

Request for Information: AI Architecture, Governance, and Security Consulting Services

Request for Information (RFI)

AI Architecture, Governance, and Security

Issued by: Legal Aid Chicago

RFI Purpose: Inform market research and cost estimation for anticipated projects.

Contact: Vivian R. Hessel, Chief Information Officer

Email: aiarchitecture@legalaidchicago.org

Subject line: RFI Response – AI Architecture, Planning, and Governance Consulting

Response due date: September 30, 2026

1. Introduction

Legal Aid Chicago is conducting market research to identify qualified firms or consultant teams with expertise in artificial intelligence (AI) planning, governance, technical architecture, legal/regulatory compliance, cybersecurity, change management, and implementation planning.

This RFI is intended to help Legal Aid Chicago better understand:

- Vendor qualifications and relevant experience
- Available service models and staffing approaches
- Typical deliverables and methodologies
- Estimated costs and pricing assumptions
- Key risks, dependencies, and timeline considerations

This RFI is being issued for **information-gathering purposes only**. It is **not** a Request for Proposals (RFP), and it does **not** obligate Legal Aid Chicago to award a contract or to reimburse any costs associated with responding.

2. Organizational Context

Legal Aid Chicago is exploring how AI may be used responsibly, securely, and effectively across the organization to improve client services, increase staff efficiency, enhance knowledge management, and support access to justice. Current planning priorities include AI readiness assessment, governance and policy development, technical architecture and security design, vendor procurement strategy, and an implementation roadmap that includes training and evaluation frameworks.

Legal Aid Chicago's internal policies require careful handling of low sensitivity, sensitive, and highly sensitive data; public AI tools must not be used with PII, confidential information, sensitive information, highly sensitive information, or client information, while internal or Legal Aid Chicago-managed AI tools are approved for use with sensitive data subject to policy requirements.

3. Project Objectives Under Consideration

Legal Aid Chicago is interested in learning how vendors would support some or all of the following activities:

1. **AI Readiness Assessment**
Assess current workflows, systems, data, and organizational readiness for AI adoption.
2. **Governance and Policy Development**
Develop AI governance structures, acceptable use guidance, risk management processes, data handling requirements, and oversight practices.
3. **AI Architecture and Security Design**
Define secure architecture options, integration considerations, access controls, retention requirements, and safeguards appropriate for a legal services environment.
4. **Vendor Procurement Strategy**
Support market research, vendor evaluation criteria, tool comparisons, and procurement planning. The planning grant guide specifically contemplates RFIs to obtain realistic cost estimates.
5. **Implementation Roadmap that Includes Training and Evaluation Plans**
Produce a phased implementation roadmap with preliminary budget estimates, a training plan, and evaluation measures that help to assess adoption.

4. Requested Information

Please respond to the questions below as completely as possible. If a question does not apply, please indicate "Not Applicable."

A. Vendor Profile and Qualifications

1. Company name, headquarters location, and year established.
2. Brief overview of your firm and core service areas.
3. Description of your experience with:
 - AI strategy or AI transformation planning
 - AI governance and policy development
 - AI architecture or secure deployment planning
 - Cybersecurity, privacy, or risk assessment
 - Legal services, legal aid, justice sector, nonprofit, or similarly regulated environments

4. Size of firm and number of staff dedicated to AI-related consulting/services.
5. Whether your firm would serve as a prime contractor, subcontractor, or either.
6. Whether you use subcontractors, and if so, for what functions.

B. Relevant Experience

7. In 2500 words or less (i.e., approximately 500 words or less for each description), please describe up to five comparable projects completed within the last several years that involved one or more of the following:
 - AI planning or readiness assessment
 - AI governance and policy development
 - Secure AI architecture planning
 - Vendor/tool evaluation
 - Implementation roadmap and budgeting
 - Work with legal organizations, public interest organizations, or organizations handling sensitive/confidential data
8. For each example, please include:
 - Client type (you may anonymize if necessary)
 - Project scope
 - Deliverables produced
 - Approximate project size or consulting level
 - Your firm's role

C. Proposed Approach

9. What project approach or methodology would you recommend for an organization seeking to develop an AI readiness assessment, governance framework, architecture blueprint, vendor strategy, and implementation roadmap?
10. Which activities do you typically perform directly, and which would require partners or subcontractors?
11. What information, access, or internal participation would you typically need from the client?
12. What risks, dependencies, or common barriers should an organization anticipate during this type of planning effort?
13. What deliverables would you typically produce for this type of engagement?

D. Governance, Privacy, Security, and Risk Management

14. Describe your experience developing AI governance frameworks, including acceptable use, review responsibilities, issue escalation, and human oversight.
15. Describe how you evaluate confidentiality, privacy, security, and bias risks when assessing third-party or enterprise AI tools.

16. Please describe any risk management frameworks, security frameworks, or governance standards your firm commonly uses in this work (for example, if applicable, frameworks related to AI risk management, cloud security, privacy, or vendor due diligence).
17. If your work includes evaluation of third-party AI vendors, what information do you typically request regarding:
 - Model training/use of customer data
 - Data retention/deletion
 - Subprocessors/supply chain
 - Security audits or certifications
 - Incident response / breach notification
 - Access controls / administrative privileges

Please describe your experience working in environments that handle confidential information, sensitive personal information, or client-related data.

E. Staffing and Team Structure

19. Who would be assigned to this type of engagement? Please provide:
 - Role/title
 - Area of expertise
 - Relevant experience
 - Whether staff are employees or subcontractors
20. Please identify the proposed project lead and summarize that person's qualifications.
21. Please indicate whether your team includes expertise in:
 - AI governance / policy
 - Cybersecurity / privacy
 - Cloud / architecture
 - Change management / training
 - Legal / regulatory / ethics

F. Timeline and Level of Effort

22. Based on the scope described in this RFI, what project duration would you typically recommend for a planning engagement of this type?
23. Please describe major project phases or workstreams you would expect to include.
24. Please identify any assumptions that would materially affect scope, schedule, or budget.

G. Estimated Costs

25. Please provide a **non-binding estimated cost range** for the following options, if applicable:
 - AI readiness assessment only
 - Governance and policy framework only
 - Architecture and vendor strategy only
 - Full planning engagement covering all workstreams

26. Please explain your pricing model (for example: fixed fee, time and materials, milestone-based, blended rate, role-based hourly rates, or other).
27. If you use hourly rates, please provide estimated ranges by role.
28. Please identify the principal cost drivers and any optional or variable-cost items.
29. Please indicate what assumptions underlie your estimates.

H. Deliverables and Documentation

30. Please indicate whether you can provide examples or descriptions of the following deliverables from comparable work:
 - Readiness assessment
 - Governance framework
 - AI policy / acceptable use policy
 - Vendor due diligence questionnaire
 - Architecture blueprint
 - Phased roadmap
 - Training/adoption plan
 - Evaluation plan
 - Draft RFP / Scope of Work materials

I. References

31. Please provide two or three client references for similar work, if available.

5. Desired Response Format

Please submit responses in PDF or Word format and organize them using the headings above. Marketing materials may be included as an appendix.

6. Optional Attachments

Respondents may attach:

- Brief biographies or resumes of key personnel
- Sample deliverable excerpts (redacted if necessary)
- Capability statement
- Pricing sheet or rate card

7. Confidentiality / Sensitive Information Notice

Please do not include confidential, proprietary, or sensitive information in your response unless clearly marked. Legal Aid Chicago may use information gathered through this RFI to inform future procurement documents, internal cost estimation, and planning activities.

8. RFI Disclaimer

This RFI is for planning and informational purposes only. It is not a solicitation for bids or proposals, and Legal Aid Chicago reserves the right to issue a future RFP, modify the anticipated scope, or not proceed with any procurement.

9. Submission Information

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