

Practical Support Report and Changes in the New Orleans Abortion Fund

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This fall was my second semester in which I served as the Client Services Data Intern for the New Orleans Abortion Fund (NOAF). This term began with a shaky start, between Hurricane Ida, the passing of SB8 in Texas—a policy effectively banning abortion after the six-week gestation mark, and a complete restructuring of NOAF’s leadership. I had the privilege of working on two aspects of client services—pledge data and practical support. Pledge data is what NOAF is known

for—individual funding for our client’s abortion procedures and direct reimbursement with the clinics that perform the procedure. Alternatively, practical support is a need-based fund that is allocated to fit clients’ needs outside of their clinic costs. This may include travel costs, childcare, prescriptions, and aftercare supplies.

I primarily worked on recovering pledge data from 2020 and entering client information and fund allocations into DARIA—a database designed for local abortion funds coded by the Washington DC Abortion Fund. I was able to recover data from March 2020-December 2020 for NOAF’s records. This data entry is essential in tracking longitudinal funding across fiscal years.

By November, my supervisor, Merritt and I collaborated on a practical support data report. Practical Support is a need-based fund that is allocated to fit clients’ needs outside of their clinic costs. I tracked practical support pledges from the program’s start in March 2020 through September 2021—when NOAF restructured. The predominant use of practical support funding is for gas money, childcare, and food stipends. There is a positive correlation between the practical support budget and the number of pledges allocated per month, meaning that regardless of how the size of the budget has varied, it these funds have been depleted every month. As more restrictive policies are passed to effectively ban abortions, especially in neighboring states, there is a greater need for practical support for clients as the financial and emotional cost of receiving an abortion grows.

My goal for this upcoming term is to present my internal research to the staff and board at NOAF in hopes of receiving greater contributions to the practical support fund.