

Legal Aid Ontario

Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Community and Legal Clinics: 2013-14

Fund information and application



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Title: Fund to strengthen the capacity of community and legal clinics

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Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Community and Legal Clinics: 2013-14

On August 14, 2013, the Ministry of the Attorney General confirmed Legal Aid Ontario's program budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year. The budget includes an additional \$10 million, as announced in the government's 2013 budget statement to improve Frontline Services for Low-Income Ontarians. The 2013 Budget states: *"As part of the government's commitment to social justice and fair society, additional funding of \$30 Million over three years will be provided to Legal Aid Ontario. This funding will improve access to justice and enhance outcomes for low-income families, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups by strengthening the capacity of Family Law Service Centres and other community and legal clinics across Ontario to respond to evolving needs, and ensure services are sustainable."*

Part of the \$10 million allocation of the funding in the first year is to be used to create a \$2 million **"Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Other Community and Legal Clinics"** to achieve the objectives of the 2013 Budget. This specific fund ends March 31, 2016.

1. Fund information

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Other Community and Legal Clinics is to develop innovative and enhanced services within other community and legal clinics¹ in order to deliver services in a way that increases the number of clients served in a cost-effective manner. Results of the funded projects must be sustainable, that is, the initiative becomes self-funding within three years, and the program impact continues into the future without ongoing funding.

The fund can also be used to develop pilots for the delivery of legal services at sites within the community, in partnership and collaboration with student legal aid services and existing legal clinics.

¹ "Other community and legal clinics" refers to all community legal clinics, student legal aid service societies (SLASS) and other community organizations or institutions that are looking to enhance their current programs and services by integrating poverty law services in a manner that supports LAO's Strategic Directions and corporate strategies. Such organizations could include but are not limited to: multi-service organizations; ethno-racial specific agencies; community health centres, and community colleges.

1.2 Eligibility

Eligibility for funding is open to all community legal clinics, student legal aid service societies (SLASS) and other community organizations which provide or could provide poverty law services.

Applications may be from a single community legal clinic, community organization or SLASS or may be joint proposals from several parties.

Proposals may be for one to three-year projects or initiatives.

All applications must meet the “criteria for projects” set out below in order to be eligible for consideration. All applications will be assessed against the criteria outlined, and allocation of funds will be based on the strength of the applications.

1.3 How to apply

The application form must be completed and submitted to the appropriate Regional Vice President, c\o Clinic and Program Advisor:

- Janet Budgell, Vice President, Southwest Region and Specialty Clinics
- Randall Ellsworth, Vice President, North, Central and Eastern Regions
- Vicki Moretti, Vice President, GTA Region

You can append other information you consider relevant to the application form. Applications must be submitted no later than January 15, 2014, for 2013/2014 funding.

If you have questions about the Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Other Community and Legal Clinics or the application process, please contact the respective Regional Vice President or Clinic and Program Advisor.

1.4 Criteria for projects

All projects for the Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Other Community and Legal Clinics must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible:

1. Meets the 2013 Budget objective: Allocation of the new funding must meet the intent of the objectives of the 2013 budget funding.
2. Supports unmet needs of families and vulnerable people: Expenditure of the funds will improve access to justice and enhance outcomes for low-income families, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups, respond to evolving needs, and ensure that services are sustainable. Initiatives should take into account projects that:

- a. Focus on new and enhanced services to clients;
 - b. Deliver services through community access points in a way that increases the number of clients served and is cost-effective;
 - c. Partner with other organizations to expand the range of available holistic and wrap-around services to better meet clients' needs by including family-law related services in the proposal;
 - d. Provide wrap-around services that address individuals' intersecting legal and non-legal needs, such as housing, income assistance, family law and mental health issues in location "hubs", to prevent cascading problems and stabilize the clients' situations;
 - e. Promote coordination of poverty law and legal aid services regionally, by district or within a community;
 - f. Promote development of new models and ways of partnering;
 - g. Promote cost effective administration;
 - h. Pilot the delivery of legal services at sites within the community in partnership and collaboration with student legal aid service societies and existing legal clinics.
3. Projects must be sustainable: Costs of strengthening capacity must be sustainable, with consideration of savings achieved, as the funding is being provided on a one-time basis. While initiatives may be considered sustainable if they are started and fully completed within the three-year window, preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate an ongoing impact beyond the three-year window.
 4. Results must be measurable: Proponents will need to establish performance measures that demonstrate accountability for the use of public funds.
 5. Funded initiatives may include a broad range of services, not limited to individual casework services, but also systemic services such as public legal education, community development and law reform.

1.5 Report-back requirements for successful applicants

The recipients of a fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Other Community and Legal Clinics will be required to report back to LAO on the following:

- how the funds were used;
- what the project or initiative accomplished, based on the goals and outcomes identified in the application form,
- performance measures, and
- how goals will be achieved going forward.

Successful proponents will be required to enter into a funding agreement (in addition to any existing funding agreement with LAO).

A report on the project's progress will be required semi-annually.

2. How applications are evaluated

All applications for 2013/14 funding will be reviewed after Jan 15, 2014, after the application deadline has been reached. Decisions on successful proposals will be based on the strength of the applications, and with a province-wide view to the best use of the funds.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS (A) will be judged on a pass/fail basis. If the proposal fails on one or more of the mandatory requirements, the proposal will be returned to the Proponent with a letter of explanation. The proposal will not advance.

If the proposal passes all mandatory requirements, it will be evaluated based on the following RATED EVALUATION CRITERIA (B).

A.	Mandatory requirements	YES/NO
1	Fits with the Respective Principles of the Fund	
2	Fits within mandate of LAO and the legal clinics or community organization	
3	Clear, measurable benefits to clients	
4	Potential for collaboration and innovation	
5	Responses received for EVERY question on the Application Form.	
6	Clarity of Proposal	
7	Contact Information provided	

B.	Rated evaluation criteria	WEIGHT (points)
1	Does the proposal meet the intent of the objectives of the 2013 budget funding?	/25
2	Does the proposal support unmet needs of families and vulnerable people, such that expenditure of the funds will improve access to justice and enhance outcomes for low-income families, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups, and respond to evolving needs, in context of the criteria listed in section 2?	/40
3	Does the proposal address the sustainability of the project, with consideration of savings achieved? Initiatives started and fully completed within the three-year window may be considered sustainable; preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate an ongoing impact beyond the three-year window.	/15
4	Are the results measurable? Can the proposed performance measures demonstrate accountability for the use of public funds?	/20
	TOTAL	/100