

Application form

LAO funding to help Black students in conflict with education system

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) is offering two grants of \$100,000 each to help address suspensions and expulsions of Black youth in Ontario.

LAO is looking for two projects that will:

- Focus on reducing disparities affecting Black students in the education system (e.g. expulsions, suspensions)
- Provide legal aid services (e.g. direct representation, advocacy, public legal education and community outreach)
- Take place in Ontario

We are particularly interested in supporting projects that:

- Involve community organizations that have not received LAO-funding in the past
- Involve collaborations and partnerships between two or more groups/organizations
- Result in the provision of services to a large number of students/families
- Have a clear plan for how the success and learnings achieved by the project will be sustained after LAO's funding ends

LAO is looking to work with new community organizations as part of our mandate to develop innovative ways to expand access to justice.

If you are a community organization/group that has an Africentric focus and/or that works primarily with members of the Black community, we encourage you to apply.

Part 1: Application process

Please read this entire document before preparing your application.

Issue date	October 19, 2016
Application deadline	November 14, 2016 at 5:00 pm EST
Assessment and short list	By November 28, 2016
Successful applications announced	By week of January 2, 2016

Note: LAO reserves the right to adjust dates if required.

Please forward your completed application, signed by an authorized person(s), together with any additional material, by the date/time specified. Please use only one of the following to deliver your application:

- **Email:** education2016@lao.on.ca
- **Fax:** (416) 979-2948
- **Mail:** Education 2016, Legal Aid Ontario, 40 Dundas Street West, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2H1

Upon submitting your application, you will receive confirmation that LAO received it.

Your applications will be assessed by LAO Staff for eligibility and completeness, including required documents. Please note that only complete applications will be accepted. Review your application to ensure that you have answered all the questions and provided all the information we need.

A Committee of LAO Staff and Community Partners will review all shortlisted applications. The Committee will consist of people who have experience in education law, people who have experience running community-based projects, and LAO staff. The Committee will submit its recommendations to LAO for approval.

For more information on how applications will be assessed, please review the [Assessment Criteria](#).

Part 2: Applicant information

Name of organization*:

Address:

City:

Province:

Postal code:

Contact person:

Position:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

Mandate of organization
(1-2 sentences –
supplementary
information may be
attached):

If applicable, please list
the list of names of your
Board of Directors and
executive staff.

Signature:

Title:

Name:

Date:

**If you are submitting an application jointly with another organization, please indicate clearly which organization would take lead responsibility for the grant if it is approved.*

Part 3: Application form

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Does your proposal focus on delivering “legal aid services” (as defined in the <i>Legal Aid Services Act</i>) to Black youth and/or Black families? | Yes | No |
| 2. Does your proposal address disparities affecting Black students in the education system? | Yes | No |
| 3. Does your proposal take place in Ontario? | Yes | No |
| 4. Is your organization a not-for-profit corporation or registered charity? | Yes | No |
| a. If your organization is a not-for-profit corporation, please provide the date of incorporation. | | |
| b. If your organization is a registered charity, please provide the Charity Number. | | |
| 5. If your organization is <u>not</u> a not-for-profit corporation or registered charity, are you partnering with an organization that has a financial accountability structure (e.g. corporation, charity, law firm)? | Yes | No |

6. If yes to question 5, please complete the information below:

Name of organization:

Address:

City:

Province:

Postal code:

Signature:

Title:

Name:

Date:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 7. Does your organization have experience working with or providing services to members of the Black community? | Yes | No |
| 8. Does your application include a work plan? | Yes | No |
| 9. Does your application include a budget? | Yes | No |

Part 4: Application questions

Please limit your answers to the questions below to a total of four (4) pages.

- 1. Please tell us about your organization.** What does your organization do? What services does it provide? To how many people? What experience does your organization have working with members of the Black community? Are there any relevant projects/initiatives you would like to tell us about?

If you are partnering with another organization, please tell us about them too.

- 2. Please tell us about your proposed project.** How will you use the funds to deliver legal aid services to Black youth who are in conflict with the education system? What are your expected outcomes? How will you determine if your project is successful? How will you share the lessons, outcomes, and tools from this project? What types of legal professionals will be involved in this project? How will they be engaged/involved? If available, what is/are the name(s) of the legal professional(s) who will be involved in this project? What are their qualifications? What is their contact information?

- 3. Is there anything else you would like us to know?**

Part 5: Assessment criteria

Mandatory requirements

The requirements below will be judged on a pass/fail basis. If your proposal fails on one or more of the requirements, it will be returned to you with a letter of explanation and it will not move on in the process.

- Project will deliver legal aid services to members of the Black community
- Project will address disparities affecting Black students in the education system
- Project will take place in Ontario
- Organization is a:
 - Not-for-profit corporation,
 - Registered charity, or
 - Community organization that is partnering with an organization that has a financial accountability structure (e.g. corporation, charity, law firm)
- Organization has experience working with or delivering services to members of Ontario's Black community
- Proposal includes work plan and budget

If your proposal passes all requirements, it will move on to be assessed by the Committee of LAO Staff and Community Partners.

Rated evaluation criteria

A Committee of LAO Staff and Community Partners will evaluate your responses to the Application Questions based on the following criteria:

Rated criteria category	Weighting
<p>Does the proposal contain a clear and realistic plan? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the work plan and budget clear and realistic? • Does the proposal demonstrate an understanding of the issues affecting Black students in the education system? • Does the proposal describe issues that the organization would like to see changed? • Does the proposal clearly set out how legal aid services will be delivered to address these issues? • Are the expected outcomes realistic? On what assumptions, experiences, data are the expected outcomes based? • Does the proposal identify how the organization will track/measure whether the project is successful? • Does the proposal identify how the organization will share the lessons, outcomes, and tools from this project? 	30
<p>Does the organization have experience working with members of Ontario's Black community? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the organization have a demonstrated history of engagement with members of the Black community? • Has the organization demonstrated/explained how it will engage a large number of Black youths/families who could benefit from these services? • Does the organization have experience working with Black youths who are in conflict with the education system? 	25
<p>Is this the organization's first time receiving LAO funding? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the organization a new partner? • Does partnering with the organization provide an opportunity to encourage and facilitate flexibility and innovation in the provision of legal aid services? 	20
<p>Is the proposal focused on direct client services? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposal focused on representation, legal advice, assistance, and advocacy? • Does the proposal identify legal professionals that will aid in the delivery of these services? Do these legal professionals have experience with and/or a demonstrated understanding of the <i>Education Act</i>? 	15
<p>Is the proposal collaborative? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this is a proposal submitted on behalf of two or more organizations? • Does the proposal explain how the partner(s) is/are relevant to the proposal? • Does the proposal set out how the partners will work together to achieve expected outcomes? 	10
Total	/100

Note: LAO reserves the right to:

- Request written clarification or additional written information from applicants
- Waive formalities and accept applications that mostly comply with the requirements
- Verify with you or with a third party any information in your application
- Disqualify applications that contain misrepresentations or any other inaccurate or misleading information
- Accept or reject your application even if it is the only application submitted
- Cancel this application process at any stage
- Accept any application in whole or in part
- Reject any or all applications in its absolute discretion
- Negotiate all terms and conditions in order to enter into a formal contract with the successful applicant

Part 6: Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

1. Why is LAO providing these funds?

In 2015, LAO committed to developing a multi-year, multi-faceted, province-wide Racialized Communities Strategy. Community consultations that LAO is conducting as part of this strategy have highlighted the experiences of Black children in the education system as an area of concern.

LAO has decided to provide one-time funding to two projects that:

- focus on reducing disparities affecting Black students in the education system (e.g. expulsions, suspensions)
- provide legal aid services (e.g. direct representation, advocacy, public legal education and community outreach)

For more information about the Racialized Communities Strategy (RCS), [click](#) or email racs@lao.on.ca.

2. Why focus on Black children in conflict with the education system?

Various media reports and community partners involved in the RCS community consultations report that Black children are among those that are far more harshly punished and far more frequently suspended and expelled than their peers.

While few jurisdictions in Canada publicize annual statistics regarding suspensions and race, the most recent report from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) revealed that Black students are suspended at three times the rate of white students – Black students make up 12% of high school students but account for 31% of suspensions.

Another independent analysis found that Black students at a high school in the Durham Catholic School Board were almost 8 times more likely to face discipline than white students. One out of every 128 white students was disciplined for fighting or bullying while the rate for Black students was one in 17.

Studies from the US suggest that one suspension in or after the 9th grade triples the likelihood that a child will be incarcerated while doubling the chance of dropping out. This phenomenon is what is referred to as the “school-to-prison-pipeline.”

3. Doesn't LAO already provide these services?

LAO does not currently cover matters that fall under the *Education Act* but it does fund some legal clinics that provide legal aid services and information relating to children in conflict with the education system. Recent reports from these clinics and from members of the community suggest that this is an area of high need. As a result, families of children who are facing a suspension or expulsion must advocate for themselves or retain a legal professional, often at a high cost.

Eligibility to Apply

4. Can an unincorporated group apply for a grant?

Yes, if administration of the grant can be done through an appropriate accountability structure, e.g. through a law firm in trust or an incorporated non-profit. If your grant request is approved, LAO will require you and your partner to provide a Memorandum of Agreement that sets out clear roles and responsibilities for each of you.

5. Do we have to be a registered charity in order to apply for a grant?

No, but if you are a non-profit with charitable status, please include your registered charity number on your application.

6. Can an individual apply for a grant?

No, an application can only be made by a non-profit organization, a registered charity, or an unincorporated group with an appropriate accountability structure.

7. Can an LAO-funded clinic or SLASS apply for the grant?

Yes, but preference will be given to community organizations that have not received LAO funding in the past.

8. We want to apply for a grant jointly with another organization – can we do this?

Yes, we encourage joint applications. However, you must indicate clearly which organization will assume lead responsibility for the grant if it is approved (this is the organization that will be expected to sign LAO's Letter of Agreement).

9. Do you have a fixed amount of available funding that is allocated to specific geographic regions?

No, applications from any area of the province are welcome. However, according to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), a significant majority of Ontario's low income Black population lives in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Also, according to the Ministry of Education, more than 1/5 of the 55,636 students that were suspended in 2013/14 come from school boards in the GTA. Similarly, at least half of the 452 students that were expelled in 2014/14 come from school boards in the GTA. Geographic location may be a relevant consideration when evaluating the projects ability to deliver services to a large number of Black youths.

Eligible costs

10. Will you fund core operating costs associated with a project? If so, do you fund on the basis of a set percentage of total project costs?

Yes, we will fund core operating costs that can be shown to be directly related to the project. Rather than cover such costs on the basis of a flat percentage, we prefer to fund on the basis of actual need, so your application should

demonstrate the connection between the project and the expense.

11. I understand that you will not fund capital expenditures. Are office furniture or computer equipment considered to be capital expenditures?

We will not fund capital expenditures for immovable assets (i.e., buildings). We may consider reasonable costs associated with furniture or computer equipment but encourage attempts to have these expenses covered as in-kind contributions.

12. We would like to lobby government to make needed changes to the legislative and policy environment surrounding our legal issue. Can we apply to LAO for funding?

No, the primary focus of the project must be on direct client services.

13. Will LAO fund conferences or symposiums?

No, we are focused on expanding direct client services.

After a grant application is approved

14. Our grant application has been approved – what happens next?

You will be asked to review and sign a standard Letter of Agreement, which may also have special conditions attached that are specific to your grant. In general, the first instalment is paid soon after receipt of the signed Letter of Agreement, and remaining instalments are paid in accordance with the schedule drawn up to suit your particular project.

15. What is the payment schedule?

The payment schedule is developed taking into consideration the information provided in the grant application, and often also in consultation with the grantee. In general, LAO makes payments in advance, in accordance with each grantee's needs, and subject to any special conditions of approval being met. LAO makes every effort to accommodate special requirements (for instance, where significant expenses have to be incurred at an early stage of the project). For all projects, the final payment is a hold-back instalment (typically 10% of the total grant) that is paid out on receipt of the final report.

16. What are your reporting requirements?

All grantees are required to submit a written activity report, as well as budget-to-actual financial reports, over the course of the project. A full final report is required in order to receive payment of the final grant instalment. Instalment payments are always conditional upon receipt of required reports, in accordance with the schedule established between LAO and the grantee. The timing and frequency of reporting is tailored to the circumstances of each project.

17. I still have questions. Who can I contact?

Please direct your questions to education2016@lao.on.ca.