

## 2020 ACCESS TO JUSTICE GRANTS PROGRAM

### *Underserved Areas, Housing-Related Matters and Shared Legal Services Interpreter Bank*

## Program Overview and Application Instructions

### I. About the DC Bar Foundation

Since 1978, the DC Bar Foundation has funneled more than \$85 million into DC's legal aid network to ensure that every District resident, regardless of income, has access to justice. The Foundation makes strategic investments in legal aid providers and the critical issues facing District residents in order to strengthen and expand our civil legal aid network and improve our community. As the largest funder of civil legal aid in the District, the Foundation is a steadfast community partner, committed to protecting access to justice in life's most pivotal moments.

In addition to our grant programs, the Foundation administers loan repayment assistance programs for attorneys working at DC legal aid organizations and provides training and technical assistance to these organizations. Learn more by visiting our website: [www.dcbfoundation.org](http://www.dcbfoundation.org).

### II. Overview of the Access to Justice Grants Program

The DC Bar Foundation (DCBF) is pleased to announce that it will award approximately \$5,000,000 to nonprofit legal aid providers located in the District of Columbia to fund civil legal services in the categories of **underserved areas** and **shared legal services interpreter bank** through the 2020 Access to Justice (ATJ) Grants Program.

Thanks to a grant from the District of Columbia Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants, eligible civil legal aid providers can apply for a grant that covers January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. Organizations may apply for funding for one project, multiple projects, and/or joint projects, by submitting one project per application.

### III. Eligibility for Funding

#### A. Eligibility for Access to Justice Funding

Qualified recipients must:

1. Be a not-for-profit DC corporation;
2. Have tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;
3. Operate primarily within the District of Columbia;
4. Be located within the District of Columbia; and,

5. Have as a primary purpose the provision of civil legal services to low-income residents of DC.\*

\*An organization meets the primary purpose test if the majority of its total organizational resources and/or legal services department or project are spent on the delivery of civil legal services to low-income District residents without charge.

## **B. Definitions**

DCBF defines the following terms for the purpose of determining eligibility for the ATJ Grants Program:

1. **“Civil legal services”** **must** include the individual representation of District residents. It may also include the following:
  - a. The supervision of such representation;
  - b. Appellate advocacy on behalf of District residents; and,
  - c. Policy advocacy in the District that is associated with the representation of individual clients.
2. **“Low-income”** is calculated by using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) income limits that determine the eligibility for District residents for HUD’s assisted housing programs.
3. **“Underserved”** is defined as those residents of the District of Columbia who share a common neighborhood, geographic area, language, culture, ethnicity, religion, life situation, or lack of adequate and affordable access to legal services.
4. **“District resident”** is defined as any individual with a residential address in the District of Columbia. DCBF may accept an organization’s reasonable functional alternatives to this definition to the extent that DCBF determines such functional alternatives are consistent with the goal of increasing access to justice in the District for special populations, including but not limited to individuals in correctional facilities, individuals living in or fleeing from violence, and homeless individuals.

## **IV. Funding Principles, Standards and Priorities**

### **A. Principles to Guide Allocation of Funds**

The primary purpose of the ATJ Grants Program is to fund civil legal services to low-income and underserved District residents. Thus, funding will be provided:

1. ONLY for free civil legal services;
2. ONLY for services to low-income District residents; and,
3. ONLY for projects that address underserved areas and housing in the District or support a shared legal services interpreter bank.

## **B. The Foundation's Standards for Funding**

### **1. Standards for Organizations**

Funding will be provided to civil legal aid organizations that have systems in place that align with widely accepted industry standards for promoting quality, efficiency, and effectiveness in the delivery of civil legal aid, including methods for self-assessment to provide feedback regarding the extent to which those systems are achieving their desired purpose.

A strong proposal will demonstrate that the applying organization:

- a. Seeks to identify and respond to the most pressing civil legal needs of the low-income people it serves;
- b. Has systems in place to ensure appropriate supervision, training, and development of its staff, applies feedback obtained from stakeholders and clients to evaluate and improve organization effectiveness and quality;
- c. Integrates pro bono attorneys and others to supplement and increase the effectiveness of its representation and other services;
- d. Provides other services designed to increase accessibility of legal services to low-income DC residents, such as assistance with self-help strategies, legal information through its website or other channels, community legal education; and,
- e. Engages with other important stakeholders working on behalf of or serving its targeted client population, such as the judiciary, government agencies, and social services agencies.

### **2. Standards for Projects**

Funding will be provided only to projects that measure and report to DCBF their performance against stated goals with respect to legal services to be delivered, outreach and training, pro bono development, and any other activities to be funded under the requested grant.

A strong proposal will demonstrate that the project:

- a. **Has ambitious yet realistic goals for delivering significant amounts of legal services**, as measured by the volume and type of legal services to be provided, the number of DC residents to be assisted, the number of cases to be accepted, the DC wards from which the majority of clients are anticipated, and other measures.
- b. **Seeks to increase access to services to residents in underserved areas of the District**, as measured by the percentage of the total proposed legal services that will be provided in areas containing the greatest concentrations of low-income residents.

- c. **Has high goals for providing significant amounts of outreach and training**, as measured by the number of outreach efforts and/or trainings that will be conducted, the number of individuals to whom outreach will be conducted, the number of trainings to be held, the number of DC residents who will attend, the volume of materials distributed (literature, website accesses, etc.), and other relevant measures.
- d. **Seeks to increase engagement of pro bono attorneys and law firms in the provision of legal services to low-income DC residents**, as measured by the number of pro bono attorneys recruited, the number of attorneys trained, growth in the total number of attorneys and firms participating, and other relevant measures.
- e. **Has adequate capacity for delivering the services that are proposed**, as indicated by experience in providing services similar to those being proposed, related current work that will be supported or enhanced by the proposed services, and other factors.
- f. **Has a high likelihood of sustainability**, taking into account such factors as potential funding sources beyond DCBF, a track record of successful fundraising, a longer-term service delivery strategy, and other factors.

### **C. The Foundation's Priorities for Funding**

Additionally, in allocating available funding, the Foundation will give priority to proposals that seek to address the most pressing legal needs of the District's low-income residents and make legal services accessible to this population.

Proposals that address one or more of the following criteria will be given priority (all other factors being equal):

1. Addresses underserved areas in the District, OR addresses housing-related matters, OR supports a shared legal services interpreter bank (for this grant application due on August 23, 2019, we will only fund proposals for underserved areas, housing, and shared legal services interpreter bank).
2. Is likely to expand the number of DC residents who are provided legal assistance.
3. Seeks to avoid duplication of services being provided in the District, in the same issue area, or to the same special population segments as those being proposed.
4. Is likely to make legal assistance more accessible to DC residents.
5. Is likely to expand pro bono participation by recruiting, training, and supervising law firm attorneys to help deliver free legal assistance to DC residents.
6. Is likely to leverage DCBF resources by applying them strategically to expand efforts by other service providers and/or provide services that could NOT potentially be supported by other funding sources.
7. Will test innovative approaches for achieving the above priorities.

## V. Application Instructions and Timeline

### A. Application Structure

There are three sections required for the 2020 ATJ Grants Program application:

1. **PART ONE: ORGANIZATION DATA** describes the overall civil legal aid organization that is applying for DCBF funding. If you are applying for more than one grant, this information should be the same for all applications, including all applications for the ATJ and Private grants programs, since it is about your organization, rather than about your proposal (Part Two).

There are two options: (1) you can **submit** one application before starting the second, and the information entered in Part One will auto-fill into Part One of your second application, if the second application is created under the same account which the first was submitted; or (2) you can download the Word document version of Part One from the online application or our website, prepare your answers on this document, and then copy and paste into Part One of each application.

2. **PART TWO: PROPOSAL** describes the proposed project or program for which funding is requested. You must submit a different Part Two for each proposal submitted.
3. **PART THREE: PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS** includes required signatures, the Data Packet (the project budget, staffing, and funding), client eligibility guidelines, client story, letters of support, memoranda of understanding, resumes, staff training, and any supplemental documents.

### B. Definitions of Application Terms

- **“Legal assistance”** includes any activity designed to help an individual understand or resolve a legal problem. It includes representation limited to advice or brief service as well as all forms of extended representation. Legal assistance does not include legal information offered to an individual in the form of a pamphlet or letter or oral presentations, trainings, or conversations offering general legal information. [Appears in Part Two Proposal Performance Measures, Question #1a.]
- **“Advice or legal counsel”** consists of guidance or explanation of options, often with a recommendation for a course of action offered in the context of the attorney-client relationship, based on the specific circumstances of the client and the law which applies to those circumstances. It includes advice given in the course of “limited scope representation,” such as an advice clinic, if an attorney-client relationship is formed and the assistance is not mere legal information that is not tailored to the circumstance of the client. [Appears in Part Two Proposal Performance Measures, Question #1c.]
- **“Brief service”** includes assistance such as making a phone call or writing a brief letter on the client’s behalf. Brief service generally involves assistance that takes less than two hours. Brief service may take place in the context of “limited representation,” in which the client agrees at the outset that assistance will be limited

to the service that is offered, although the matter could call for extended representation. [Appears in Part Two Proposal Performance Measures, Question #1d.]

- **“Extended representation”** refers to any legal representation beyond advice, legal counsel, or brief service, as defined previously. It may include, but is not limited to, transactional work or negotiation, administrative representation, litigation, and other forms of advocacy. [Appears in Part Two Proposal Performance Measures, Question #1e.]
- **“Legal information”** consists of general guidance provided to the general public regarding legal rights and responsibilities, as well as steps that can be taken to resolve legal problems on their own. The information can be given in the form of a pamphlet, self-help packet, letter with generalized advice, or guidance provided in a pro se clinic. No attorney-client relationship is formed when legal information is provided. *Do not* include participants in community legal education events. [Appears in Part Two Proposal Performance Measures, Question #3a.]
- **“Cases placed with pro bono attorneys”** are cases for which the volunteer attorney has assumed responsibility for the representation. [Appears in Part Two Proposal Performance Measures, Question #4d. It does not include “co-counseling cases,” which is captured in Question #4e.]

### C. How to Apply

The application and all attachments must be submitted via our online system. The links to start an ATJ Grants Program application are available on our website here:

<https://dcbfoundation.org/grants/atj-grants/>. There are three unique links for 2020 applications; they are clearly marked, but make sure you select the correct one:

1. One link if you are applying for the ATJ Grants Program in the category of underserved areas or housing;
2. A second link if you are applying for the ATJ Grants Program in the category of shared legal services interpreter bank; and,
3. A third link if you are applying for the Private Grants Program.

Log into the system using a previously created account or create a new account by following the steps as instructed on the screen. **The system works best in Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Safari.**

All attachments for which the Foundation provides the template (e.g. Part Three’s Data Packet and required signatures), are available for download on our website here: <https://dcbfoundation.org/grants/atj-grants/>. If a template is not provided (e.g. client eligibility guidelines, staff training, etc.), please create your own, labeling the attachment correctly and using your organization’s letterhead, when appropriate.

For technical questions on using our online system, please refer to this page: <https://dcbfoundation.org/grants/grantee-portal/>. The most frequently asked questions are:

1. To access an application you have begun or submitted, log in via the main grantee portal ([https://www.grantrequest.com/SID\\_2334](https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_2334)) with the same username and password used to start or submit the application. Select “Applications” in the top left corner and make sure the correct status is selected in the drop-down on the right side of the page (“Submitted Applications” or “In Progress Applications”).
2. If you are applying for multiple grants, you can submit multiple applications for your organization under the same account (or different accounts). Just click the unique URL provided to start a new blank application.

#### **D. Applying for a Joint Project**

Applications for joint projects are welcome under the ATJ Grants Program. Please follow the instructions below when applying for a joint project:

1. Each organization must submit an application for the joint project.
2. Each organization should submit a unique **Part One Organization Data**, meaning your *answers and attachments* for this section should only include information about your organization. For example, do not include the partner organization’s mission statement; only include your organization’s mission statement.
3. For the questions asked in **Part Two Proposal**, the only questions for which answers may differ are:
  - a. Section A, for “New Funding Interviews,” each organization should submit a form, if it is a new project;\*
  - b. “Funding Requested, Budget, and Staffing;”
  - c. “Number of low-income DC residents who will benefit from this funding;” and,
  - d. “Performance Measures for Assessing Alignment of this Project with DCBF Standards.”
4. For the attachments requested in **Part Three Proposal Attachments**, only Letters of Support and Memoranda of Understanding may be the same. Note a Memoranda of Understanding between the two partner organizations is required for joint projects.

\*For organizations submitting a proposal for a new joint project, the partner organizations will participate in the same interview. In other words, the interview will be conducted jointly so please consult with each other on interview availability and select the same interview slots on the form.

## E. Timeline of Application Process

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Monday, July 1, 2019       | Application released   |
| Tuesday, July 30, 2019     | Information session regarding 2020 ATJ and Private funding. <a href="#">RSVP</a> by July 25.<br>2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. |
| Friday, August 23, 2019    | Application due by 12:00 pm EST  |
| Week of September 23, 2019 | Interviews for new applicants and new projects   |
| December 2019              | Awards announced   |
| Friday, December 13, 2019  | Revised project budgets due (if applicable)  |
| Friday, December 20, 2019  | Signed grant agreements due  |
| Monday, January 1, 2020    | Grant year begins  |

## VI. Monitoring and Evaluation

If your proposal is approved, your organization must submit quarterly financial reports, semiannual programmatic reports, and an annual client story (schedule below). Plus, your organization may be required to participate in a programmatic and/or a financial site visit. The Foundation will contact the grantee directly to schedule site visits.

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| January 2020 | Mandatory ATJ Subgrantee Meeting  |
| April 2020   | First Quarter Financial Report  |
| July 2020    | Semiannual Programmatic Report and Second Quarter Financial Report                |
| October 2020 | Third Quarter Financial Report  |
| January 2021 | Semiannual Programmatic Report, Fourth Quarter Financial Report, and Client Story |

## VII. Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the ATJ Grants Program, how to apply, or our monitoring and evaluation processes, please contact [grants@dcbfoundation.org](mailto:grants@dcbfoundation.org).