



## Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid

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### **NOTICE OF FUNDS AVAILABILITY PANDEMIC LEGAL AID EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT**

The Washington State Legislature appropriated \$6M in funding in FY 2022 and \$5M in funding in FY 2023 to continue providing emergency legal assistance to individuals and families with civil legal problems arising from or relating to the COVID-19 emergency. Of these amounts, OCLA has reserved \$1.5M for 18 months for a collaborative program to provide emergency pandemic related legal information, services, and support for children and youth (and their families) denied educational and special educational services and support during the emergency and in its near-term aftermath. Funding availability breaks down by fiscal year as follows:

January 1 to June 30, 2022: \$500,000

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023: \$1,000,000

There is no guarantee of continued funding beyond 6/30/23.

By this Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA), the Office of Civil Legal Aid seeks proposals from qualified non-profit law firms to establish and operate a project to address the civil justice needs of children, youth, and families denied educational and special educational services and support during the COVID-19 emergency and who experience disproportionate risks of permanent harm to their educational progress as a result. OCLA will select and fund a single proposal that best meets project requirements. OCLA strongly encourages proposals that involve collaborative efforts between legal aid programs, qualified private attorneys, and statewide and community based educational organizations, leaders, and advocates who reflect the demographics of the communities targeted for service.

#### **I. Project Requirements**

Qualifying proposals must meet the following requirements:

- Establish and serve as a statewide resource for equity-informed information, self-help materials, and video content relating to civil legal problems experienced by children, youth, and families experiencing pandemic related educational and special educational legal problems.
- In active partnership with organizations, leaders, and advocates reflecting the membership of the target community(ies), develop and deliver training, technical assistance, and provide legal support to help to build community-based capacity to assert and enforce educational and special educational rights of children and youth at risk of harm due to the denial of educational and special educational services during

- and following the state of emergency.
- In consultation with representatives of communities most harmed by the failure of state or local educational institutions to meet legal obligations under federal, state, and local educational laws and policies, establish initial priority areas of focus and identify populations that will be targeted for direct legal assistance and support.
- Establish a system to receive and respond to requests for legal information and assistance, identify appropriate referral resources, and establish referral protocols for families with children and youth in need of pandemic related educational and special educational legal assistance and support.
- Undertake targeted and potentially precedent setting legal advocacy to address systemic institutional failures to deliver legally required educational and special educational services to members of the target population(s).

## **II. Minimum Organizational Criteria**

Minimum organizational criteria for the entity proposing a Pandemic Legal Aid Educational Project include:

- Must be a non-profit law firm with attorneys licensed to practice in the state of Washington.
- Must establish an Educational Advocacy Project Advisory Committee, at least one-half of whom are members of impacted communities whose children and youth are most at risk and experiencing the greatest harms from institutional failures to meet legal educational-related responsibilities.
- Must have a demonstrated history and competence in providing legal assistance addressing educational needs of children and youth in Washington State, including children, youth, and families that come from communities that experience disproportionately negative educational outcomes.
- Must be eligible to contract with the State of Washington.
- Must not have been debarred from contracting with the federal government in the past five years.
- Must have an independent annual financial audit.

## **III. Components of Response to Notice of Funding Availability**

Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Availability shall be organized as follows:

- Introduction and Statement of Organizational Purpose.
- List of members of the organization's Board of Directors.
- List of the organization's staff leadership and staff members who will be involved in the project.
- A list of members of the Educational Advocacy Project Advisory Committee
- A project narrative, including how the project will address each of the components outlined in Section I of this NOFA.
- An 18-month project budget using the attached budget form.

#### **IV. Deadline for Submission of Proposals and Project Start Date**

To be considered, proposals must be submitted on or before November 19, 2021. Proposals shall be submitted electronically to:

Office of Civil Legal Aid

[ocla@ocla.wa.gov](mailto:ocla@ocla.wa.gov)

Questions related to this Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) may be sent to:

[ocla@ocla.wa.gov](mailto:ocla@ocla.wa.gov).

OCLA reserves the prerogative to withdraw or revise this NOFA or decline to issue an award and issue a new NOFA in the event that it, in its exclusive judgment, determines that insufficiently responsive applications were submitted.