



**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grants**

Notice

**Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2006 Grant
Funding**

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Technology Innovative Grant Program
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I. Summary

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) issues this Notice describing the conditions under which Letters of Intent will be received for the Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) program. This grant program provides an integral tool to help achieve LSC's goal of dramatically increasing the quantity and quality of legal services provided to eligible persons. When submitting Letters of Intent, applicants should consider the phenomenal growth and continued development of technology and the resulting effects on the practice of law, program management and service delivery. Projects funded under this program develop, test and replicate innovative technologies that can enable grant recipients and state justice communities to improve clients' access to high quality legal assistance through an integrated and well managed technology system and that is integrated in the program's service delivery.

II. General Information

All prospective applicants for 2006 funds from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) program must submit a "Letter of Intent" prior to submitting a formal application. Given the significant reduction in available funds for the 2006 grant cycle, and based on input from the field and other interested parties, LSC has determined that the submission and review of Letters of Intent enables a prospective applicant to vet their project ideas with TIG staff, who can then identify those projects that have a reasonable chance of success in the competitive grant process. LSC will solicit full proposals only for those projects that LSC determines have a reasonable chance of success in the grant competition process based on LSC's analysis of the information provided in the Letters of Intent.

The format and contents of the Letters of Intent should conform to the requirements specified below in Section III.

Funding Availability

Approximately \$1.2 million will be available for this program.

Court Collaborations

From its inception, the TIG program has emphasized the importance of projects that help those persons who cannot obtain the services of an attorney. We have also encouraged our programs to work with the courts in order to find appropriate solutions to the

problems often encountered by these self-represented litigants. The State Justice Institute (SJI) awards grant to improve the quality of justice in State courts and to foster innovative, efficient solutions to common problems faced by all courts. This year LSC and the State Justice Institute hope to work closely together to identify a number of worthy collaborative projects, for which each organization might be able to provide funding. While there is no guarantee that such projects will be selected for full proposals, we encourage our grantees to reach out to their local and state courts to identify such projects and to submit Letters of Intent to LSC. For more information, applicants should review the SJI web site, <http://www.statejustice.org/>.

Grant Categories

There are three grant categories this year:

- 1) Web Site Category – new, renewal, and continuation web sites
- 2) Replication Category — Previous TIG Projects
- 3) Open Category

LSC will continue to make use of a Web Site Category to allow grantees to apply for new and continued funding for the statewide web site initiative.

Since the establishment of LSC’s TIG program in 2000, LSC has made 274 grants totaling over \$23,000,000. Although this funding amount may be large in number, when spread over a six year period on a variety of projects from Micronesia to Maine, this sum is much less than it appears. To leverage these funds, LSC has always stressed that grants be replicable. LSC requires that any software developed with TIG funding be available to other legal services programs at little or no cost. This policy has allowed LSC to develop two web site templates, which have been successfully replicated at a fraction of the cost of development of stand alone web sites in each state. In 2006, LSC has added a Replication Category to focus on the implementation of tested methodologies and technologies to encourage the replication and improvement of previous TIG projects.

The 2006 TIG competition will also continue to have an Open Category designed for applicants wishing to test new innovative ideas and technological configurations in providing assistance to our client population.

Therefore, LSC will accept projects in three application categories as set out below:

1. Web Sites

A. New Web Sites

Maximum Grant Amount: \$50,000

In the 2000 round of TIG grants, LSC funded projects to develop web templates that would serve as patterns for statewide web sites. LSC will accept letters of intent for

statewide web sites that use one of the two available templates for up to \$50,000. We cannot guarantee additional funds for recipients of first-time TIG grants awarded in 2006.

To view a sample Kaivo template go to www.kaivo.com/TIG;
and for a sample of the Probono.net template go to
www.lawhelp.org.

Since most states and territories have already taken advantage of this funding opportunity, this will be the last year for funding in this category. States or territories that have not established a single centralized legal aid web site are strongly encouraged to consider an application in this category.

B. Renewal Web Sites **Maximum Grant Amount: \$25,000***

Recipients of statewide web site grants in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, or 2005 may submit a Letter of Intent for additional funding up to \$25,000 if they:

- a) have not previously received a renewal grant, and
- b) anticipate they will complete, report on and be approved by LSC for successful achievement of their milestones through *the third payment milestone period ending on May 15, 2006*.

C. Continuation Web Sites **Maximum Grant Amount: \$25,000***

Recipients of statewide web site grants in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, or 2005 may submit a Letter of Intent for additional funding up to \$25,000 if they:

- a) have received a renewal web site grant, and
- b) have not previously received a continuation web site grant, and
- c) anticipate they will complete, report on and be approved by LSC for successful achievement of their renewal grant *first payment milestones by May 15, 2006*.

2. Replication Category — Previous TIG Projects

The second category is for the replication of previously successful TIG projects. During the past six years of this program there have been many successes. A complete list with

* Additional funding may be provided for the following grantees due to increased costs based on state size: New York, California, Texas, and Pennsylvania.

contact information can be found at www.lscopp.com. Although successful, many projects have not been replicated in other states and programs because of the costs incurred in doing so. While it is less expensive to replicate than to create, it is not always free. The key component of the successful Replication application will be the balance between effective, simplified replication and a reduced cost of implementation.

Applicants should look to previous successful TIG projects and determine how they can be replicated at a substantially reduced cost from the original project. For example, some states have spent large sums of money to create online forms for their web sites using HotDocs™. A possible application in the Replication Category would be a project that could take these pre-existing forms and customize them for use in another state at a fraction of the cost. Some are provided free.

Projects that lend themselves to replication are projects where software or content has already been created. Since any software developed through the TIG program is available to all LSC grantees at little or no cost, it is recommended that you look to these projects to see how they could benefit the delivery systems in your state.

Projects that do not lend themselves to replication are projects for the development or acquisition of hardware or technical equipment – for example infrastructure grants. The costs of wide area networks (WAN) are driven by local economies and receive little cost benefit from replication.

3. Open Category

The Open Category is designated for new, innovative ideas for using technology in legal services. LSC will consider any idea as long as the purpose of the proposal is to expand the use of technology that integrates, manages, communicates, and otherwise improves the quality of the delivery of legal services to eligible clients. This category has no funding limit or matching requirement.

Given the continuing reduced level of funding for the TIG program, applications with broad applicability and/or that directly address initiatives that have impact throughout the legal services community are strongly encouraged. While there is no matching requirement, LSC encourages applicants to submit projects with strong support from other partners.

For applications that do not have broad applicability, LSC will carefully consider the size of the request and the cost effective balance of risk and reward.

III. Specific Letter of Intent Requirements

One Project Per Letter of Intent

Applicants may submit multiple Letters of Intent for multiple projects. Each project for which you seek funding should be submitted in a separate Letter of Intent. For example, do not combine a request for a statewide web site grant with a grant request to expand the intake system.

Letter Requirements and Format

The Letter of Intent must be submitted using the LSC online system that can be found at www.lscopp.com. This system will walk you through the process of creating a simple two page Letter of Intent. You are not required to submit a hardcopy of your Letter of Intent. The Letter of Intent should concisely provide the following information about the proposed project:

- 1) **Category** - select the appropriate category from the drop down list.
- 2) **Description of Project** - (not required for Web Site grants) Briefly describe the basic elements of the system(s), how they will be developed, how they will operate, the function they will serve within the legal services delivery system, their expected impact, and other similar factors. (Only the impact should be highlighted here; more details about the system's benefits should be provided below.)
- 3) **Major Benefits** - (not required for Web Site grants) Describe the specific ways in which the system(s) will increase or improve services to clients and/or enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of program operations. To the extent feasible, discuss both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of these benefits.
- 4) **Estimated Costs** - Start by stating the amount of funding you are seeking from the TIG program, followed by the estimated total project cost, summarizing the anticipated costs of the major components of the project. List anticipated contributions, both in-kind and monetary, of all partners involved in the project.
- 5) **Major Partners** - Identify organizations that are expected to be important partners. Specify the role(s) each partner will play.
- 6) **Innovation/Replication/Sustainability** - (not required for Web Site grants) Identify how and why the proposed project is new and innovative. Identify how and why the proposed project can significantly benefit and/or be replicated by other legal services providers and/or the community at large.

Identify how the proposed project will be maintained to ensure sustainability. *If you are applying in the Replication category*, identify the previous TIG project you are replicating; explain how you will be replicating it; identify what cost savings will be realized through this replication; detail any enhancements you will be making to the previous project; explain whether or not your work on the project will make it more readily replicable by others; and detail how you plan to sustain the project after the end of the grant.

Waiver Authority

It is the general intent of LSC not to waive any of the provisions set forth in this Notice. However, under extraordinary circumstances and when it is in the best interest of our targeted client community, LSC, upon its own initiative or when requested, may waive provisions in this Notice at its sole discretion. Waivers may only be granted for requirements that are discretionary and not mandated by statute or regulation. Any request for a waiver must set forth the extraordinary circumstances for the request and be included in the application. LSC will not consider a request to waive the deadline for a Letter of Intent unless the waiver request is received by LSC prior to the deadline.

Eligible Organizations

TIG grants are only available to existing LSC program grantees. Although other entities are not eligible to apply, they are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Letter of Intent Deadline

Letters of Intent must be completed and submitted into the online system no later than 5:00 pm EST, Friday, April 7, 2006. The online system often experiences technical difficulties due to heavy traffic on the day of the deadline. Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete their Letter of Intent submissions as early as possible.

Non-conforming Letters of Intent

LSC will initially review all Letters of Intent to determine whether they conform to the required format and clearly present all of the required elements. These requirements are listed and described in Section III. Failure to meet these requirements may result in rejection of the Letter of Intent.

Next Steps for Successful Applicants

LSC will notify successful Letter of Intent applicants by Friday, April 28th, 2006. Successful applicants will have until 5:00 pm EST, Friday, June 2, 2006 to complete full applications in the online system.