



**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grants**

Notice

**Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2011 Grant
Funding**

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Technology Innovative Grant Program
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I. Summary

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) issues this Notice describing the conditions under which Letters of Intent will be received for the Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) program. LSC's TIG program was established in 2000. Since that time, we have made over 450 grants totaling more than \$36 million. This grant program provides an integral tool to help achieve LSC's goal of increasing the quantity and quality of legal services provided to eligible persons. When submitting Letters of Intent, applicants should consider the phenomenal growth and continued development of technology and the resulting effects on the practice of law, program management and service delivery. Projects funded under this program develop, test and replicate innovative technologies that can enable grant recipients and state justice communities to improve clients' access to high quality legal assistance through an integrated and well managed technology system.

II. General Information

All prospective applicants for 2011 funds from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) program must submit a "Letter of Intent" prior to submitting a formal application. The format and contents of the Letters of Intent should conform to the requirements specified below in Section III.

The submission and review of Letters of Intent enables a prospective applicant to vet their project ideas with TIG staff, who can then identify those projects that have a reasonable chance of success in the competitive grant process. LSC will solicit full proposals for only those projects that have a reasonable chance of success in the grant competition process based on LSC's analysis of the information provided in the Letters of Intent.

LSC Requirements

TIG funds 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 the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), including, but not limited to, LSC Audit Guide for Recipients and Auditors, the Accounting Guide, the CSR Handbook (2008 Edition), the 1981 LSC Property Manual (as amended) and the Property Acquisition and Management Manual, and with any amendments of the foregoing adopted before or during the period of this grant. Accordingly, before submitting a Letter of Intent, applicants should be familiar with LSC's subgrant and transfer requirements at 45 CFR Parts 1610 and 1627, particularly as they pertain to third party-contracts to conduct programmatic activities.

For additional information and resources regarding TIG compliance, including third-party contracting, conflicts of interest, grant modification procedures, and special TIG grant assurances, see <http://tig.lsc.gov/complianceresources.php>.

Eligible Organizations

TIG grants are only available to current LSC program grantees. Although other entities are not eligible to apply, they are encouraged to participate as project partners. 2011 TIG grants will not be awarded to programs unless they have made satisfactory progress on all previously awarded TIG grants. Because of the time and effort involved for programs to submit Letters of Intent and for LSC staff to review and assess them, programs should be up to date according to the milestone schedule on all previous TIG grants prior to submitting a Letter of Intent. If there are compelling reasons for delays in completing prior grants, programs must work with LSC staff to secure new payment due dates prior to submitting a Letter of Intent. Failure to do so will disqualify submission.

Funding Availability

Approximately \$3.4 million is anticipated for 2011 grant awards¹. In 2010, 43 TIG projects received funding with a median funding amount of \$41,100. LSC places no limits on TIG funding requests, but grants for TIG projects typically range from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

Collaborations

From its inception, the TIG program has encouraged applicants to reach out to and include in TIG projects others interested in access to justice, be it the courts, bar associations, pro bono projects, libraries, or social service agencies. Partnerships can enhance the reach, effectiveness or sustainability of many projects.

Grant Categories

LSC will accept projects in three application categories:

- 1) Website Improvement and Innovation
- 2) Replication and Adaptation
- 3) Open

Grant Category 1: Website Improvement and Innovation

The Website Improvement and Innovation category is designated for initiatives that will add new tools, promote website traffic, build community and increase the effectiveness of statewide websites to better serve their community, partners, advocates, and client population. From 2001-2010 LSC funded the creation and continuation of statewide website grants to help states build and coordinate effective websites for the use of clients,

¹ The amount of TIG funding available will depend on the 2011 fiscal year appropriation to LSC from Congress, which had not been determined by February 7, 2011, the date this notice was issued.

advocates and pro bono attorneys. In 2010, TIG created the Website Improvement and Innovation grant category to expand the potential use of websites. Statewide websites should no longer be static repositories to post and download information. For instance, live help and video resources may provide better assistance and direction to clients looking for information, and Web 2.0 and social networking tools can provide opportunities to enhance websites to better engage and educate clients, advocates, pro bono attorneys, partners and communities. Every year, more of the client-eligible population is using the Internet. According to a May 2010 survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, individuals in 63% of households with incomes of less than \$30,000 have access to and use the Internet, either from home or from public access points, at least occasionally, showing that websites continue to be an increasingly important tool for legal aid programs to use to expand their reach and services.

Grant Category 2: Replication and Adaptation

The Replication and Adaptation category is for proposals that seek to replicate, adapt, or provide added value to the work of prior TIG projects. To leverage TIG funds, LSC has always stressed that grants be replicable. LSC requires that any software developed with TIG funding be available to other legal services programs at little or no cost. This policy has allowed LSC to develop two website templates, which have been successfully replicated at a fraction of the cost of development of standalone websites in each state. In 2011, LSC will continue to use a Replication Category to focus on the implementation of tested methodologies and technologies to encourage the replication and improvement of previous TIG projects. Replication and adaptation of prior TIG projects may include, but is not limited to:

A: Replication of Previous TIG Projects

During the past eleven years of TIG there have been many successes. A list of some examples of replicable projects with contact information can be found at <http://tig.lsc.gov/currenttigcycle.php>. The final reports of a range of successful projects are available at: <http://tig.lsc.gov/finalreportsamples.php>. Although successful, many projects have not been replicated in other states and programs because of the costs incurred in doing so.

Applicants should look to previous successful TIG projects and determine how they could be replicated at a substantially reduced cost from the original project. Projects that lend themselves to replication are projects where software or content has already been created. Since any software developed through the TIG program is available to all LSC grantees at little or no cost, it is recommended that you look to these projects to see how they could benefit the delivery systems in your state.

Projects that do not lend themselves to replication are projects for the development or acquisition of hardware or technical equipment. In addition, the bandwidth costs of wide area networks (WAN) are driven by costs from local providers and benefit little from replication.

B: Automated Form Replication

LawHelp Interactive (LHI²) is now deployed in 27 states. There are over 1,676 active HotDocs templates being hosted on the LawHelp Interactive National HotDocs Server. While there are differences from state to state in the content and format of the forms, many of these can be edited for use in other jurisdictions with less effort, hence a lower cost, than starting from scratch.

In addition to these templates, the server hosts more than 596 A2J³ interviews to gather the information needed to complete the templates. Even if a form differs from one state to another, the information needed to populate the form will, for the most part, be the same. What is the name of the plaintiff, the name of the defendant, the name of the children, etc. This means the interviews are more easily replicated than templates.

All of these templates and interviews are available to be modified as needed. TIG has always sought to leverage its scarce grant dollars by encouraging replication, so we have created this specific category to invite such replication. Applicants should identify which forms and templates are to be adapted, then estimate the cost to do this and how much that would save over doing them from scratch.

Grant Category 3: Open

The Open Category is designated for projects that do not fall within Grant Category 1 or 2 and that: (1) implement new or innovative approaches for using technology in legal services; (2) enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of other TIG initiatives or that enable the legal services community to better use technology to increase the quality and quantity of services to clients; and/or (3) enable grantees to substantially increase and/or improve the services provided their client communities.

There is no funding limit or matching requirement for applications in this category. However, additional weight is given to projects with strong demonstrated support from appropriate partners.

Proposals for initiatives with broad applicability and/or that would have impact throughout the legal services community are strongly encouraged.

For applications that do not have broad applicability or impact, LSC will carefully consider the size of the request and the cost-effective balance of risk and reward.

III. Areas of Interest

LSC has always welcomed applications for a wide variety of projects. For 2011, LSC has five areas of particular interest in which programs are encouraged to submit proposals for innovative technology approaches. The inclusion of these areas does not in any way limit the scope of proposals in which LSC is interested. A new funding category is not required for proposals that address these areas of interests because these are encompassed by the broad categories listed above.

² LHI is an automated document server powered by HotDocs Server and made available to any LSC funded program at no charge.

³ A2J Author is a free software program used to create guided interviews that collect information from users that can populate HotDocs documents, for online intake, or to guide users to resources.

These areas of interest are:

Increasing Access to Legal Assistance for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Client Populations. The most recent Census Bureau data indicate that at least 25 million people in the country have limited proficiency in English. In recent years, legal services programs serving both urban and rural populations have experienced increasing demands for assistance from this population. The higher incidence of poverty of LEP individuals compared to the broader population and the lack of services or information in LEP groups' native languages make it especially difficult for LSC grantees to serve LEP clients. Technology-enabled strategies can greatly enhance access to and utilization of legal services for LEP persons. To this end, LSC encourages technology-based proposals that seek to increase access to legal services of, and LSC grantees' capacities to respond to, the unique needs of LEP clients.

Improving Fiscal and Administrative Operations. The fiscal management and administration of a legal aid program, with multiple funding sources, evolving technology, numerous offices and new electronic banking arrangements, is a constantly challenging endeavor. There is an increased emphasis on internal controls with the enactment of Sarbanes Oxley and the fiscal audits of legal aid programs by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and LSC's Office of Inspector General (OIG). In the Improving Fiscal and Administrative Operations category, LSC encourages proposals for applications that will use technology to improve operations by, for example, (1) fully integrating the timekeeping records with the accounting and payroll programs or (2) integrating payroll, human resource and accounting systems to avoid duplication of data entry and to comply with the internal fiscal controls found in LSC's Accounting Guide and with applicable laws and regulations.

Using Mobile Technologies to Provide and Increase Access to Legal Assistance. Internet connectivity is no longer limited to hard wired locations. According to a July 2010 survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, "six in ten Americans go online wirelessly using a laptop or cell phone [46% have household incomes less than \$30,000] . . . and mobile data applications have grown more popular over the last year." In addition, the survey showed that 72% of all Americans now use their cell phones for text messaging. The increased availability and use of mobile technologies, including tools and resources such as cell phones, smartphones, laptops, netbooks and tablets, combined with the increasing availability of broadband access to facilitate delivery of resources like video and web conferencing, provides an opportunity for legal aid programs to create innovative uses of these new tools. LSC encourages proposals to explore how these mobile technologies can be used by legal aid programs, for example by increasing pro bono involvement through mobile clinics, creating mobile apps, or using SMS text messaging to follow-up with clients about appointments and information.

Leveraging Technology to Increase Pro Bono Attorney and Law Student Involvement. The economic crisis has increased the need for legal services providers to engage private attorneys willing to help low-income clients. Many state justice communities have urged attorneys to get more involved in pro bono efforts, and some have suggested that particular categories of attorneys, such as retiring advocates and recent graduates, are well-poised to expand access to justice in their states. In addition, nearly 150,000 law students are currently enrolled in an ABA-approved law school, and

many of these students have a strong interest in providing legal help to those in need. LSC recognizes that technology can play an important role in recruiting pro bono attorneys and law students and providing them the tools necessary to effectively meet the legal needs of clients. To that end, LSC seeks proposals for projects that leverage creative uses of technology to enhance private attorney and law student involvement.

Technology Tools with Applicability to Federal Laws. A variety of technologies have the potential to enhance access to legal information and resources related to federal laws affecting the clients of LSC grantees. These resources may be especially valuable given that they could be used by clients and advocates across the country. Substantive legal areas might include, but are not limited to: Social Security Disability, SSI, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Bankruptcy, Fair Labor Standards Act, Public and Federally Subsidized Housing, and Medicare. Resources for clients might include web-based legal information and guidance, including appropriate automated documents and videos. Advocate resources could include web-based trainings, informational materials and automated documents and court forms. These technology tools should be developed so they can be readily used and/or adapted by advocates or clients across the country. Tools also might include mechanisms for coordinating and sharing information about federal legal issues.

IV. Specific Letter of Intent Requirements

One Project Per Letter of Intent

Applicants may submit multiple Letters of Intent, but a separate letter of intent should be submitted for each project for which funding is sought.

Letter Requirements and Format

The Letter of Intent must be submitted using an online system that can be found at <http://tig.lsc.gov/> under the TIG Online Systems tab. This system will walk you through the process of creating a simple two page Letter of Intent. You are not required to submit a hardcopy of your Letter of Intent. The Letter of Intent should concisely provide the following information about the proposed project:

1. **Category** – select the appropriate category from the drop down list.
2. **Description of Project** - Briefly describe the basic elements of the project, including the specific technology(ies) the project will develop or implement; how they will be developed, how they will operate, the function they will serve within the legal services delivery system, their expected impact, and other similar factors. (Only the impact should be highlighted here; more details about the system's benefits should be provided below.)
3. **Major Benefits.** Describe the specific ways in which the project will increase or improve services to clients and/or enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of program operations. To the extent feasible, discuss both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of these benefits.

4. **Estimated Costs.** Start by stating the amount of funding you are seeking from the TIG program, followed by the estimated total project cost, summarizing the anticipated costs of the major components of the project. List anticipated contributions, both in-kind and monetary, of all partners involved in the project.
5. **Major Partners.** Identify organizations that are expected to be important partners. Specify the role(s) each partner will play.
6. **Innovation/Replication/Sustainability.** Identify how and why the proposed project is new and innovative. Identify how and why the proposed project can significantly benefit and/or be replicated by other legal services providers and/or the community at large. Identify how the proposed project will be maintained to ensure sustainability.

Letter of Intent Deadline

Letters of Intent must be completed and submitted into the online system no later than 11:59 p.m. EST, Monday, March 7, 2011. The online system may experience technical difficulties due to heavy traffic on the day of the deadline. Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete their Letter of Intent submissions as early as possible.

Selection Process

1. LSC will initially review all Letters of Intent to determine whether they conform to the required format and clearly present all of the required elements. These requirements are listed and described in Section IV. Failure to meet these requirements may result in rejection of the Letter of Intent.
2. Each proposal will be reviewed to identify those Letters of Intent that propose projects likely to improve access to justice or the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of legal services provided by our grantees. The Letters of Intent will be reviewed to determine the extent to which the project proposed is clearly described and well thought out, offers major benefits to our targeted client community, is cost effective, incorporates all of the parties needed to make it successful and sustainable, and is either innovative or a cost effective replication of prior successful projects. Those that do will be invited to submit full applications.

Next Steps for Successful Applicants

LSC will notify successful Letter of Intent applicants by Monday, April 11, 2011. Successful applicants will have until 11:59 p.m. EST, Monday, May 23, 2011 to complete full applications in the online application system.

Waiver Authority

It is the general intent of LSC not to waive any of the provisions set forth in this Notice. However, under extraordinary circumstances and when it is in the best interest of our targeted client community, LSC, upon its own initiative or when requested, may waive provisions in this Notice at its sole discretion. Waivers may only be granted for

requirements that are discretionary and not mandated by statute or regulation. Any request for a waiver must set forth the extraordinary circumstances for the request and be included in the application. 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.