



Request for Proposal: Pro Bono Housing Project Evaluator

Purpose

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland (Cleveland Legal Aid) extends this Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Project Evaluator to assess their current Pro Bono Innovation Fund (PBIF) project: Lawyers Advocating for Safe Housing (LASH). LASH engages volunteers to serve tenants facing issues that cause unsafe and unhealthy housing including conditions issues, utility shut offs, lockouts, and evictions. By engaging an evaluator, Legal Aid seeks to ensure that it is making the best possible use of resources and personnel to provide high quality service to clients and meaningful support to volunteers. Cleveland Legal Aid supports pro bono attorneys with training, resource materials and mentorship. Cleveland Legal Aid is committed to sustaining this work with volunteers and seeks to ensure the project is fully integrated into the Volunteer Lawyers Program (VLP). Cleveland Legal Aid anticipates that the evaluator will review case and volunteer data, interview former clients, current volunteers and staff and make recommendations to improve the project and Cleveland Legal Aid's evaluation methods. Through this evaluation, Cleveland Legal Aid seeks recommendations that are centered on tenants' needs while also reflecting organizational capacity and priorities.

About the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland & LASH

Cleveland Legal Aid is a nonprofit law firm that provides high quality legal assistance to people with low incomes in civil matters in five counties in Northeast Ohio. Cleveland Legal Aid's mission *is to secure justice, equity, and access to opportunity for and with people who have low incomes through passionate legal representation and advocacy for systemic change.*

Cleveland Legal Aid created LASH in 2022 through a PBIF grant from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and has successfully engaged over 100 volunteer attorneys to address unsafe living conditions faced by tenants. Volunteer attorneys provide brief and extended service to tenants through monthly virtual clinics, in person events and traditional case placement. Legal Aid is now in its first year of a 2-year sustainability grant. During the sustainability period Cleveland Legal Aid plans to engage more attorneys in rural areas, assist tenants living in properties with lead hazards and conduct an evaluation process to ensure clients are receiving high quality assistance, volunteers are supported, and the work can continue. The LASH team consists of a lead attorney and a project assistant who works closely with the managing attorney of the VLP/intake group.

LASH has built a strong base of educated volunteers able to assist in housing matters. LASH regularly communicates with volunteers about client needs, updates on courts and relevant laws, and upcoming events. LASH hosts Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminars to help recruit and educate attorneys. In addition to CLE opportunities, LASH maintains an online reference bank that includes sample motions, previous CLE recordings, short "how to" videos, court rules, brochures, and referral sources. In addition, Cleveland Legal Aid provides mentorship to volunteers.

LASH seeks to engage with a Project Evaluator to assess the program that has been created thus far and determine how it can be improved upon. This Evaluator will assist with determining how to best

facilitate fully integrating LASH into Legal Aid's VLP programming going forward and maximizing the services offered through efficiencies. The Evaluator will also provide recommendations on how to recruit and recognize volunteers.

Project Description

Legal Aid seeks a Project Evaluator to examine the current LASH project, including service delivery models, engagement of volunteers and resources offerings to review for efficiency and effectiveness, and to create a plan to fully integrate LASH into VLP. The consultant will engage directly with the project lead attorney, administrative assistant and managing attorney of the VLP group.

The selected consultant will provide an initial project plan aligned with Legal Aid's timeline, outlining a clear, structured approach to the evaluation project.

Responsibilities of this consultant will include

- Interview members of the LASH team to assess workloads, workflows, and infrastructure
- Review internal SOPs
- Interview former clients and volunteers to understand their experience with Cleveland Legal Aid
- Develop a report and plan for the provision of effective and efficient services to tenants
- Develop recommendations for volunteer recruitment, support and recognition
- Assess how LASH has been integrated into VLP and make recommendations for further integration
- Recommend ongoing evaluation tools for the LASH team for both clients and volunteers
- Serve as a resource to LASH on best practices for strengthening the program
- There may be additional work, as determined necessary.

Qualifications

- Experience analyzing pro bono programs for legal aid organizations or similar organizations and a professional reputation of having successfully implemented the same
- Experience with SOPs, case management systems, and guided navigation tools
- An understanding of organizational process flow and tools, and experience successfully implementing organizational procedures and change
- Experience with process redesigns viewed through a trauma-informed, human-centered design lens
- The ability to think deeply about organizational process flow and create actionable plans and tools that can be implemented to achieve concrete success in meeting implementation goals
- Experience with the LegalServer case management system is a plus
- Past performance working with an LSC-funded project

Desired Deliverables

- Project Plan
- Documentation of interviews and surveys of stakeholders, including volunteers and clients served
- Final report that includes at least the following:
 - Comprehensive review and documentation of Cleveland Legal Aid's current LASH program, including review of all current SOPs, form and form management, project

plan, case acceptance guidelines, volunteer engagement and effectiveness of client service.

- Recommendations for areas of improvement and opportunities to improve and fully integrate the LASH program into VLP including recommendations for improved volunteer recruitment and retention and recommended staffing levels, and a plan to implement said improvements.

Estimated Project Timeline

An initial timeline is provided here; we are open to considering alternative deadlines if justified by the Consultant's response.

- RFP released: October 6, 2025
- Questions due: October 24, 2025
- Proposals due by 5 p.m.: October 31, 2025
- Interviews: November 3- November 14, 2025
- Selection announced: November 21, 2025
- Evaluation conducted: December 2025- May 2026
- Draft assessment submitted for feedback: June 1, 2025
- Final assessment submitted: July 1, 2026

Project budget: \$30,000

This amount will cover:

- Consultant fees
- Travel expenses and materials
- Administrative costs
- All other relevant expenses related to the project

Response Requirements:

To be considered for the Project Evaluator, please submit a proposal that addresses the following:

- Name(s) and experience of the person(s) who will be involved in this project
- Relevant experience, including experience:
 - with non-profit organizations and law firms, especially with non-profit organizations that work with low-income communities
 - with grant funded projects
 - evaluating pro bono projects
- A description of how you would approach this evaluation project, including the steps you will take and a timeline you recommend
- Names and contact information for three client references, preferably legal services or nonprofit organizations

How to Apply:

Please send RFP responses and inquires to Lauren Gilbride, Managing Attorney for the Volunteer Lawyers Program (lgilbride@lasclev.org) with the subject line "Cleveland Legal Aid LASH Program Evaluator" by October 31, 2025.