

LAWYERS TRUST FUND OF ILLINOIS

Grant Guidelines & Guiding Principles:

2009 - 2010

Background

The **Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois** is a private, not-for-profit foundation incorporated by the Illinois State Bar Association and The Chicago Bar Association in 1983.

The Lawyers Trust Fund administers Illinois' *Interest on Lawyer Trust Account (IOLTA)* program. Pursuant to Rule 1.15 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct, the Lawyers Trust Fund collects the interest earned on lawyers' and law firms' pooled client trust accounts. The Lawyers Trust Fund distributes these funds, and the proceeds of a \$42 add-on to the annual registration fee paid by Illinois attorneys, to support the provision of legal services throughout the state.

Eligibility for Grants

The Lawyers Trust Fund makes grants to organizations that provide civil legal aid to low-income individuals and families. The Lawyers Trust Fund will *only* consider grant applications from organizations that:

- ◆ Are Illinois **not-for-profit organizations** that are tax-exempt under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- ◆ **Provide legal assistance to individual clients** in civil matters.
- ◆ Serve Illinois residents who have no resources to obtain private legal counsel, which is generally defined as having incomes **below 150%** of the federal poverty guidelines.
- ◆ Employ at least **two full-time attorneys** (or full-time equivalents) licensed to practice in Illinois. The attorneys must either provide or directly supervise the agency's legal services.
- ◆ **Provide services without charge** to the client. [*Note: This does not mean programs cannot charge some sliding-scale fees to clients with incomes above 150% of the federal poverty guidelines, nor does it mean that grantees cannot require clients to pay court costs or related expenses that cannot be waived. However, LTF funds can only support free services.*]

Additionally, the Lawyers Trust Fund will not make grants to support mediation services.

Grantmaking Goals & General Criteria

In making its grant decisions, the Lawyers Trust Fund will attempt to support:

- The provision of legal aid services in all areas of the state;
- An appropriate balance of delivery mechanisms (*e.g.*, advice & referral hotlines, advice & “brief service” projects, representation by staff and *pro bono* attorneys);
- Legal services that address the most critical needs of low-income individuals and families, including health, personal safety, family stability, access to shelter, and economic security;
- Legal services that would not be addressed – based on geographic location, area of the law, and/or client characteristics – without the applicant’s services.

Grant Cycles/Application Timeline

The Lawyers Trust Fund accepts and reviews grant applications **two times per year**:

- The **Spring Cycle** is for programs **currently funded by LTF** that receive grants for **general operating support**.
- The **Fall Cycle** is for current LTF grantees who receive **project grants** and for **new applicants**.

	Application Available	Application Due	Decision Made	Funding Period
General Operating Support <i>(Current Grantees Only)</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July 1 – June 30</i>
Project Grants & New Applicants	<i>July</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>January 1 – December 31</i>

Application materials for the Fall Cycle will follow the schedule below:

Grant applications available from LTF	July 2009
Completed applications due	September 2009
Grant decisions made by LTF	November /December 2009
Applicants notified of grant decision	December 2009
Initial grant payment	January 1, 2010

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR 2009 - 2010

Because of a decline in IOLTA revenue, LTF will be forced to reduce total grants in FY 10. As a framework for the difficult decisions that lie ahead, the directors of LTF have adopted the following guiding principles:

- LTF will favor organizations that provide substantial amounts of direct legal assistance to low-income clients facing critical legal problems.
- LTF will favor organizations that leverage substantial additional resources to support and carry out their work.
- LTF will make funding decisions based on the idea that Illinois residents who live outside of Cook County should have equitable access to legal aid services.
- LTF will emphasize funding to organizations that serve the broadest possible constituency, in order to maintain maximum flexibility and coverage in the legal aid system.
- LTF will focus on preserving the capacity of strong organizations that serve large numbers of clients with efficient, effective services.

For More Information

We encourage applicants to call with any questions about the Lawyers Trust Fund's guidelines, application procedures or funding criteria.

Please feel free to contact Mark Marquardt, deputy director (312/938-2133 or mark@ltf.org) or David Holtermann, counsel (312/938-3076 or david@ltf.org).