

Request for Proposals Evaluation of Montana TIG 20021 Project

We will consider all responses that are sent to the Project Coordinator, Alex Clark, at aclark@mtlsa.org by 5:00 pm MST on Wednesday, December 8, 2021. Please include the name of the project, "Evaluation of Montana TIG 20021 Project" in the subject line. All vendor communication concerning this Request for Proposal must be directed to aclark@mtlsa.org. Any oral communications will be considered unofficial and nonbinding on MLSA. Only written statements issued by the Project Coordinator may be relied upon.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Through this Request for Proposal (RFP), Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) is soliciting responses from vendors interested in evaluating the effectiveness of MLSA's Consumer Financial Stability Tools project, funded by Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) 20021. In addition to conducting the evaluation, the successful vendor will produce a draft of the final evaluation report by November 4, 2022.

WHO WE ARE

MLSA is a law firm that empowers low-income people by providing legal information, advice, and other services free of charge. Our mission is to protect and enhance the civil legal rights of, and promote systemic change for, Montanans living in poverty. MLSA accomplishes its mission by engaging with the low-income community in Montana to become their advocates to change the systems that keep people in poverty.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The object of the Consumer Financial Stability Tools project is to develop, test, and implement a series of self-help consumer law tools that will use branching logic and a guided interview process to provide targeted legal information to users with debt-related legal problems. These tools include:

1. A garnishment calculator to allow users to determine the impact a garnishment order might have on them;
2. A tool to help identify possible claims, defenses, and exempt income and to push out education resources on their common consumer questions;
3. An automated interactive pro se Answer form to make it easier for users to respond to lawsuits.

This evaluation will assess the usability, usefulness, and legal accuracy of the Consumer Financial Stability Tools to make it easier for low income Montanans with debt-related legal issues to address their legal problems on their own in accordance with state and federal law. In addition, the evaluator will help compile evaluation data into a final report that will be submitted to the Legal Services Corporation no later than December 31, 2022.

To accomplish this, the evaluation will be comprised of information and data about the Consumer Financial Stability Tools from:

1. List of interviews produced.
2. Confirmation from MLSA attorneys that tools are accurate, consistent with relevant state and federal laws, and acceptable for use.
3. Description of usability testing.
4. Results of usability testing.
5. Description of notable changes made to interviews following initial testing.
6. Interviews and surveys of users, advocates, self-help law center staff, and MLSA attorneys.
7. User feedback from website.
8. Field observation data.
9. Anecdotal evidence from development process.
10. Description of collaboration with Montana's Self-Represented Litigants (SRL) Committee, including introduction of interview/form, responses, and resulting changes to interview and form.
11. List of partners consulted for outreach plan.
12. Copy of outreach plan.
13. Description of outreach activities, including roles and activities of community partners.
14. Data from MontanaLawHelp.org server and website host on number of page views, number interviews completed, and number of finalized forms downloaded.
15. Anecdotal evidence from staff, clients, MontanaLawHelp.org users, and community partners regarding their knowledge and use of the forms.

For more information see the LSC Technology Initiative Grant Program Evaluation Plan included in Appendix A of this Request for Proposals.

It is anticipated that the vendor will work with MLSA staff to conduct the surveys and interviews and that necessary data will be gathered by MLSA and project partners.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

- RFP released – November 17, 2021
- Responses due no later than 5pm MST, December 8, 2021
- Successful vendor announced – December 15, 2021
- Contract signed and work commences – December 29, 2021
- Draft of evaluation by November 4, 2022
- Revisions to be completed by December 9, 2022

PAYMENT

It is anticipated that payment will be made in two installments contingent upon of the completion of the final evaluation report. The first payment will be made on or before November 4, 2022, upon satisfactory completion of the initial draft of the final evaluation report. The second and final payment will be made upon the satisfactory completion of the revisions to

the final evaluation report, on or before December 9, 2022. Alternative payment arrangements, including monthly billing for time spent, may be negotiated with a successful contractor.

THE INFORMATION WE NEED

For consideration, please provide:

1. Vendor's name, address, federal tax identification number, Uniform Business Identifier (UBI) number, and a description of the vendor's legal status, e.g., corporation, sole proprietor, etc.
2. Vendor contact's name, telephone number, fax number and email.
3. A statement that guarantees that the response constitutes a firm offer valid for sixty (60) days following receipt and that MLSA may accept any time within the 60 day period.
4. A statement on whether the vendor or any employee of the vendor is related by blood or marriage to an MLSA employee or resides with an MLSA employee. If there are such relationships, list the names and relationships of said parties. Include the position and responsibilities within the vendor's organization of such vendor employees.
5. State whether the vendor has been a party in any litigation during the past five (5) years, all such incidents except employment related cases must be described, including the other parties' name, address, and telephone number. Present the vendor's position on the matter.
6. Provide two (2) references for other similar projects you have completed. Please include a phone number or email address of the referenced individual so he/she/they may be contacted.
7. Provide an estimated number of hours you believe the project will take.
8. Provide a statement of your hourly rate and any other information about your compensation requirements.
9. Provide a statement of how you propose to complete the project.

Proposals that exceed 10 pages in length will not be accepted. Late proposals will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration. Vendors must respond to each requirement listed above. In preparing their response, vendors should restate each requirement and then give their response.

SELECTION CRITERIA

We will consider all responses that are sent to aclark@mtlsa.org by 5:00 pm MST on December 8, 2021. Please include the name of the project, "Evaluation of Montana TIG 20021 Project" in the subject line.

The following will be key factors in our decision-making process:

- Demonstrated commitment to exceptional customer service and responding to client requests in a timely fashion.
- Experience working with nonprofit organizations.
- Past performance working with MLSA (if applicable).

- Price that is commensurate with the value offered by the firm/individual and ability to work within a budget.
- Responses are presented in a clear, organized, and logical manner.
- Candidate has successfully completed similar projects and has the qualifications necessary to undertake this project.
- Can demonstrate detailed-oriented nature.

BUDGET

The budget for evaluation, including consulting, data collection and analysis, and report drafting, is \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Appendix A



**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) Program
Evaluation Plan Form**

Grantee name: Montana Legal Services Association
Submission date: May 6, 2021

TIG Grant number: 20021

Contact person: Alison Paul, Alex Clark
Email address: apaul@mtlsa.org, aclark@mtlsa.org

Phone number: 406-442-9830x115, 406-543-8343x220

Project Goal: To make it easier for low income Montanans with debt-related legal issues to address their legal problems on their own by developing automated Consumer Financial Stability Tools that will help guide users through their options related to debt, garnishment orders, and lawsuits in accordance with state and federal law.

Project Objective:

Develop a garnishment calculator to allow users to determine the impact a garnishment order might have on them.

Strategies / Activities:

- Identify and contract with developer vendor to build out garnishment calculator.
- In consultation with vendor, develop full business and technical specifications of garnishment calculator.
- Develop online garnishment calculator that will compute the amount of income a user could be garnished based on answers to a guided interview about type of debt and total income, as well as relevant state and federal law.
- Work with MLSA attorneys to ensure calculator is accurate and effective.
- Contract with usability testing vendor to ensure calculator is user friendly and to identify potential problems.
- Modify calculator to address any problems identified in usability testing.
- Train staff on use of garnishment calculator.
- Publish garnishment calculator to MontanaLawHelp.org.
- Reassess and modify the garnishment calculator based on full roll-out feedback.

Evaluation Data:

- List of interviews produced.

- Confirmation from MLSA attorneys that forms are accurate, consistent with relevant state and federal laws, and acceptable for use.
- Description of usability testing.
- Results of usability testing.
- Description of notable changes made to interviews following initial testing.
- Interviews and surveys of users, advocates, self-help law center staff, and MLSA attorneys.
- User feedback from website.
- Field observation data.
- Anecdotal evidence from development process

Project Objective:

Develop an online education tool to (a) help users identify possible claims, defenses, and exempt income related to consumer debt-related legal issues; and (b) push out relevant legal information for their common consumer questions.

Strategies / Activities:

- Identify and contract with developer vendor to create online education tool.
- Work with vendor to develop full business and technical specifications of online education tool
- Develop online education tool that will provide specific and targeted legal information about possible claims, defenses, and exempt income to users based on their answers to interview questions and push out relevant legal information for their common consumer questions.
- Work with MLSA attorneys to ensure tool provides accurate and effective information.
- Contract with usability testing vendor to ensure tool is user friendly and to identify possible problems.
- Modify education tool to address any problems identified by usability testing.
- Train staff on use of education tool.
- Publish tool to MontanaLawHelp.org and AskKarla.org.
- Reassess and modify the education tool based on full roll-out feedback.

Evaluation Data:

- List of interviews produced.
- Confirmation from MLSA attorneys that information provided is accurate, consistent with relevant state and federal law, and acceptable for use.
- Description of usability testing.
- Results of usability testing.
- Description of notable changes made to interviews following initial testing.
- Interviews and surveys of users, advocates, self-help law center staff, and MLSA attorneys.

- User feedback from website.
- Field observation data.
- Anecdotal evidence from development process.

Project Objective:

Use HotDocs and A2J Author to create a guided interviews that will produce an automated pro se answer form to make it easier for users to respond to lawsuits on their own.

Strategies / Activities:

- Identify and contract with developer for HotDocs and A2J automation.
- Work with vendor to develop automated answer interview and form.
- Collaborate with the Self-Represented Litigants Committee of the Montana Access to Justice Commission to review the interview and forms to ensure accuracy and consistency with court requirements.
- Contract with usability testing vendor to ensure automated interview and form are user friendly and to identify potential problems.
- Modify interview and form to address any problems identified in usability testing.
- Train staff on use of forms.
- Publish automated answer form to MontanaLawHelp.org.
- Reassess and modify the form based on full roll-out feedback.

Evaluation Data:

- Description of interview and automated document produced, with URLs.
- Description of collaboration with Montana's SRL Committee, including introduction of interview/form, responses, and resulting changes to interview and form.
- Description of usability testing.
- Results of usability testing.
- Description of notable changes made to interview and form following initial testing.
- Interviews and surveys of users, advocates, self-help law center staff, and MLSA attorneys.
- User feedback from website.
- Field observation data.
- Anecdotal evidence from development process.

Project Objective:

Conduct outreach and publicity to increase public awareness and use of the Consumer Financial Stability Tools.

Strategies / Activities:

- Work with MLSA staff, Montana State Bar, and other community partners and access to justice stakeholders to develop and implement outreach initiatives to maximize use of the Tools by low income individuals facing consumer debt-related legal issues.
- Develop outreach plan
- Conduct outreach activities.

Evaluation Data:

- List of partners consulted for outreach plan.
- Copy of outreach plan.
- Description of outreach activities, including roles and activities of community partners.
- Data from MontanaLawHelp.org server and website host on number of page views, number interviews completed, and number of finalized forms downloaded.
- Anecdotal evidence from staff, clients, MontanaLawHelp.org users, and community partners regarding their knowledge and use of the forms.