



**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grants**

Notice

**Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2009 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.

II. General Information

All prospective applicants for 2009 funds from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) program must submit a "Letter of Intent" prior to submitting a formal application. 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 for only those projects that 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 \$2.1 million will be available for 2009 grant awards.

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 solutions to the problems often encountered by unrepresented 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 will again work closely together to identify a number of worthy collaborative projects where 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 check out the SJI website, <http://www.statejustice.org/>.

Grant Categories

LSC will accept projects in three application categories:

- 1) Website Category –renewal, and continuation websites only**
- 2) Replication of Previous TIG Projects Category**
- 3) Open Category**

LSC's TIG program was established in 2000. Since that time, we have made 375 grants totaling \$29,541,276. However, this funding was spread over a nine year period on a variety of projects from Micronesia to Maine. 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 website templates, which have been successfully replicated at a fraction of the cost of development of stand alone websites in each state. In 2009, LSC will continue to use a Replication Category to focus on the implementation of tested methodologies and technologies to encourage the replication and improvement of previous TIG projects.

The 2009 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.

Grant Category 1: Websites

A. Renewal Websites

Maximum Grant Amount: \$25,000

Recipients of statewide website grants in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 or 2007 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 by April 3, 2009.*

B. Continuation Websites

Maximum Grant Amount: \$25,000

Recipients of statewide website grants in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, or 2007 may submit a Letter of Intent for additional funding up to \$25,000 if they:

- a) have received a renewal website grant, and
- b) have not previously received a continuation website 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 April 3, 2009.*

Grant Category 2: Replication of Previous TIG Projects Category

The second category is for the replication of previously successful TIG projects. During the past eight years of this program there have been many successes. A complete list with contact information can be found at <http://tig.lsc.gov/>. The final reports of a range of successful projects are available at: <http://tig.lsc.gov/evaluation.php>. 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 could 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 Websites 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.

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. In addition, the costs of wide area networks (WAN) are driven by local economies and receive little cost benefit from replication.

Grant Category 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 to increase and/or improve the delivery of legal services to the client-eligible population. LSC will also consider applications in this category that enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of other TIG initiatives. This category has no funding limit or matching requirement.

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. Areas of Interest

LSC has always welcomed applications for a wide variety of projects. For 2009, LSC has three areas of particular interest in which programs are encouraged to submit proposals for innovative technology approaches. The inclusion of these areas does not in any way limit the scope of proposals in which LSC is interested. A new funding category is not

required for proposals that address these areas of interests because these are encompassed by the broad categories listed above.

These areas of interest are:

Board Training and Oversight. It is paramount that an effective legal services program have an active board that is well trained in governance, oversight, and resource development. While some issues are unique, most are common among the programs, offering the opportunity to create training modules and modalities that can be configured to the needs of individual programs. Also, the large geographic areas served by many programs may create challenges for active board engagement. Technology should be able to assist in facilitating effective board communications and actions.

Impact of Economic Downturn. Government and private economic forecasters project that the current recession will be as bad as or worse than any downturn since the 1930s. This could increase the size of the client eligible population by over 10 million people from 2007 to 2009 alone. Moreover, it will intensify the range of legal problems clients face including: foreclosures and evictions; bankruptcies and consumer scams; domestic violence and other family issues and increased demands for government benefits at the same time that declining tax revenues engender reductions in those same benefits programs. LSC seeks proposals to address this crisis with technologies that enable clients to represent themselves, where appropriate, or that equip advocates to more efficiently assist clients.

Meeting the Legal Needs of Veterans. Growing numbers of "individuals with a military connection" (e.g., veterans, active duty personnel, reservists) face significant legal problems as more and more soldiers are returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Increasing numbers of legal services programs seek to address this rising need, but they recognize they currently lack the capacity to do so. LSC seeks proposals, analogous to those needed to meet the economic crisis, to assist in the provision of assistance to this population: technologies that enable clients to help themselves where appropriate, or that equip advocates to more efficiently assist them.

IV. 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 website grant with a grant request to expand the intake system.

Letter Requirements and Format

The Letter of Intent must be submitted using an online system that can be found at <http://tig.lsc.gov/> under the TIG Online Systems tab. This system (which will be available by February 2, 2009) 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** - 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**. 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**. 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.

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 current 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, February 20, 2009. 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, March 20, 2009. Successful applicants will have until 5:00 pm EST, Friday, May 8, 2009 to complete full applications in the online application system.