



Request for Proposals (RFP)

LACI TIG25

Shared Governance Development

Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc.
54 Ellis St. NE
Atlanta, GA, 30303

Contact:
Virginia O'Reilly
vmoreilly@atlantalegalaid.org

Introduction and Purpose	2
Background	2
About Atlanta Legal Aid Society	2
Project Overview	2
The LACI Community	3
Scope of Work	3
Deliverables	4
Timeline	5
Procurement Phase	5
Project Phase	6
Evaluation Criteria	7
Proposal Submission Instructions	7
Atlanta Legal Aid's Rights	8
Confidentiality	8
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)	9
Questions	9
Deadline	9

Introduction and Purpose

Atlanta Legal Aid Society (ALAS) seeks proposals from qualified consulting firms to evaluate, propose, and facilitate the development of a Shared Governance Framework for the Legal Aid Content Intelligence (LACI) system.

The purpose of this engagement is to assess our current landscape and future horizons to establish a sustainable, collaborative model for the open-source management of LACI. The selected vendor will work with ALAS and its national partners to design a governance structure that balances high technical integrity with a "low-effort buy-in" for participating organizations. Crucially, this framework must also accommodate LACI's diverse and growing ecosystem, which includes open-source developers, third-party technology vendors, and LSC funded or non-LSC funded legal service providers.

The ultimate goal is to transition LACI from a single-agency development project into a multi-state collaborative governance body, capable of overseeing long-term maintenance, code contributions, and feature prioritization for the entire LACI ecosystem.

This RFP outlines the project background, the specific scope of governance services requested, expected deliverables, and evaluation criteria. We strongly encourage applications from vendors with demonstrated experience in lean governance, agile open-source community management, or collaborative technology projects within the nonprofit or legal services sectors.

Background

About Atlanta Legal Aid Society

Founded in 1924, Atlanta Legal Aid Society (ALAS) provides free civil legal services to low-income individuals across the Atlanta metropolitan area. With over 100 years of service, our mission is to provide free civil legal assistance to help people in need access justice to protect their rights and secure their safety and stability. In recent years, ALAS has become a leader in legal technology, leveraging resources like Georgia's LawHelp website, GeorgiaLegalAid.org, and LAVA (Legal Aid Virtual Assistant) to improve the accuracy and efficiency of legal information delivery.

Project Overview

To keep vital resources like GeorgiaLegalAid.org and LAVA up to date, we are implementing the open source software project LACI (Legal Aid Content Intelligence). This software system tracks relevant legal documents and the external authorities they depend on, empowering users to efficiently manage necessary legal information updates. Because Georgia and US/federal authorities are available online, LACI can periodically check them and automatically alert editors when an underlying law changes. Conversely, when internal documents are updated, LACI prompts reviewers to ensure the cited authorities remain accurate.

Through a Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), ALAS is spearheading an expansion of LACI to:

- Monitor Georgia-specific authorities (statutes, rules, and regulations).

- Develop AI-powered tagging tools to identify legal references in internal and public documents.
- Create a web-monitoring feature to notify staff when external self-help pages require updates due to changes in the law.
- Develop a shared governance framework for sustaining the LACI ecosystem.

The LACI Community

Originally developed by Lone Star Legal Aid (LSLA), LACI is an innovative system designed to monitor changes in statutes, regulations, and court rules. As LACI expands to multiple states—including current and future partners such as Lone Star Legal Aid, Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC), Minnesota (LawHelpMN), and Idaho Legal Aid Services (ILAS)—it is transitioning into a true open-source community asset.

ALAS recognizes that the long-term success of LACI depends on a formal governance structure that encourages a common shared body of software and ensures high standards for security and quality. However, many legal aid partners have limited technical staff, and the broader community of stakeholders is highly varied. Therefore, this project seeks to build a shared governance model that provides clear pathways for contribution of resources, technology, and decision-making that benefit the LACI community without creating an administrative burden that discourages participation.

The selected vendor will help research the best path forward and propose a transition from an informal working group to a more structured governance structure, ensuring this powerful tool and its associated assets remain a stable, high-quality resource for the national legal aid community for years to come.

(Note to vendors: You can learn more about LACI concepts and terminology from the informational videos published on the [\[LACI YouTube channel\]](#). The LACI source code is available from our [\[Git repository\]](#).)

Scope of Work

The selected vendor will assess, propose, and facilitate the implementation of a Shared Governance Framework for the LACI system. Working with ALAS, its partners, and other interested parties as appropriate, the vendor will help establish a sustainable model for the collaborative, open-source development and maintenance of LACI. We rely on the vendor to propose the most effective mechanisms to achieve these goals.

The engagement will include, at a minimum, the following areas:

- **Stakeholder Assessment & Research:** Conduct research with current and potential LACI stakeholders (including but not limited to ALAS, LSLA, TLSC, LawHelpMN, ILAS, and external technical contributors) to understand their capacities, governance preferences, and operational constraints.
- **Environmental Scan & Case Study Research:** Research and analyze both successful and failed shared governance models in relevant fields (such as open-source civic tech,

public interest technology, or collaborative legal services). Identify best practices and common pitfalls to inform the proposed LACI framework.

- **Model Proposal & Participation Protocols:** Based on research findings, propose a formal collaborative governance body (e.g., steering committee, consortium, nonprofit foundation, etc.). Define tiered levels of participation to ensure a "low effort buy-in" remains a priority for partners with limited resources. Propose methods of making changes to the governance framework and protocols.
- **Asset & Resource Management Strategy:** Propose strategies for the coordinated management, administration, and ownership of LACI's digital assets (e.g., Git repositories, Google Groups, social media pages, and web domains).
- **Contribution & Code Review Standards:** Establish technical standards for how different organizations contribute code and the procedures for rigorous code review and testing to maintain system integrity. Establish procedures for coordinated vulnerability and issue reporting and patching across all participating partners to maintain system integrity.
- **Collaborative Decision-Making Framework:** Draft policies for software release cycles, feature prioritization, and resolving technical variances across different state implementations.
- **Long-Term Sustainability & Maintenance:** Develop a plan for the ongoing maintenance of features built under this TIG (such as the AI tagging tool and web monitoring) and future iterations of the LACI codebase. Propose viable financial or operational models to support this sustainability. Establish a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework with specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track the health of the LACI ecosystem (such as frequency of code contributions, response time for security updates, and partner participation rates).
- **Intellectual Property & Licensing Guidance:** Advise on shared copyright and licensing terms, specifically reviewing the *AGPLv3 license*, to ensure the software remains open-source and accessible.
- **Governance Transition:** Facilitate the transition of the initial working group into the agreed-upon permanent governance structure for long-term open-source sustainability.

Deliverables

The selected vendor will provide the following deliverables to ensure a functional and transparent governance structure:

- **Needs Assessment & Model Proposal Report:**
 - A summary of stakeholder research findings.
 - An analysis of external case studies, highlighting lessons learned from other open-source or collaborative technology projects.

- Proposals for 2-3 potential collaborative governance structures, highlighting the recommended approach for LACI, including options for financial sustainability and stakeholder administration.
- **Comprehensive Governance Framework Document:**
 - Formalized policies covering the accepted governance model, contribution protocols, release cycles, and testing standards.
 - Defined decision-making systems for technical updates and resource allocation.
 - A plan for the administration and oversight of LACI digital assets (Git repositories, communication and outreach channels, etc.).
 - A sustainability plan for the long-term hosting and maintenance of the shared LACI assets.
 - A Technical & Ethical Standards Manual for formalized protocols for cross-state interoperability, version control, architectural standards, security vulnerability response, etc.
 - A charter document outlining the roles, responsibilities, and meeting cadence for the newly established permanent governance body, as well a protocol for updating the charter after adoption
 - A Governance Health Dashboard or KPI Scorecard template to be used by the established steering committee to evaluate the model's effectiveness annually.
- **Permanent Governance Repository:**
 - Establishment of a permanent, accessible online location for all governance guidelines, technical documentation, and replication guidance.
 - Formalized onboarding materials to the future stakeholders to ensure understanding of the governance model.
 - Sample templates for future contribution agreements or MOUs between partner agencies.
- **Final Report & Sign-off Portfolio:**
 - A comprehensive final report detailing the research methodology, chosen governance structure, and implementation outcomes, specifically designed to support ALAS's final grant reporting requirements to the Legal Services Corporation (LSC).
 - Evidence of official sign-offs on the governance framework from core partner organizations.

Timeline

Procurement Phase

- **RFP Issued:** April 20, 2026
- **Vendor Questions Due:** April 30, 2026
- **Responses to Questions Provided:** May 11, 2026

- **Proposal Submission Deadline:** May 29, 2026
- **Vendor Interviews (if applicable):** June 8 – 13, 2026
- **Contract Negotiation and Execution:** June 23, 2026

Project Phase

We expect the project to start on August 1, 2026. We propose the following timeline; should you propose a different one please make that explicit in your response. The final deliverable must be tendered no later than August 31, 2027.

- **Phase 1: Research, Assessment, and Initial Policy Drafting (Months 1–3)**
 - Conduct stakeholder interviews to assess capacity and governance preferences.
 - Facilitate the interim Developing LACI Governance Working Group.
 - Conduct an environmental scan and case study research of successful and failed shared governance models in relevant open-source or public interest fields.
 - Present the Needs Assessment & Model Proposal Report for review.
 - Lead the development of initial technical policies focused on testing standards to support the parallel development of AI and Web monitoring tools.
- **Phase 2: Pilot Testing and Framework Refinement (Months 4–6)**
 - Pilot the draft governance and technical protocols alongside the software testing of the Georgia LACI instance and AI tagging tools.
 - Circulate the draft governance framework to all partners and revise the documents based on their feedback to ensure a "low-effort buy-in" fits the proposed structure.
 - Begin drafting specific policies for the long-term maintenance of the new features built during this grant period.
- **Phase 3: Consensus, Formalization, and Sign-off (Months 7–9)**
 - Obtain official consensus and sign-offs on the finalized governance framework and organizational structure from all partner organizations.
 - Determine and establish the permanent online location for all governance guidelines and technical documentation.
 - Finalize the approach for long-term hosting and system maintenance to ensure the project remains viable post-grant.
- **Phase 4: Implementation and Transition (Months 10–12)**
 - Finalize and publish all governance documentation, workflows, use cases, and replication guidance for future LACI adopters.
 - Transition the interim working group into the permanent, formalized governance body to oversee long-term open-source sustainability and code review.
 - Provide final peer review of all materials and lead a final briefing for ALAS leadership on the stabilized sustainability environment.
- **Ongoing (Post-Engagement)**

- o Findings may be used to inform future funding applications and strategic planning.
- o Vendors may be considered for follow-up engagements, subject to performance and organizational needs.

Evaluation Criteria

Each section below is given a weight for the section. Individual criteria in each section are not exclusive.

Relevant Experience and Qualifications (25%)

- Demonstrated experience researching, proposing, and managing open-source communities, technology collaboratives, or shared governance structures.
- Experience working with nonprofit, legal services, or other resource-constrained organizations.
- Familiarity with open-source licensing models (e.g., AGPLv3).

Approach and Methodology (25%)

- Clarity, feasibility, and completeness of proposed approach to scope and deliverables.
- Ability to balance rigorous technical standards with varying capacities from diverse partners.
- Alignment of methodology with the exploratory, multi-stakeholder scope outlined in this RFP.

Deliverables and Reporting (20%)

- Quality and usefulness of proposed deliverables, including the framework, governance charter, contribution templates, and sustainability roadmap.
- Commitment to knowledge transfer and actionable recommendations that support LACI's long-term maturity.

Cost Proposal (20%)

- Overall cost-effectiveness and clarity of pricing structure.
- Transparency regarding fees, expenses, and a clear firm fixed-price structure.
- Alignment and transparency of potential additional costs dependent on the governance model selected.

References and Past Performance (10%)

- Strength of references from comparable clients.
- Evidence of successful project outcomes and client satisfaction in similar consulting/advisory roles.

Proposal Submission Instructions

Proposals must be twenty-five (25) pages or fewer, concise, well-organized, and submitted electronically in PDF format. Proposals must include the following components:

1. **Cover Letter:** Brief introduction of the firm, including an authorized point of contact.

2. **Respondent Information:** Company overview, history, client mix (percentage of nonprofit/government/commercial), and contact details.
3. **Experience and Qualifications:** Description of relevant open-source or collaborative governance engagements, and bios of key personnel.
4. **Proposed Approach and Methodology:** Detailed description of how the firm will conduct the stakeholder research, evaluate external shared governance models, propose the governance and asset management, and facilitate the working group.
5. **Deliverables & Timeline:** Outline of specific deliverables and a project schedule mapped to the phases outlined above.
6. **Cost Proposal:** Please submit a single firm fixed price (FFP) bid. Payment will be made upon milestone completion. The budget for this scope of work is \$24,000. Pricing must include all overhead costs.
7. **Subcontractors:** If applicable, state the percentage of work performed by subcontractors and their qualifications.
8. **References:** At least two (2) client references for similar work performed.

Atlanta Legal Aid's Rights

ALAS reserves the right to:

- Accept or reject any or all responses, or any part thereof.
- Waive any informalities or technicalities contained in any response received.
- Conduct discussions with respondents and accept revisions of proposals after the closing date.
- Make an award based upon various selection criteria.
- Request clarification from any respondents on any or all aspects of its proposals.
- Cancel or re-issue this RFP at any time.
- Retain all proposals submitted in response to this RFP.
- Invite some, all, or none of the respondents for interviews, demonstrations, presentations, and further discussion.

Confidentiality

During the selection and project execution phases, ALAS may give you access to ALAS's confidential or proprietary information. You agree not to use this information for your or any third-party's benefit and will not disclose this information to any person who does not have a need to know.

ALAS will not under any circumstances disclose any information submitted by Respondent to any other Respondents, except the questions and answers described above. ALAS will not disclose any information submitted by Respondent to ALAS to any other parties until after the contract is finalized.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and associated federal regulations may require ALAS to disclose certain documents to the public, including portions of your proposal. Generally, ALAS will not release any documents that would cause competitive harm to a Respondent or potential Respondent.

You are encouraged to label any confidential information contained in your proposal to facilitate ALAS's ability to withhold it from disclosure.

Questions

Submit in writing by May 4 2026, to Virginia O'Reilly, vmoreilly@atlantalegalaid.org. Please include "RFP for LACI TIG25 - Shared Governance Development" in the subject line.

Deadline

Proposals must be received by **5:00 PM (US/Eastern) on May 29, 2026**.