



THE CHICAGO BAR FOUNDATION ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT GRANT GUIDELINES 2019

I. THE CHICAGO BAR FOUNDATION'S WORK

The Chicago Bar Foundation brings the legal community together to improve access to justice for people in need and make the legal system more fair and efficient for everyone.

Through grants, advocacy, pro bono, and partnerships, the CBF accomplishes this by:

- Increasing access to free and affordable legal assistance for people in need
- Making the courts and legal system more user-friendly, fair and accessible for people without lawyers

As the charitable arm of the Chicago Bar Association, the CBF is the largest voluntarily supported bar foundation in the country. The generous contributions of thousands of dedicated individuals, more than 200 law firms and corporations, and many other committed partners make the CBF's work possible. Thanks to that strong support, the CBF awards more than \$2 million in grants each year and plays a lead role in a number of innovative access to justice initiatives.

II. GRANTS CURRENTLY AWARDED

Through general operating grants and targeted investments in innovative projects and initiatives, the CBF's grants help to meet immediate legal needs in our community while also strengthening the pro bono and legal aid system and making longer-term systemic improvements in access to justice. The CBF funds a continuum of legal services to help people in need, ranging from web-based resources and legal aid hotlines to advice desks, extended legal representation, and larger impact litigation and advocacy. The CBF also supports organizations that provide free mediation services and organizations that engage the bar and broader legal community in improving access to justice through pro bono and other efforts. The CBF's grants ensure that tens of thousands of low-income and disadvantaged Chicago area residents most in need of the protections of our civil legal system have access to justice.

In 2019, the CBF will award four types of grants: (1) Organizational Support grants (general operating support); (2) Special Project grants (CBF-initiated project-based support for innovative special projects); (3) Fellowships, Scholarships, and Internships (funding to assist dedicated students and lawyers pursue careers in public interest law); and (4) Other Grants (initiated by the CBF to support a variety of access to justice and related philanthropic initiatives). The Fellowships and Scholarships are subject to separate guidelines, which are available at <http://chicagobarfoundation.org/fellowships/>.

III. OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT GRANTS

The CBF is committed to providing consistent general operating support grants for effective, well-managed organizations in the Chicago area that the CBF determines are working to improve access to justice for significant numbers of low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans. See Section IV for eligibility requirements. In 2019, the CBF will award Organizational Support Grants for a one-year period.

GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

The CBF's grants are awarded through a comprehensive screening and evaluation process that carefully vets organizations before they receive funding. The CBF's grants process is overseen by a highly regarded board of lawyers and judges who are broadly representative of Chicago's legal community, with the assistance of experienced CBF staff. CBF Board members, along with members of the CBF Young Professionals Board, join staff in making site visits to the organizations applying for funding to better inform the Board in making grant decisions.

FUNDING SOURCES

The 2019 Organizational Support grants will be funded entirely by money raised through the 13th Annual CBF Investing in Justice Campaign, which takes place in spring 2019. These grants are made possible by the generous support of thousands of lawyers and other legal professionals at more than 150 participating law firms, corporations, and other legal organizations. Funding decisions are contingent upon the success of the Campaign.

PRIORITIZATION OF FUNDING

Priority among the CBF's Organizational Support grants is given to organizations that have a broad impact on increasing access to justice for low-income and disadvantaged people in Cook County. In particular, the CBF takes into account the overall systemic impact the organization has, the areas of law and communities served by the organization, and the number of people impacted by the organization's work. Using these parameters, the CBF has developed some general categories and associated funding ranges for similarly situated organizations to ensure objectivity and consistency in grant awards. The CBF realizes that every organization is different even within these categories; the categories simply provide guidance to the CBF Grants Committee and Board in determining the amount of grant awards within some general ranges.

IV. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to be considered for an Organizational Support grant from the CBF, an organization must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- a. The organization must be a 501(c) (3) organization that works to improve access to justice for a significant number of low-income and disadvantaged residents of Cook County. Organizations that predominantly serve persons outside of Cook County are not eligible for funding. The CBF will not make Organizational Support grants to individuals or law school clinics/programs.
- b. The organization must satisfy the basic legal requirements for operating a 501(c) (3) organization and demonstrate strong financial management and oversight, including timely completion of an annual audit (if required) and timely filing of Form 990 and the Illinois Attorney General Annual Report/Form 990.
- c. The organization must have at least one licensed attorney on staff delivering or overseeing legal services absent exceptional circumstances where the organization has been accredited by a government agency to have accredited non-attorney representatives represent clients in matters pending before that agency, such as a Department of Justice accredited representative.
- d. The organization's work must fall into one or more of the following categories:
 - **Direct Legal Services:** The organization provides direct legal services, which is defined to include advice, brief services, and/or extended legal representation.
 - **Advocacy:** The organization works to increase access to justice through impact litigation and/or policy reform efforts.
 - **Legal Information and Resources:** The organization provides extensive, interactive online and print information and resources to people without lawyers to help them navigate the legal system and better understand their legal rights and responsibilities.
 - **Court-Based Mediation:** The organization provides court-based mediation services in partnership with the court.

- e. Generally, the CBF will not make grants to faith-based or religious organizations. However, the CBF will consider grants to faith-based organizations or specific programs run by faith-based or religious organizations if the programs are open to people of all faiths, service decisions are not based on a prospective client's particular faith or religion, the organization's staff do not promote a particular faith or religion to people served, and the organization's policies and practices do not discriminate against legally protected classes of individuals.
- f. In accordance with federal, state, and local laws, and in keeping with the CBF's mission to ensure equal access to justice, the CBF will not fund organizations that use race, color, creed, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, veteran status, or any other protected classification as a basis to deny services to qualifying individuals who seek assistance that falls within the scope of the organization's mission.

V. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The CBF will evaluate applicants using the following factors, which provide a framework to help the CBF maximize the impact of its grants:

ADDRESSES CRITICAL LEGAL NEEDS

Does the organization effectively and efficiently address critical legal needs that otherwise would be unaddressed or inadequately addressed?

WELL-DEFINED MISSION AND VISION

Does the organization have a sound vision for what it is trying to accomplish, a clear sense of how its mission advances that vision, and a solid understanding of how it fits into the larger pro bono and legal aid delivery system and broader community?

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Has the organization engaged in meaningful strategic planning and established effective measures for evaluating its progress and impact?

STRONG LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Does the organization have effective governance structures and strong and responsive leadership at both the Board and Executive Director levels?

STRATEGIC USE OF PRO BONO ATTORNEYS

Where appropriate, does the organization strategically and effectively utilize pro bono attorneys and provide them with appropriate training and support?

EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

Does the organization effectively leverage staff, technology, volunteers (other professionals aside from attorneys), funding, and other resources to increase and improve the services it provides?

CONSISTENT AND SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Is the organization taking appropriate steps to coordinate and/or collaborate with other relevant legal aid organizations and stakeholders in pursuit of the larger goal of equal access to justice?

DEMONSTRATED SUCCESS

Does the organization have a demonstrated track record of stability, fiscal responsibility, and successfully advancing the organization’s mission?

IMPACT OF GRANT ON THE ORGANIZATION

Will the CBF’s grant have a meaningful impact on the organization?

VI. APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Only organizations that received a CBF Organizational Support grant in June 2018 are invited to apply for a one-year renewal grant in 2019.

The applying organization must complete the Renewal Grant Application Form – 2019, which is available through Foundant, an online grants management system. The link to access the application materials has been emailed to the primary contact(s) at current CBF grantees.

TIMELINE

Deadline to submit Renewal Grant Application	February 28, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.
The CBF conducts site visits	March through May 2019
The CBF informs applying organizations of grant decisions	Week of June 24, 2019

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- Please submit the completed Renewal Grant Application form, along with the required attachments listed on the form, through Foundant by February 28, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

- The CBF will not accept incomplete or late applications.

VII. GENERAL CONDITIONS

The following general conditions apply to organizations applying for a CBF Organizational Support grant:

- a. All materials submitted to the CBF become the property of the CBF and will not be returned.
- b. Information contained in the Applications submitted may be shared with third parties and outside organizations as part of the CBF's evaluation process.
- c. The CBF, in its discretion, may request a site visit and/or additional information to assist in its review and evaluation of the proposal.
- d. The CBF reserves the right to reject any and all Applications, in whole or in part, at any time, in its sole discretion. The CBF receives substantially more requests than it can fund, and thus there is no guarantee that any particular organization will receive funding or any particular level of funding.
- e. No funds provided by the CBF can be used for the support of any political campaign, election activities, or other political activities that are inconsistent with the organization's tax-exempt status.
- f. Organizations that receive funding must subscribe to Illinois Nonprofit Principles and Best Practices, developed by Forefront and available at <https://myforefront.org/publictrust> and strive to adopt the Best Practices pertinent to the organization.

VIII. QUESTIONS

We encourage you to call if you have questions about these guidelines or about a particular proposal. Inquiries should be directed to Dina Merrell, at 312/554-1206 or dmerrell@chicagobar.org.