



Legal Services Corporation
America's Partner For Equal Justice

**Guidelines for Preparing Applications
Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grants**

2005

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INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) staff designed these *Guidelines for Preparing Applications* (Guidelines) to help you provide us with enough information to make a decision upon your funding request. Please note that the suggestions presented here are not a prescription for a successful application.

APPLICATIONS BY INVITATION ONLY

For 2005, LSC solicited Letters of Intent to begin the Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) process. After reviewing those Letters of Intent, we have invited certain programs to submit applications for proposed projects. If you did not receive an invitation to apply, you may not apply for TIG funding in 2005.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Electronic submissions for the 2005 TIG grant cycle must be completed no later than **5:00 P.M. EDT, June 24, 2005**. We will not accept applications or portions of applications in hard-copy format. Begin the process by going to: <http://www.lscopp.com/techsite/application/login.asp>.

LSC will reject applications submitted after the application deadline unless a waiver is obtained prior to the submission deadline as explained infra. Therefore, ensure that you to allow sufficient time for online submission.

LSC will provide confirmation via email of the completed electronic submission of each application. You should keep this email as your verification that your application was submitted. If you do not receive such an email, you may inquire at Techgrants@lsc.gov.

ONE PROJECT PER APPLICATION

Each project for which you seek funding should be submitted in its own application. For example, do not combine a request for a statewide web site grant with a request for a grant in the Open Category. If you were invited to apply on two or more Letters of Intent, you must do an application for each; they may not be combined.

Two Categories, Two Procedures

For 2005 we have refined the process for applications for website funding. Applications for website funding are not subject to external review but are reviewed internally by LSC to be sure they meet our published criteria. Consequently, the information we need to review these applications is different from what we need for applications in the Open Category. Both applications will start with the Standard Application Form, but from there they will differ. Please follow the procedures listed below for the type of grant you are seeking.

PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO BOTH THE WEB SITE AND OPEN CATEGORIES

Signatures

An original signature is required at the bottom of the Standard Application Form. Failure to include an original signature on the application may result in the rejection of your application. The Application should be signed by someone who is authorized to commit the applicant organization, such as the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, President, or Executive Director. The signed Standard Application Form must then be scanned and submitted electronically as explained infra.

Amendments to Applications after Application Deadline

LSC will **not** accept amendments to an application submitted after the application deadline unless specifically requested by LSC staff. We will notify you if any additional information is needed to evaluate the application.

Changes in Applicant's Contact Information

If the contact information submitted on the *Standard Application* changes after submission, you should immediately notify LSC in writing. If possible, please use a street address, not a Post Office box, when completing this form.

Waiver Requests

As stated in the *Notice*, LSC does not intend to waive any provisions of the *Notice*. However, under extraordinary circumstances, and when it is in the best interest of our targeted client community to do so, LSC may, on its own initiative or when requested, waive certain provisions in the *Notice*. LSC cannot waive requirements that are statutory, only those that are discretionary. **Please note**, as described in the *Notice*, requests to waive the application deadline will not be considered unless received by LSC prior to the application deadline.

- If you plan to request a waiver prior to the application deadline, you must do so via email addressed to Techgrants@lsc.gov stating clearly (1) which provision(s) you are asking to be waived, and (2) the extraordinary circumstances that necessitate the request. The request must be clearly identified as a "Waiver Request." LSC cannot guarantee that it will be able to resolve waiver requests before the application deadline.
- If you are requesting a waiver at the same time that you submit your application, you must insert a document stating clearly (1) which provision(s) you are asking to be waived, and (2) the extraordinary circumstances that necessitate the request. In order to ensure the timely processing of your waiver request, the request must be clearly identified as a "Waiver Request" and inserted immediately after the Standard Application Form.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING APPLICATIONS IN THE WEBSITE CATEGORY

For 2005 there are three categories of website grants. They are:

- **New Web Sites**
- **Renewal Web Sites**
- **Continuation Web Site Funding**

A TIG application in the Website Category is complete only when it contains the items referenced below. A complete application includes the following items and, for ease of processing, should be assembled in the following order:

- **Standard Application Form**, (scanned copy must be signed and placed on top)
- **Website Questionnaire** (answers to a series of questions that vary by type of website funding sought)

On the Standard Application Form you will choose the type of website funding you are seeking. After this form is completed, you must fill out the Website Questionnaire that corresponds to the type of website grant you are seeking.

Please note that the milestones for website grants are fixed and you do not need to enter them. You can see the milestones you will be expected to complete for the type of grant you are seeking by clicking on this form. Be sure to review these because, by applying for a grant in this category, you are agreeing to complete these milestones.

In addition to the completion of these online application sections, you must submit one complete copy of the application to be uploaded. At the bottom of each section of the application is a Print Button. You may print each page, have the Standard Application Form signed as required (see **Signatures** above), assemble all of the pages in the order listed above, scan these printouts into a single document, then upload this final application document. If you have the ability to print directly to PDF and then assemble those separate files into you a single PDF file, you may do it that way, so long as you print the Standard Application Form, have it signed, then scan it and include it in the final application form that is uploaded.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING APPLICATIONS IN THE OPEN CATEGORY

A TIG application in the Open Category is complete only when it contains the items referenced below (excluding optional items). A complete application includes the following items and, for ease of processing, should be assembled in the following order:

- **Standard Application Form, Technology Initiative Grants Application Form** (scanned copy must be signed and placed on top)
- **Executive Summary** (1 page, up to 250 words, does not count against overall page limit)
- **Standard Budget Form**

- **Budget Narrative** (Does not count against overall page limit)
- **Project Narrative** (Up to 8 pages)
- **Appendices to the Project Narrative** (Optional, up to 32 pages) **includes timelines, technical diagrams, organizational charts, maps, letters from partners, letters of support, résumés, etc.**
- **Information on Grantee's Prior TIG Projects**
- **Lessons Learned from other Technology Projects**
- **Proposed Payment Schedule**
- **Statement of Additional Funds**

In addition to the completion of these online application sections, we require one complete copy of the application to be uploaded. At the bottom of each section of the application is a Print Button. You may print each page, have the Standard Application Form signed as required (see **Signatures** above), assemble all of the pages in the order listed above, scan these printouts into a single document, then upload this final application document. If you have the ability to print directly to PDF and then assemble those separate files into you a single PDF file, you may do it that way, so long as you print the Standard Application Form, have it signed, then scan it and include it in the final application form that is uploaded.

Standard Application Form

Each application should begin with a completed Standard Application Form. (All forms needed for the application are available online at www.lscopp.com/techsite/sitepages/grants2005.htm.) You should check the box for Open Category. Next, please indicate the total amount of funds you are requesting from LSC, and the total cost of the proposed project. Also, give a brief description of the nature of the project. This should be no more than six lines.

Finally, fill out the information identifying your program and the person you wish us to contact about your application, then sign and date the application.

Executive Summary

The second page of every application should be a concise, one (1) page Executive Summary, **not to exceed 250 words**. The Executive Summary is your first opportunity to introduce the reader to your project; it should be factual, brief, and focused on your efforts.

The Executive Summary should briefly cover the core aspects of the project and address the following questions:

- Why is the project needed?
- What are the goal(s) of the project?
- What are the anticipated outcomes and impact for clients of the project?
- What is innovative about the project?
- What technologies are to be employed?

- What will users do with the technology?
- What communities will the project serve?
- What organizations are participating as project partners?

Standard Budget Form

As a component of the Feasibility review criterion, reviewers will analyze your budget request in terms of its clarity, cost-effectiveness, and consistency with the goals and objectives described in your Project Narrative. The proposed budget should be appropriate to the tasks proposed and sufficiently detailed so that reviewers can easily understand the relationship of items in the budget to the project activities. The Budget Form is available online at www.lscopp.com/techsite/sitepages/grants2005.htm. This form is to be submitted electronically. There are 15 budget items that must be filled in. Each area is the total for that category. For example, item five is for equipment purchases. If you are buying a server, router and battery backup, the costs of all three items would be added together for this category. Use the sum of these costs in this form only. In your Budget Narrative, you will set out descriptions and specific costs for each of these items. The Budget Form is the summary, the Budget Narrative is for the detail.

For each of the fifteen categories, we want to see who is paying for what, so this form has five columns. They are for (a) the amount you expect to receive from LSC, (b) your contributions, (c) additional funds from other LSC-funded partners, (d) additional funds from non-LSC funded partners, and (e) the total of (a), (b) (c) and (d). All calculations will be tabulated automatically.

Budget Narrative

In the Budget Narrative, you will flesh out the budget items listed in the Budget Form. This is the place for detail. Also, it is the place for cataloging your proposed expenditures in relation to the project timetable. If the term of the project is for three years, you should give the proposed expenditures for each of those years. Most projects will have identifiable stages. LSC anticipates structuring the grants so that they are payable in installments, conditioned upon completion of these stages. You should identify the budget requirements for each of the different stages of the project in the Budget Narrative.

In order for the reviewers and program staff to evaluate your budget, you should fully explain each budget item. The budget must be reasonable for the tasks proposed, and the relationship of items in the budget to the Project Narrative, especially the project objectives, should be clearly defined and communicated.

When the grant award is made, you are committed to the total project cost proposed in the application. Therefore, be sure that all additional funds proposed in an application are allowable, achievable, and defensible.

LSC will support most costs associated with a technology project. LSC allows costs for personnel, fringe benefits, computer hardware and software, other end-user equipment, telecommunication services and related equipment, consultants and other contractual services,

travel, rental of office equipment, furniture and space, supplies, etc. that are allowable under the applicable cost principles. Unspecified administrative costs will not be funded. The only cost category specifically excluded is construction costs (see the Eligible Costs section of the *Notice*).

Discounts: You should also be aware that the value of products or services must reflect the fully discounted price to your organization. For instance, if you receive a 70% discount on computer equipment, then the value of the equipment should appear in the budget as the **actual amount you paid** (i.e., 30% of the total cost of the computer equipment).

Program Income: As indicated in the *Notice*, any program income generated by a proposed project is subject to special conditions and needs to be identified appropriately in the budget.

Project Narrative

The Project Narrative is your opportunity to convince readers that your project fits LSC objectives. It is the one place in the application where you have an opportunity to speak in your own voice, not filling out a form, not explaining budget details but speaking directly about the goals of your project, the means with which you expect to achieve your goals, the partners you plan to involve, and the people affected by the project outcomes.

Readers will review your presentation from the perspective of how well you address the **Review Criteria** defined in the *Notice*. These are: **Need for the Project (15%), Project Goals and Objectives (20%), State Justice Community Partnerships (15%), Replication (15%), Evaluation and Documentation (15%), and Feasibility (20%)**. You should review the descriptions of each of these in the *Notice* carefully before preparing your *Project Narrative*.

The *Project Narrative* should start with a section that clearly identifies what your project is and what you hope to accomplish with it. Please write this clearly and succinctly. This section should make clear what you propose to do, why you propose to do it, and how you plan to accomplish it. Next, you should address each of the **Review Criteria** with six clearly marked sections, one for each of the criteria.

Appendices to the Project Narrative

In addition to the *Project Narrative*, you have up to 32 pages to fully document your proposal. You can include timelines, technical diagrams, organizational charts, maps, letters of support, résumés, etc. You are encouraged to do so. For example, most technology projects will use outside firms and consultants for implementation. Information on the past projects and credentials of these firms and consultants will be essential in determining the likelihood of success. Be sure to give us as much information as you can.

Your Project Narrative and Appendices combined must not exceed forty (40) pages. The 40-page limit includes a Project Narrative of up to eight (8) pages and thirty-two (32) pages of appendices (e.g., tables, timelines, organizational charts, memoranda of understanding, technical designs, illustrations, maps, letters of support, résumés, and supporting documents).

The 40-page limit is applicable to the Project Narrative and Appendices only and does not include any additional forms.

It is important to stay within your page limits. Reviewers will be instructed to ignore any portion of your application that extends beyond the specified page limits. Because the Project Narrative is limited to 8 pages, you should include information in the appendices that supports your application. CD-ROMs, disks, video or audiotapes should not be included in your application.

Information on Grantee's Prior TIG Projects

If the applicant has been awarded TIG funds in previous rounds, this form in the online system is populated with those prior grants listed by TIG number. For each of those, please provide a short narrative that gives the current status of each of these prior projects.

Lessons Learned from other Technology Projects

This is the sixth round of TIG. Nearly 250 grants have been awarded so far. One of the benefits of these prior grants is the knowledge we have learned. In this section of the application, you need to show us how your project relates to prior projects; how it builds upon them, what you have learned from them, and how you will avoid any pitfalls they have encountered.

For example, if you are proposing a video conferencing project, we would want to be sure that you have reviewed the results of the Hawaii and Montana projects, looked at the materials on LSTech.org and the LSC Resource Library (www.lri.lsc.gov), and talked with technical people and staff from the programs. In this section you should demonstrate that you are ready to build upon and improve what has gone before. If your proposed project builds upon one of your own prior TIG projects, you must address what you learned from that project and how this project builds upon and improves that prior work.

Proposed Payment Schedule

If you are awarded a TIG, you will receive an initial payment before you start your grant. Subsequent payments will be made for progress completed. In this section of the application you must tell us how many payments you want, the amount of each payment, when you want them, what tasks (milestones) must be done to complete the project, and then associate each of the milestones with a payment. You should plan payment amounts to take into consideration the costs of completing your milestones associated with the payment.

It is important that each task be entered as its own individual milestone. Do not group tasks together. For example, "Buy Server and software, train content coordinator, and do evaluation plan" would be three separate milestones, not one.

Statement of Additional Funds

On the budget you listed LSC funding, program project contributions, funds from other LSC funded partners, and funds from non-LSC funded partners. In this section you should specify who, by name, these other partners are and how much each is contributing.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

- *Be succinct and clear:* Because of page limitations, you should discuss your project clearly and succinctly. Reviewers are less interested in jargon and exaggeration and more interested in learning what you are proposing and how well you respond to the *Review Criteria* published in the *Notice*.
- *Review the Project Narrative once it is complete:* One of the biggest mistakes applicants can make in writing their Project Narratives is to treat each of the *Review Criteria* as a separate and distinct writing task. Even though there should be a section of the Project Narrative that corresponds to the each one of the *Review Criteria*, each of these should be viewed as a portion of a coherent and convincing presentation. It should not appear to the reviewers that various parts of a single narrative have been written by different people, and that no one appears to have read the narrative all the way through to check for spelling mistakes, stylistic inconsistencies, redundancies, factual omissions, and unexplained assumptions. A good strategy is to let someone who is not familiar with the project read and critique the *Project Narrative* before it is sent to LSC.
- *Do not use pointers to online resources:* Because World Wide Web pages or other online resources can be altered after the close of the grant round, you cannot use pointers to online resources to augment your application. Reviewers will be instructed to ignore pointers to online resources. If you want to include documentation available on the Internet, you should print the material and include it in your appendix.
- *Use appendices to expand your presentation:* Please keep in mind that you are writing to a diverse group of readers — independent reviewers, LSC staff, and the LSC selecting official. You should not assume that the people who are reading your application know any information about you, your organization, your project, or the individuals in the communities you are trying to impact. Use the thirty-two (32) pages allocated for appendices to expand upon the points you want to discuss in greater detail.
- *Check each copy of the original application:* Reviewers can only evaluate proposals using the documentation that you provide. It is your responsibility to ensure that the one original and all copies you submit include the required material.

CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION:

For information regarding preparation and submission of the application, questions about the process, or for inquiries about statewide web site proposals, please contact Mounia Bensalah, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202.295.1543, Email: bensalahm@lsc.gov.

For questions about “Open Category” proposals from: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Micronesia, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming, please contact Glenn Rawdon, Program Counsel, Telephone: 202.295.1552; E-mail: grawdon@lsc.gov,

For questions about “Open Category” proposals from: American Samoa, Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virgin Islands, West Virginia and Wisconsin, please contact Joyce Raby, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202.295.1554, Email: jraby@lsc.gov

For questions about evaluation issues, please contact Bristow Hardin, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202.295.1553; Fax: 202.337.6813; Email: hardinb@lsc.gov.

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