

# Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois CY 2025 Annual Grant Opportunity

July 2024



The [Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois](#) is a charitable foundation that provides grants to support the provision of free civil legal services to low-income Illinois residents. LTF seeks to make our society fairer and more equitable by providing resources to address legal problems – including problems stemming from past and present racial injustices and systemic exclusion – and help people in need find legal solutions.

## **2025 Annual Grant Guidelines & Application Now Available**

The application window for CY 2025 (January 1 – December 31, 2025) Annual Grants is now open. [Information about applying](#) for an Annual Grant and LTF's [Grant Guidelines for CY 2025](#) are available online. This grant cycle is open to both current grantees and new applicants and is the only opportunity to seek annual support funding from LTF for 2025.

## **Grantee Profile**

LTF currently funds 49 non-profit organizations located across Illinois that provide civil legal services. This total includes free-standing agencies focused solely on legal services, as well as legal programs housed within larger non-profit organizations (such as social services providers). On an annual basis, the largest of these legal programs closed thousands of cases, employed more than 200 staff members, and had an annual budget in excess of \$24 million. However, LTF also makes grants to many smaller organizations. During the past three Annual Grant cycles, LTF has made initial grants to 16 new grantees, whose staff size ranged from two to 20 employees, and with annual budgets ranging from \$120,000 to \$11.8 million. More detailed information about LTF grantees and their work is available in LTF's report on its 2024 [Legal Aid Grantees & Services](#). A list of [current 2024 grantees](#) also is available on the LTF website.

## **2025 Funding Outlook**

LTF's board currently anticipates that at least \$26 million will be available for annual grants in 2025. LTF awarded more than \$21 million in grants for 2024. It is expected that the increased CY 2025 funding will support:

- Requests from current grantees to maintain or increase service delivery as well as to support organizational needs (such as staffing, technology, and infrastructure), and
- New grants to meritorious first-time applicants.

## **Minimum Grant Amount**

In recognition of the extensive effort and resources required to complete an application for an annual grant, the LTF board of directors has established \$25,000 as the minimum annual grant award.

## **Application Due Date**

Completed applications are due on **Monday, September 16, 2024**.

## **New & Emerging Organizations/Programs Encouraged to Apply**

LTF invites new and emerging legal aid organizations and/or programs – especially those based in, led by, and/or serving historically marginalized groups, including communities impacted by racism – to apply for CY 2025 funding.

## **Waiver of the One-Attorney Requirement**

LTF's grantmaking focuses on organizations and programs that use attorneys to deliver and/or supervise the delivery of legal services. Consistent with this approach, LTF requires applicants to employ at least one (1) paid, full-time equivalent staff attorney who has been licensed to practice for a minimum of three years at the time the annual grant application is due on September 16.

The LTF board of directors will consider granting a temporary, one-year waiver of the one FTE attorney requirement for emerging legal aid organizations/programs that meet certain criteria. Applicants can seek a waiver in their application for CY 2025, or they can request a pre-application waiver by August 15 to determine their eligibility prior to completing a full application. To request a waiver, follow the instructions on pages 9 -10 of the [Grant Guidelines](#).

## **LTF Strategic Goals**

In 2022, LTF adopted a [strategic plan](#) that identifies several broad goals for LTF's legal aid grants, including:

- Increasing awareness of and confidence in legal solutions among people who do not know of them or have low trust in the legal system
- Increasing the availability of legal solutions to people who have been excluded from obtaining the protections of the legal system
- Creating widely accessible entry points for people encountering problems that may have legal solutions
- Ensuring that all available legal solutions respect the dignity, diversity, and experiences of the people they are trying to help

## **Information Sessions**

LTF will hold four sessions via Zoom to provide information about LTF grants and the CY 2025 application process. Both current grantees and prospective new applicants are welcome to attend any of these sessions, but participation is optional. The sessions are scheduled for the following dates:

- **July 17** at 2:00pm - New applicant information session (*This session will explain LTF's grant guidelines, eligibility criteria, and factors in grant awards*)
- **July 25** at 10:00am - General grant application information session
- **July 30** at 10:00am - New applicant information session (*Repeats content of July 17 session*)
- **August 14** at 2:00pm - General grant application information session (*Repeats content of July 25 session*)

To register for an information session email Nebula Li, Program Officer for Legal Services, at [nebula@ltf.org](mailto:nebula@ltf.org).

## **Questions?**

LTF staff are available to answer questions about the Lawyers Trust Fund, eligibility for a grant, and/or the application process. Please contact David Holtermann, Deputy Executive Director for Grants & Legal Affairs ([david@ltf.org](mailto:david@ltf.org) or 312-938-3076).