



Legal Services Corporation

Pro Bono Innovation Fund

Notice

Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2015 Grant Funding

Issued: January 23, 2015

Letter of Intent Submission Deadline: February 23, 2015 by 5:00 p.m. ET

Submit online at: <http://lscgrants.lsc.gov>

**Legal Services Corporation
Pro Bono Innovation Fund
Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2015 Grant Funding**

I. Summary

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) issues this Notice describing the conditions under which Letters of Intent to Apply for 2015 funding will be received for the Pro Bono Innovation Fund. The Pro Bono Innovation Fund is LSC's newest competitive grant program. It was created after the LSC Board of Directors formed a Pro Bono Task Force in 2011 to identify ways to better engage pro bono lawyers and other volunteers to serve low-income people. One recommendation of the Pro Bono Task Force was to create a competitive Innovation Fund grant program. On January 17, 2014, the President signed Public Law 113-76, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, which included \$2.5 million in LSC's appropriation for the Pro Bono Innovation Fund. In its first year of grant making, LSC funded eleven projects seeking to address the critical legal needs of underserved populations with more pro bono volunteers, significant collaboration, and technology enhancements. The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, Public Law 113-235 (December 16, 2014) increased LSC's appropriation for the Pro Bono Innovation Fund to \$4 million.

In 2015, the Pro Bono Innovation Fund will continue to advance LSC's goal of increasing the quantity and quality of legal services provided to eligible people. Applicants to the Pro Bono Innovation Fund should identify the most pressing unmet client needs and how pro bono volunteers will be used to address those needs. Projects funded by the Pro Bono Innovation Fund will serve as demonstration efforts to strengthen pro bono service delivery and improve low income persons' access to high quality legal assistance through coordinated legal delivery systems.

II. Funding Opportunity Information

A. Pro Bono Innovation Fund Purpose and Key Goals

The purpose of the Pro Bono Innovation Fund is to develop and enhance pro bono programs that serve larger numbers of low-income clients and that improve the quality and effectiveness of the services clients receive by using pro bono volunteers. Projects should be innovative (new, replicable models and approaches to pro bono delivery) or replicate prior successful models.

The Pro Bono Innovation Fund is designed to address issues identified in the 2012 report of LSC's Pro Bono Task Force. The report provides a summary of findings that illustrates the current crisis in legal services and suggests ways that pro bono

can be used to increase the supply of lawyers and others who are available to provide legal assistance to low-income people. The key goals of the Pro Bono Innovation Fund are to:

1. Address gaps in the delivery of legal services to low-income people.
2. Engage more lawyers and other volunteers in pro bono service.
3. Develop and implement new, innovative, and replicable strategies that address persistent challenges in pro bono delivery systems.

B. Areas of Interest for FY 2015

LSC will continue to welcome applications in a wide variety of areas without targeting its FY 2015 grant making to specific areas of interest. Consistent with the key goals of the Pro Bono Innovation Fund, however, applicants are encouraged to consider developing projects that propose to replicate effective models of pro bono delivery or propose novel solutions to persistent challenges in their current pro bono system. Such challenges and solutions may include, but are not limited to:

- Addressing duplicative or fractured pro bono efforts by forming partnerships with pro bono and community stakeholders or adding new partners to existing collaborations (e.g., working with state and local pro bono committees, specialty and minority bar associations, aligning with state Access to Justice Commission initiatives, and complementing self-represented litigant efforts).
- Developing strategies to bring pro bono services to the locations and communities where clients reside or are accessing services (e.g., medical-legal partnerships, mobile or remote services for rural populations, or adopting a neighborhood), particularly for hard to reach populations.
- Developing quality controls and setting goals for timely, effective pro bono work. This can include technology solutions and/or innovative ways to provide more mentoring, training, and support for volunteers (e.g., designating experienced volunteers to mentor newer pro bono attorneys, developing process improvements to share resources through common data portals, and sharing case updates and files with shared case management systems).
- Streamlining the process of matching, supporting, and training pro bono volunteers.

C. Available Funds and Estimated Award Amounts

LSC has received an appropriation of \$4 million, of which \$3.8 million is available for grants in fiscal year 2015 to support Pro Bono Innovation Fund projects. In 2014, eleven Pro Bono Innovation Fund Projects were funded with a median funding amount of \$211,120. LSC recommends a minimum \$50,000 request, and there is no maximum amount for Pro Bono Innovation Fund requests that are within the total funding available. LSC encourages proposals for projects that include other in-kind and cash support, although LSC has no matching requirement.

D. Project and Funding Period

Pro Bono Innovation Fund grant awards will cover either an 18- or 24- month project period. Applicants' proposals should cover the full period for which a grant award is requested. The project period is expected to commence in October 2015.

III. Grant Application Process and Letter of Intent to Apply Instructions

A. Pro Bono Innovation Fund Grant Application Process

LSC is committed to reviewing all Pro Bono Innovation Fund grant applications in a quick and thorough manner. In 2015, the Pro Bono Innovation Fund grant process requires applicants to first submit a Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI). LOIs will be reviewed by LSC staff, and applicants will be notified by April 2015 if their LOI is selected to move forward. Applicants whose LOIs are selected will be asked to submit a detailed, full application in LSC Grants. Once LSC has received a full application from a selected applicant, the application undergoes a rigorous review process by LSC staff and external subject matter experts. LSC's President makes the final decision on funding for the Pro Bono Innovation Fund.

B. Letters of Intent to Apply Requirements and Format

The Letter of Intent to Apply is a brief document that summarizes a proposed project's context, goals, objectives, activities, estimated budget, timeline and evaluation plan. LOI's should be succinct and approximately 3 pages in length. The LOI will be submitted electronically to LSC using the LSC Grants online system found at <http://lscgrants.lsc.gov>. They system will be live for applicants in early February 2015.

The LOI in LSC Grants will ask each applicant the following information about the proposed project:

1. Project Description. In this section, please provide a brief description of the proposed project that includes:

- The specific client need and problem in the pro bono delivery system that the project will address.
- The goals and objectives of the project and the activities that will be implemented to accomplish them. Activities must contribute to achieving the stated goals and objectives. How does the project design link to the goals and objectives you have identified?
- The expected impact of the project. This should include a brief explanation of the changes and outcomes that will be created as a result of the project.
- A description of how the project will be monitored and evaluated.

2. Project Staff, Organizational Capacity, and Project Partners. Please briefly describe the project team and project partners including:

- The qualifications and relevant experience of your organization, any proposed partner organizations, and the proposed project team as related to the project goals.

3. Budget and Timeline. Please provide the following information about the estimated project costs and the proposed implementation timeframe:

- Whether the proposed project will be implemented in an 18- or 24-month timeframe.
- Estimated total project cost. This includes the estimate for the Pro Bono Innovation Fund requested amount and other in-kind or cash contributions to support the project.
- List, if any, of anticipated contributions, both in-kind and monetary, of all partners involved in the project.
- List of key partners who will receive Pro Bono Innovation Fund funding, including role, and estimated dollar amount or percent of budget assigned to each.

The LOI Estimated Budget for the Pro Bono Innovation Fund share will be requested in the form below.

		Pro Bono Innovation Fund Share - <i>Estimated</i>	Other Cash or In-Kind Support - <i>Estimated</i>
1. Personnel Expenses	a. Salaries/Wages		
	b. Fringe Benefits		
	<i>Subtotal Personnel Expenses</i>		
2. Project Expenses	a. Travel		
	b. Equipment		
	c. Software		
	d. Supplies		
	e. Communication		
	f. Training		
	g. Evaluation		
	h. Other		
	<i>Subtotal Project Expenses</i>		
3. Third-Party Contracts and Subgrants	a. Contract		
	b. Subgrant		
	<i>Subtotal Third-Party Contracts and Subgrants</i>		
TOTALS			
Percentage of Total Project			

Note: Applicants are encouraged to provide as complete an estimate as possible despite the preliminary nature of the LOI. LSC recognizes that the budget information provided is an initial estimate only and subject to change if applicants are invited to submit a full application.

C. One Project Per Letter of Intent to Apply

Applicants may submit multiple LOIs, but a separate LOI should be submitted for each project for which funding is sought.

D. Letter of Intent to Apply Deadline

Letters of Intent must be completed and submitted into the online system at <http://lscgrants.lsc.gov> no later than **5:00 p.m. ET, Monday, February 23, 2015**. The online system may experience technical difficulties due to heavy traffic on the day of the deadline. Therefore, please allow sufficient time for online submission, and applicants are strongly encouraged to complete LOI submissions prior to the deadline.

LSC will provide confirmation via email upon the completed electronic submission of each LOI received. Please keep this email as verification that the organization's LOI was submitted. If no confirmation email is received, applicants may inquire about the status of your LOI at probonoinnovation@lsc.gov.

LSC will not accept applications submitted after the application deadline unless a waiver of the deadline has been approved in advance. *See Section IV (D) Waiver Authority* below.

E. Selection Process

Applicants must be current LSC grantees. LSC will initially review all Letters of Intent to Apply to determine whether they are from eligible entities, submitted as complete in LSC Grants, and are responsive to the questions described above. Failure to meet these submission requirements may result in rejection of the LOI.

Each LOI will then be carefully reviewed to identify those projects that address the key goals of the Pro Bono Innovation Fund. The LOIs will also be reviewed to determine the extent to which the proposed project:

Provides a clear description of client need and the challenge in the pro bono delivery system that the project will address.

Articulates thoughtful, appropriate, and concrete goals and activities that address the articulated need and challenges.

Is either innovative or an appropriate replication of prior successful models.

Has potential for client impact, strong outcomes, further replication, or scaling.

Leverages partnerships and involves all of the appropriate parties needed to make it successful and sustainable.

Is cost-effective.

Projects that address the above criteria will be invited to submit full applications.

F. Next Steps for Successful Applicants

LSC will notify successful Letter of Intent to Apply applicants by early April 2015. Successful applicants will have until 5:00 p.m. ET, Friday, May 18, 2015 to complete full applications in the LSC Grants online application system.

IV. LSC Requirements and Eligibility Information

A. LSC Requirements

Pro Bono Innovation Fund grants are subject to all the requirements of the Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974 as amended (LSC Act), any applicable appropriations acts and any other applicable law, rules, regulations, policies, guidelines, instructions, and other directives of including, but not limited to: [LSC Audit Guide for Recipients and Auditors](#), [the Accounting Guide for LSC Recipients \(2010 Edition\)](#), [the CSR Handbook \(2011 Edition\)](#), [the 1981 LSC Property Manual \(as amended\)](#), and [the Property Acquisition and Management Manual](#), with any amendments to the foregoing adopted before or during the period of the grant. Termination Policies and Procedures will be same as those described for the Technology Initiative Grants Program at: <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/compliance>.

B. Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for Pro Bono Innovation Fund grants, applicants must be current grantees of LSC grants for Basic Field-General, Basic Field-Migrant, or Basic Field-Native American funding. Organizations and entities that are not current LSC grantees are not eligible to apply directly to LSC for Pro Bono Innovation Fund grants. Collaborations between LSC grantees and partner organizations are strongly encouraged to enhance projects, strengthen pro bono delivery systems, and avoid duplication of services.

D. Waiver Authority

LSC, upon its own initiative or when requested, may waive provisions in this Notice at its sole discretion under extraordinary circumstances and when it is in the best interest of the eligible client community, Waivers may be granted only for requirements that are discretionary and not mandated by statute or regulation. Any request for a waiver must set forth in writing the extraordinary circumstances for the request. LSC will not consider a request to waive the deadline for a Letter of Intent unless the waiver request is received by LSC prior to the deadline.

E. Contact Information

For more information about current Pro Bono Innovation Fund projects, please contact Mytrang Nguyen, Program Counsel, (202) 295-1564 or nguyenm@lsc.gov.

If you have a general question or questions about the Pro Bono Innovation Fund application process, please email probonoinnovation@lsc.gov.

For technical questions or issues with the LSC Grants online application system, please send an email to techsupport@lsc.gov.