



LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

**Legal Services Corporation
Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project
COVID-19 Amendment Grant**

Notice of Funds Availability

Request for Applications for 2021 Grant Funding

Issued: February 8, 2021

Application Submission Deadline: March 5, 2021

By 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time

Email Applications to: emergencygrants@lsc.gov

Table of Contents

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION.....	1
B. KEY OUTCOMES OF THE MIDWEST LEGAL DISASTER COORDINATION PROJECT	1
II. AWARD INFORMATION	1
A. ESTIMATED AWARD AMOUNTS	1
B. PROJECT PERIOD	1
C. FUNDING INSTRUMENT	1
III. LSC REQUIREMENTS AND ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	2
A. LSC REQUIREMENTS	2
B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	2
C. PROJECT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS.....	2
IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	2
A. APPLICATION DEADLINE	3
B. APPLICATION SUBMISSION	3
C. CHARACTER LIMITS FOR NARRATIVE	3
D. LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS	3
V. REVIEW, AND SELECTION PROCESS.....	3
A. SELECTION CRITERIA AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS	4
B. APPENDICES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	4
C. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS	4
D. ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT AND AWARD DATES	5
VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	5
A. AWARD NOTICES.....	5
1. <i>Activities Prior to Award or Negotiated Starting Dates</i>	5
2. <i>No Credit Towards 12.5% Private Attorney Involvement Requirement</i>	5
3. <i>No Obligation for Future Funding</i>	5
4. <i>False Statements</i>	5
5. <i>Waiver Authority</i>	5
6. <i>Freedom of Information Act</i>	6
7. <i>Conflicts of Interest</i>	6
B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	6
C. PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND CONTINUED FUNDING	6
D. ELIGIBLE COSTS, THIRD-PARTY CONTRACTS, SUBGRANTS, AND TRANSFERS.....	6
VII. LSC CONTACTS	7
VIII. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	7
APPENDIX I: QUESTIONS AND REVIEW RATING CRITERIA	8
<i>Project Design (55%)</i>	8
1. <i>Need Statement</i>	8
2. <i>Goals, Objectives, and Activities:</i>	8
3. <i>Proposed Performance Measures</i>	8
<i>Organizational Capacity (30%)</i>	9
<i>Ability to Provide Project Support, Oversight, and Capable Leadership</i>	9
<i>Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (15%)</i>	9

<i>Budget Justification:</i>	9
APPENDIX II: SUBGRANT FORM	10
APPENDIX III: CONTRACT FORM	11

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Purpose of the Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant economic impact on low-income individuals and families, particularly in the areas of unemployment, evictions, and consumer debt. Many low-income individuals are unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and face economic instability and homelessness at alarming rates. To address the increased demand for civil legal services resulting from the impact of COVID-19, LSC received a private grant to assist LSC grantees located in the designated Midwest Disaster Area (Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota).

This grant supplements prior efforts to help low-income communities in the designated 10-state Midwest Disaster Area (see section III. B.) prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The purpose of this grant is for grantees to provide direct legal services to low-income individuals adversely affected by COVID-19.

B. Key Outcomes of the Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project

The available funding for the Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant is designed to engage in activities responsive to COVID-19 challenges, including:

1. activities performed in alignment with grantees' core mission, and
2. activities necessary or appropriate to maintain grantee capacity and/or business continuity.

LSC expects to fund applicants that successfully integrate these key elements and respond to the *Selection Criteria* described in this *Notice*.

II. Award Information

A total of \$1,000,000 is available for grant awards. Publication of this *Notice* does not obligate LSC to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funding available.

A. Estimated Award Amounts

LSC expects to issue four to six awards for the Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant in amounts ranging from \$175,000 to \$250,000.

B. Project Period

The grant award will cover an 18-month project period. An Applicant's proposed project goals, outcomes, and budget information should cover the full project period. The project period is expected to commence in April 2021 when Applicants will be notified of award decisions and submit a signed grant agreement with the grant terms and conditions.

C. Funding Instrument

The funding mechanism for the Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant is a grant.

III. LSC Requirements and Eligibility Information

A. LSC Requirements

All grants made pursuant to this solicitation will be subject to the LSC Act of 1974, as amended, LSC's appropriations acts, any other laws affecting LSC funds or LSC grantees, any other LSC laws, rules, regulations, policies, guidelines, instructions, or other directives, both procedural and substantive, including:

[LSC Audit Guide for Recipients and Auditors](#),
[The Accounting Guide for LSC Recipients \(2010 edition\)](#), and
[The CSR Handbook \(Rev. 2017\)](#).

Any new or amended LSC laws, rules, regulations, or guidance that become effective before or during the grant term shall also apply. These LSC requirements, including program letters and other policies and guidelines, are available on [LSC's website](#) or by contacting LSC directly.

The 2019 Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment grants will be subject to additional grant terms and conditions based on the *LSC Special Grant Terms and Conditions* available on [the LSC website](#).

B. Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment grants, Applicants must be current grantees of LSC grants for Basic Field-General, Basic Field-Migrant, or Basic Field-Native American funding and have a service area within the designated Midwest Disaster Area, which includes Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.

C. Project Partner Organizations

Organizations and entities that are not current LSC grantees are not eligible to apply directly for this grant. Collaborations between LSC grantees and project partner organizations can strengthen disaster delivery systems and avoid duplication of services and are therefore encouraged.

Before submitting an application involving a subgrant or third-party contract with grant funds, Applicants should be familiar with [LSC's subgrant and transfer requirements at 45 C.F.R. Parts 1610 and 1627](#), particularly as they pertain to paying third-parties to conduct programmatic activities. Certain contracts and all subgrants require prior approval under 45 C.F.R. [Parts 1627 \(Subgrants\)](#) and [1630 \(Cost Standards\)](#).

Applicants must also consider arrangements with other organizations as part of their compliance with the program integrity requirements of [45 C.F.R. § 1610.8](#).

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Application Deadline

Applications for the 2021 Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project grant program are due no later than **11:59 P.M. Eastern Time, March 5, 2021**.

B. Application Submission

Applicants must email applications to emergencygrants@lsc.gov. LSC will not accept hard copy applications. This application will **not** be submitted through LSC's new grants management system (GrantEase).

LSC will provide confirmation via email upon receipt of each completed application. Please keep this email as verification that an application was submitted and received. If no confirmation email is received, please inquire about the status of your application at emergencygrants@lsc.gov.

Application Components

Applications must be thorough and provide strong justification for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess each application based on the design of the proposed project, the Applicant's organizational capacity, and the cost-effectiveness and budget adequacy of the proposal. Completed applications must have the following components:

- *Executive Summary*
 - Applicants will be asked to provide a concise, one- paragraph description of the proposed project. The Executive Summary for successful applications will be published on the LSC website following grant awards.
- *Narrative*
 - Project Design
 - Organizational Capacity and Project Staffing
 - Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
- *Appendices and Supporting Documentation*

C. Character Limits for Narrative

The total page limit for the *Narrative* portion of the application is the lower of 10 double-spaced pages or 21,000 characters in a standard word processing document.

D. Late or Incomplete Applications

LSC may consider an application after the deadline, but only if the Applicant has submitted an email to emergencygrants@lsc.gov justifying the delay. Communication with LSC staff, including assigned Program Liaisons, is not a substitute for sending an explanatory email to emergencygrants@lsc.gov. At its discretion, LSC may consider late or incomplete applications. LSC will determine the acceptability of late or incomplete applications on a case-by-case basis.

V. Review, and Selection Process

A. Selection Criteria and Application Questions

Reviewers will rate the applications using the following Selection Criteria: Project Design, Organizational Capacity and Project Staffing, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy. All successful Applicants must demonstrate that their project(s) will accomplish LSC’s key goal of engaging in activities responsive to COVID-19 challenges.

The weights assigned to each category are detailed in the following chart. Reviewers will assess application narratives against these Selection Criteria and weigh them accordingly.

Category	Percentage	Sub-Category	Percentage
Project Design	55	Need Statement - client needs and current gaps in service	20
		Goals, Objectives, and Activities	20
		Proposed Performance Measures	15
Organizational Capacity and Project Staffing	30	Ability to provide project support, oversight, and capable leadership	30
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	15	Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	15

Appendix I contains the *Narrative Questions*. Also listed are the reviewers’ rating criteria for each question. In drafting responses to the *Narrative* questions, Applicants that are proposing to partner with third parties, including by contract or subgrant, must provide an explanation and discussion of the partner’s role in the *Narrative*.

B. Appendices and Supporting Documentation

In addition to the *Narrative*, up to 30 total pages may be submitted to support the project proposal. File extension types are limited to .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .pdf, and .rtf only. Any portion of the application that exceeds the page limit may not be reviewed. The Appendices must include the résumés of key staff responsible or job descriptions for new positions for the proposed project. Appendices may also include documents such as maps, relevant data and statistical information, letters of commitment from key partners, and letters of support from community stakeholders. They may also include information on past projects and credentials of partners and other entities involved in the project. Letters of commitment to the project from any partner whose participation is necessary for the completion of the project are required.

C. Review and Selection Process

LSC will use a multi-stage review process to review and assess Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant applications. Reviewers read, assess, score, discuss, and provide feedback on each eligible application. The results of the review are compiled and analyzed and used to inform LSC's President who considers the results of the review and makes the final grant decisions in his best professional judgment.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

LSC will announce the results of this competition in March 2021. Successful Applicants will receive an official notification that their application was selected for an award. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award, signed by the LSC President or his designee, is the authorizing document for grant activities. The Grant Award letter, Terms and Conditions, and the Grant Agreement must occur before activities on the grant begin. Grantees whose applications were not selected for funding will also receive notifications.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

1. Activities Prior to Award or Negotiated Starting Dates

LSC has no obligation to cover pre-award costs out of a Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment grant. If an Applicant incurs any project costs prior to the project start date negotiated at the time of award, it does so solely at its own risk.

2. No Credit Towards 12.5% Private Attorney Involvement Requirement

LSC requires that LSC grantees spend an amount equivalent to 12.5 percent of their annualized basic field award to involve private attorneys and others in the delivery of legal assistance to eligible clients. See 45 C.F.R. § 1614.2(a). Funds from Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment grant awards do not count towards this requirement, even if used for activities that otherwise meet the Part 1614 criteria. This prohibition applies only to the funds provided in this grant. It does not apply to any other funds used for costs and expenses that meet the 45 C.F.R. Part 1614 criteria, regardless of whether they involve activities described as part of an application for this grant.

3. No Obligation for Future Funding

If an application is selected for funding, LSC has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the sole discretion of LSC.

4. False Statements

A false statement on an application is grounds for denial or termination of funds.

5. Waiver Authority

Under extraordinary circumstances and when it is in the interest of the eligible client community, LSC, upon its own initiative or when requested, may waive provisions in this *Notice* at its sole discretion.

Waivers may be granted only for requirements that are discretionary and not mandated by statute or regulation. Waiver requests must be submitted by email to emergencygrants@lsc.gov and must set forth the extraordinary circumstances for the request.

6. Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and associated LSC regulations may require LSC to release to the public, upon request, certain third-party subgrant application materials. LSC will not, however, release an application that would cause competitive harm to the applicant. If your application is requested under FOIA, LSC will contact you before releasing some or all of it. Applicants are encouraged to label documents containing sensitive business and confidential information as such at the time of submission.

7. Conflicts of Interest

Applicants must indicate whether the proposed project raises any actual or potential conflicts of interest under their respective written conflict of interest policies. Grantees will be required to identify and resolve actual, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest, including updating prior information, at any time that they are discovered, even after payments to third parties are provided. Generally, grantees should identify and resolve possible conflicts prior to entering negotiations with a third party, including subgrants, procurements, and contracts.

B. Reporting Requirements and Performance Measures

Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant grantees will be required to use performance measures to assess the progress of their projects. Grantees should expect to work with LSC to finalize the expected performance measures they will use, which may include some standardized measures related to the LSC's key goals for the Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant.

If a grant is awarded, the project goals, objectives, and activities will be agreed upon by LSC and the grantee, then included as part of the grant award package. Interim payments will be made based on quarterly narrative reports showing progress toward achieving project goals and objectives. The final payment will be made after the final report and final financial report is submitted and approved for the grant closeout.

C. Payment Schedule and Continued Funding

LSC will pay Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant subgrantees in milestone-based installments. If a grant is awarded, the initial payment will be made shortly after the Grant Acceptance Letter is returned to LSC. Following the initial payment and assuming satisfactory reporting and progress toward key program goals and requirements, payments will be made every six months during project term, with the final payment to be made upon approval of the project final report and final financial report.

D. Eligible Costs, Third-Party Contracts, Subgrants, and Transfers

Eligible costs for this grant are the same as any Basic Field Grant eligible cost, with the exception that this grant must be used to engage in activities responsive to COVID-19 challenges.

Please see the *Appendices* to this *Notice* for information on Third-Party Contracts, Subgrants, and Transfers.

VII. LSC Contacts

This *Notice* is online at [LSC disaster website](#).

For more information or to reach a member of the Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project Team, please send an email to emergencygrants@lsc.gov.

VIII. Technical Assistance

LSC will host technical assistance webinars and/or workshops to answer questions about the funding opportunity, compliance and regulatory issues, and the application process. LSC strongly encourages all Applicants to participate in these sessions. The schedule of calls and call-in information will be posted on LSC's website and sent to LSC grantees via email.

APPENDIX I: Questions and Review Rating Criteria

Project Design (55%)

1. Need Statement: Please provide a description of the activities responsive to COVID-19 challenges. Please also provide a statement that sets forth the challenge or inefficiency in the gaps in service that will be the focus of this project.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the Applicant:

- Provides a clear description of client need and the current gap in service.
- Clearly demonstrates the need for the project by using available statistical information and other data to identify the gap(s) in services.
- Describes any current efforts (by the Applicant or other entities) that are related to the client need and gaps in service, including an explanation why the Applicant and other service providers cannot meet the needs with current resources.
- Explains how the proposed project will address the needs identified.

2. Goals, Objectives, and Activities: Please describe your project goals, objectives, and the specific project activities that are designed to meet gaps in service and engage stakeholders to meet the identified client needs.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the Applicant:

- Articulates the project's goals and objectives in clear, concrete, and measurable terms.
- Identifies the specific activities and strategies that will be implemented to achieve the goals and objectives.
- Describes the how the project addresses identified client need and gaps in service.

3. Proposed Performance Measures: Please identify specific, measurable outcomes that the project proposes to accomplish in the proposed timeframe.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the Applicant:

- Clearly identifies specific, measurable outcomes that will be achieved through the proposed project.
- Identifies outcomes that are aligned with the key outcomes of the Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment Grant Project.
- Specifies the outcome measures and data sets that will be used to assess and demonstrate the project's achievements.
- Describes how the results achieved will be reported to LSC.

Organizational Capacity (30%)

Ability to Provide Project Support, Oversight, and Capable Leadership: Please describe Applicant's capacity to set and implement goals and provide programmatic and financial oversight of this project. The response should include information about the key staff who will be responsible for the project.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the Applicant:

- Describes a staffing plan that engages staff members with sufficient capacity and experience to be effective and compliant with programmatic and fiscal requirements.
- Presents a qualified roster of staff members who have the experience and capacity to effectively implement the proposed project. This includes the involvement of senior management and board members.
- For projects that include contracts or subgranting funds to another organization, describes experience monitoring contractors or subgrantees for compliance with regulatory, fiscal, and programmatic requirements.

Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (15%)

Budget Justification: Please provide a brief description that describes how the grant will be spent to advance the desired goals, objectives, and activities being proposed.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the Applicant:

- Proposes a reasonable description of expenses consistent with the proposed goals and objectives of the project.
- Demonstrates past success in managing LSC grant funds and complying with LSC fiscal requirements and guidelines.

Please note a detailed project budget is not required for a grantee's application, but the grantee still must be able to describe the plan for how the funds will be used to meet the goals of this grant.

APPENDIX II: Subgrant Form

Instructions

This form applies to subgrants of Midwest Legal Disaster Coordination Project COVID-19 Amendment grant funds that do not require LSC prior approval under 45 C.F.R. Part 1627. For subgrants requiring LSC's prior approval, detailed application instructions will be available [LSC disaster website](#).

LSC requires additional information about proposed subgrants that are necessary for the proposed grant. On the form below, please provide the requested information on the **subgrants** that your program plans to enter into as part of this proposed grant. While LSC is primarily interested in subgrants that are directly funded by the grant, providing information on non-LSC funded subgrants, if applicable, allows reviewers to have complete information about the grant and the proposed project expenses.

- Please provide one *Subgrant Form* for each subgrant being proposed in your grant. These forms should be saved as Word Documents and included in your application email submission.
- Provide as much information as possible about the planned subgrant, including the expected subgrant amount, planned oversight activities, and the subgrantee's anticipated role and responsibilities.

- 1. Subgrant amount and funding source.**
- 2. Name of proposed subgrantee organization.**
- 3. Number of staff.**
- 4. Subgrantee's total organizational budget for current fiscal year.**
- 5. Please identify your proposed methods for providing oversight in (a) assessing the quality of the work being provided by the subgrantee, and (b) ensuring the subgrantee's adherence to applicable LSC requirements.**
- 6. Does this proposed subgrantee currently receive a subgrant from your organization of LSC funds or of non-LSC funds for PAI activities? If so, please describe the current subgrant including the amounts of LSC and of non-LSC funds being subgranted.**
- 7. Please disclose the nature of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that the Applicant may have with the proposed subgrantee. For example, does the Applicant have staff or board members who also serve as board members or staff at the proposed subgrantee or vice versa?**
- 8. For proposed subgrantees who are not current LSC grantees, please provide the names and affiliations of the proposed subgrantee's Board of Directors.**

APPENDIX III: Contract Form

Instructions

This form applies to procurement contracts under 45 C.F.R. Parts 1630 and 1631 and not subgrants under 45 C.F.R. Part 1627. For the definition of a procurement, please see section. This form is not an application for 45 C.F.R. Part 1630 prior approval, which must be submitted to LSC after the award of a grant.

Please provide information on the **contracts** that your program plans to enter into as part of the proposed grant. While LSC is primarily interested in contracts that are directly funded by the grant, providing information on non-LSC funded contracts, if applicable, allows reviewers to have complete information about the grant and the proposed project expenses.

- Please provide one form for each contract being proposed in your grant. These forms should be saved as Word Documents and included in your application email submission.
- Provide as much information as possible about the planned contracts, including the expected contract amount, planned oversight activities, and the contractor's anticipated role and responsibilities.
- Either identify a specific third party that your organization intends to contract with or, if that entity is not yet known, indicate that the contractor will be decided later.
- Specific contractors may be proposed in this application. Please note, however, that a grant award based on your application does not imply LSC approval of any specific contractor for the proposed procurements in the grant. All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition; and all third-party expenditures, regardless of cost, must be appropriately documented. *Please see [45 C.F.R. Parts 1630, 1631](#) and the [LSC Accounting Guide for contracting requirements and guidance](#).*

- 1. Contract amount and funding source.**
- 2. Are you proposing a specific third-party contractor?**

If yes, please identify the proposed contractor.

If you are proposing a specific third-party contractor, provide an explanation of how and why the proposed contractor was identified, including the competition process. If you are not proposing a specific third-party contract, provide your plan for selecting the contractor, including the competition process.

- 3. Please identify your proposed methods of overseeing performance by the contractor. This includes information on what skills your program possesses to fully monitor contract performance.**
- 4. Please disclose the nature of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that the Applicant may have with the proposed contractor. This includes relations that Applicant staff, board, or family members may have with the proposed contractor.**
- 5. Please describe the contractor's anticipated role and responsibilities.**