



Legal Services Corporation Technology Initiative Grants

Notice

Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2012 Grant Funding

Issued: February 8, 2012

Letter of Intent Submission Deadline: March 12, 2012 by 11:59 p.m. EDT

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

TIG Application Process: <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/application-process>

**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grant Program
Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2012 Grant Funding**

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 almost \$40 million. This grant program provides an important 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 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 2012 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 IV.

The submission and review of Letters of Intent enables a prospective applicant to vet its 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 (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 this grant (see <http://grants.lsc.gov/rin/grantee-guidance>). Before submitting a Letter of Intent, applicants should be familiar with LSC's subgrant and transfer requirements at 45 CFR Parts 1610 and 1627 (see <http://www.lsc.gov/about/laws-regulations/lsc-regulations-cfr-45-part-1600-et-seq>), 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/grants/compliance>.

Eligible Organizations

Only current LSC recipients may receive a TIG award. Although other entities may not apply, they may participate as project partners. 2012 TIG awards will not be made to any applicants who have not made satisfactory progress on all previously awarded TIG grants. Applicants for 2012 TIG grants must be current with their milestone schedule on all previous TIG projects prior to submitting a Letter of Intent. If there are compelling reasons for delays in completing prior grants, recipients must work with LSC staff to secure a new schedule prior to submitting a Letter of Intent. Failure to do so will disqualify their 2012 Letter of Intent submission.

LSC recipients that have had a previous TIG terminated for failure to provide timely documentation are not eligible to receive a TIG for three years after their earlier grant was terminated. This policy does not apply to applicants that worked with LSC to end a TIG early after an unsuccessful project implementation resulting from technology limitations, a failed proof of concept, or other reasons outside of the applicant's control.

Funding Availability

Approximately \$3.4 million is available for 2012 grant awards. In 2011, 37 TIG projects received funding with a median funding amount of \$70,205. (See <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/past-grant-awards> for more information on past awards.) LSC recommends a minimum amount for TIG funding requests of \$30,000, but lower requests will be considered. There is no maximum amount for TIG grants.

Collaborations

The TIG program encourages applicants to reach out to and include in TIG projects others interested in access to justice – the courts, bar associations, pro bono projects, libraries, and social service agencies. Partnerships can enhance the reach, effectiveness and 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 grants to help states build and coordinate effective websites for the use of clients, 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 not 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 innovative web applications 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 2011 survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 63 percent of adults in households with incomes of less than \$30,000 have access to and use the Internet, either from home, work or from public access points, at least occasionally, showing that websites can 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. LSC requires that any software developed with TIG funding be available to other legal services programs at little or no cost. In 2012, LSC will continue to use a Replication Category to focus on the implementation and improvement of tested methodologies and technologies from previous TIG projects. Replication and adaptation of prior TIG projects may include, but are not limited to:

A: Replication of Previous TIG Projects

During the past twelve years of TIG funding, there have been many successes. A list of examples of replicable projects and final reports can be found at <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/final-reports/final-report-samples-replicable-projects>. Applicants should look to previous successful TIG projects and determine how they could be replicated at a reduced cost from the original project, and/or how they could be built upon and enhanced. Projects where software or content has already been created lend themselves to replication. Since any software developed through the TIG program is available to all LSC recipients at little or no cost, look to these projects to see how they could benefit the delivery systems in your state.

B: Automated Form Replication

LawHelp Interactive (LHI¹) is now deployed in 38 states. There are over 2,370 active HotDocs templates being hosted on the LawHelp Interactive National HotDocs Server at <https://lawhelpinteractive.org>. While there are differences from state to state in the content and format, many of these forms can be edited for use in other jurisdictions with less effort, hence a lower cost, than starting from scratch.

¹ LHI is an automated document server powered by HotDocs Server and made available to any LSC funded program at no charge. See <https://lawhelpinteractive.org>.

In addition to these templates, the server hosts more than 823 A2J 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 are the name of the plaintiff, the name of the defendant, the names 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 category to invite replication. Applicants should identify which forms and templates are to be adapted, and then estimate the cost to do this and how much that would save over doing them from scratch.

LHI has the capacity to support Spanish language interviews and assemblies, and by the end of 2012 it will also support Vietnamese and Cantonese interviews. For additional information, including examples, best practices, models and training materials, see the LawHelp Interactive Resource Center, hosted by Pro Bono Net at <http://www.probono.net/dasupport> (you may need to request a free membership to access this website).

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.

Although there is no funding limit or matching requirement for applications in this category, additional weight is given to projects with strong support from 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 amount of the request and the balance of risk and reward.

III. Areas of Interest

LSC welcomes applications for a wide variety of projects. For 2012, LSC has five areas of particular interest in which programs are encouraged to submit proposals for innovative technology approaches. The designation of these areas does not in any way limit the scope of proposals in which LSC is interested. The 2012 areas of particular interest are:

Using Mobile Technologies to Provide and Increase Access to Legal Assistance. Internet connectivity is no longer limited to hard-wired locations. According to a 2011 survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 77 percent of U.S. adults with household incomes under \$30,000 own a cell phone. Of those, 22 percent own smartphones, and two in five of these smartphone owners indicate that they “mostly go online using their cell phone.” In addition, the survey showed that 73 percent 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, provide 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, particularly to take advantage of the high percentage of clients who have cell phones and use text messaging. For example, a program could ask clients if they would prefer to be contacted by text message, and ticklers could be set up in the program's case management system to send out text messages to remind clients of appointments, or court hearings and the information they need to bring. Programs could also create mobile applications, increase pro bono involvement through mobile clinics, and integrate the use of mobile technologies in the delivery of legal services by advocates.

Leveraging Technology to Increase Pro Bono Attorney and Law Student Involvement. The funding 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 or retired lawyers and recent graduates, are well-poised to expand access to justice in their states. In addition, nearly 155,000 law students are currently enrolled in an ABA-approved law school², and many of these students have a strong interest in providing legal help to those in need. 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. 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.

Use of Data to Analyze Service Delivery and Develop Advocacy Strategies. Recipients are increasingly recognizing that more effective use of a wide range of data can enable them to better identify: 1) current and emerging needs of their client

² For 2009-2010 Academic Year. See: http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/s tats_1.pdf

communities; 2) patterns of service delivery by case type, level of service or demographics of clients; and 3) outcomes achieved for clients. Data analysis can assist in developing specially tailored advocacy and service delivery strategies that more effectively address the most pressing legal needs and achieve the greatest outcomes for clients. Valuable data are available from a range of federal agencies (e.g., the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development) and comparable state agencies (e.g., state offices for planning and research, departments of social services and health), as well as local government agencies, academic institutions, policy groups and other non-profits. LSC encourages initiatives that enable recipients, by themselves or in partnership with other entities, to use technologies to more readily identify, compile and employ data in ways that improve the responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency of services provided to clients.

Leveraging Technology to Support Shared Infrastructure and Staffing. The emergence of new technologies – such as robust, on-demand web applications and multi-tenant data centers – has made it easier for the legal services community to share critical capacities across programs. For instance, LSC recipients can adopt cloud solutions that consolidate the IT environments of multiple recipients into regional data centers. Recipients can also use established web applications and remote access and meeting tools to share staffing for positions that have been hard for LSC recipients to fill or sustain, especially in light of recent budget cuts. Examples of shared staffing capacity could include IT helpdesk staff and communications and development professionals. LSC seeks proposals for projects that leverage technology to provide shared IT infrastructure and/or staffing across recipients. These proposals should demonstrate how sharing capacities across LSC-funded recipients will reduce costs and tie into the goal of serving low-income clients as effectively and efficiently as possible.

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://lscgrants.lsc.gov/>. Additional instructions and information can be found on the TIG website at <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/application-process>. This system will walk you through the process of creating a simple two page 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 (maximum 2500 characters)** - 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 (maximum 2500 characters)** - 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 (maximum 1500 characters)** - 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 (maximum 1500 characters)** - Identify organizations that are expected to be important partners. Specify the role(s) each partner will play.
6. **Innovation/Replication/Sustainability (maximum 1500 characters)** - 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 at <http://lscgrants.lsc.gov> no later than **11:59 p.m. EDT, Monday, March 12, 2012**. 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.

LSC will not accept applications submitted after the application deadline unless a waiver of the deadline has been approved in advance (see Waiver Authority). Therefore, allow sufficient time for online submission.

LSC will provide confirmation via email upon the completed electronic submission of each Letter of Intent. Keep this email as verification that the program's LOI was submitted. If no confirmation email is received, inquire about the status of your LOI at Techgrants@lsc.gov.

Selection Process

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 above. Failure to meet these requirements may result in rejection of the Letter of Intent.

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 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, involves 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 16, 2012. Successful applicants will have until 11:59 p.m. EDT, Friday, June 1, 2012 to complete full applications in the online application system.

Waiver Authority

Under extraordinary circumstances and when it is in the best interest of the eligible 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.

Contact Information

For information on the status of a current TIG project, contact **Eric Mathison**, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202-295-1535; Email: emathison@lsc.gov.

For questions about projects in CT, DC, IL, IN, ME, MA, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, WI, WV, VT, contact **David Bonebrake**, Program Counsel, Telephone: 202.295.1547; Email: dbonebrake@lsc.gov.

For questions about projects in AK, AZ, CA, CO, GU, HI, ID, IA, KS, MP, MN, MT, NE, NV, NH, NM, ND, OK, OR, SD, TX, UT, WA, WY, contact **Glenn Rawdon**, Program Counsel, Telephone: 202.295.1552; Email: gawdon@lsc.gov.

For questions about projects in AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, PR, SC, TN, VI, VA, contact **Jane Ribadeneyra**, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202.295.1554, Email: ribadeneyraj@lsc.gov.

For questions about veterans projects, please contact **Bristow Hardin**, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202.295.1553; Email: hardinb@lsc.gov.

If you have a general question, please email techgrants@lsc.gov.