

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION GRANT AWARD PROCESS

(for the provision of civil legal services)

Process Overview

- Congressionally mandated – beginning in 1996
- LSC funds grantees for a maximum of three years
- grantees awarded a multiyear grant must file grant renewals
- special grant conditions may be attached to any grant award
- most service areas have one applicant – the current provider
- as required by Section 1634.9 of the LSC regulations, the full review process is applied to all grant applications

Review and Evaluation of All Grant Applications

- staff evaluates each grant application based on the LSC Performance Criteria, ABA Standards, LSC Regulations, and the RFP
- the Office of Compliance and Enforcement and the Office of the Inspector General provide input based on on-site reviews and complaint investigations
- staff uses an Evaluation Guide to ensure grant application evaluations are consistent, comprehensive, and objective
- the Evaluation Guide provides elements of “excellent,” “sufficient,” and “weak” answers that staff considers when evaluating grant applications
- staff evaluations include an overall analysis of the grant application and a summary of the applicant’s strengths, weaknesses, and issues
- as necessary, on-site assessments are done for any applicant
- staff participates in an annual training to discuss the evaluation process
- **information from evaluations is maintained in an automated database**

For Multiple Applicant Service Areas Staff Also:

- conducts capability assessments of each of the applicants for the service area
- prepares capability assessment reports
- convenes review panels that assess the capacities of the applicants

Please note:

- review panels are comprised of experts in the delivery area being assessed
- a review panel consists of two attorneys and one client eligible participant
- neither LSC staff nor persons with a financial interest or an ethical conflict with the applicant may serve on review panels
- **staff and the review panel prepare separate written funding recommendations; both of which are presented to the President**



Management and Oversight of the Grants Process

The Vice President for Programs and Compliance, OPP Director, Grants Manager, and Staff meet throughout the review process to discuss:

- staff's overall assessment of the applicant, its strengths, potential weaknesses, and any potential issues
- whether additional documentation or a capability assessment is necessary to better inform the funding decision
- whether special grant conditions are appropriate
- the funding term recommendations to be presented to the President

Funding Decisions

As authorized by the LSC Act, the LSC President makes all funding decisions. As part of this process, the President meets with the Vice President for Programs and Compliance, OPP Director, Grants Manager, and Staff to address:

- staff's assessment of the applicant's delivery system based on the grant application, program visits, and evaluations from non-LSC funders
- the applicant's collaboration with stakeholders in the state justice community
- the conclusions from staff's evaluation including applicant strengths and potential weaknesses
- the rationale for funding term recommendations and special grant conditions
- follow-up activities proposed for the applicant, if funded
- issues, questions, and/or concerns raised by the President
- **staff and review panel funding recommendations for multiple applicant service areas**

Efforts to be receptive to new applicants

- **LSC Holds an Annual Applicant Informational Session (AIS):**
 - AIS is a free telephonic conference available to all interested parties
 - its purpose is to assist applicants in preparing their grant application and to promote participation in the competitive grants process
 - last year, more than 60 individuals and groups participated in this national teleconference
- LSC places announcements and updates on the Internet
- LSC publishes a notice of funds availability in the Federal Register
- LSC conducts outreach through newspapers and bar journals
- **LSC surveys individuals who file a Notice of Intent to Compete, but who do not follow through and file a grant application**

Applicant Technical Assistance

LSC maintains a service bureau to respond to applicant inquiries:

- it is staffed throughout the year
- it receives and responds to applicant inquiries by e-mail within 48-hours
- it receives about 65 inquiries each year

LSC maintains an online research center for applicants at www.ain.lsc.gov; its links include:

- the RFP
- the LSC Performance Criteria
- LRI (the LSC Resource Initiative)
- responses to frequently asked questions
- LSC program letters
- the ABA Standards
- LSC Appropriations Acts
- [guidance on responding to the RFP inquiries](#)

The End.