

Request for Proposal

Introduction

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid (Legal Aid) is accepting proposals from qualified consultants to assist with the development of a Strategic Racial Equity Action Plan (SREAP). Legal Aid is a non-profit law firm that provides access to the legal system for Minnesota's most vulnerable citizens.

Legal Aid has 180 staff located in Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Cloud, Duluth, Mankato, Fertile, and Wilmar who defend the basic rights for safety, shelter, food, health care, and education for our clients.

Background Analysis:

The purpose of this RFP is to identify a DEI Consultant who will partner with the Executive Director, DEI Officer, and Executive Management Team, and staff to identify and support Legal Aid in creating a framework to imbue DEI concepts and goals into its operations that can be actionable, measurable, and supported by staff. This should allow Legal Aid to continue building and maintaining DEI work after the contract has ended.

With the support of the Executive Director, Legal Aid strives to be a leader in providing continued support to all of its staff, and by extension its clients regarding DEI work. Legal Aid began its DEI journey in 2019 with the hiring of its DEI Officer. Soon after, Legal Aid brought in a consultant who introduced staff to DEI tools, facilitated equity training workshops, held trauma and healing sessions, and presented in-house learning opportunities. Under the guidance of the previous consultant, all staff, at that time, were administered the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). An estimated 30% received their results from the IDI.

Eligibility: Organizations eligible for funding must meet the following criteria:

- For-profit or non-profit organization (registered as a 501(c)(3) with the U.S. Internal Revenue) who has substantial portfolio of work in diversity, equity, inclusion and antiracism work
- Have a history of serving people in Minneapolis and greater Minnesota.
- Show reliable fiscal agency.
- Have headquarters or an office located in the City of Minneapolis, or the Twin Cities Metro area.
- Submit only one application per organization.
- The chosen organization MUST provide proof of general liability insurance of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) before a contract will be executed.
- Be a legal entity.
- Embraces an active approach toward achieving equity for all people, consider biased and racial systemic issues, and how these impact individuals.
- Have a demonstrated focus in the nonprofit sector.
- Experience facilitating workshops with participants of all professional levels and age groups.

Small and underutilized businesses are highly encouraged to apply.

Ineligible Organizations: Organizations that are ineligible for this RFP include the following:

- Local, regional, or state governmental entities and universities.

Terms of Project

The project is anticipated to last 6-12 months

Indirect and Administrative Costs

The proposal must include indirect or administrative costs, at a rate not to exceed ten percent.

Funding Timeline

Proposals should state the requested timeline, which should be between 6 to 12 months, and should start within 1 month of receiving funding.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activities described in the proposal must support leadership development and organizational engagement by members of staff. Eligible activities include but are not limited to: meetings, focus groups, and conferences. All sessions must be recorded and retained by Legal Aid.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Ineligible activities include fund-raising, religious-based activities, electoral campaigning, and professional lobbying.

REPORTING AND MEASUREMENT

Projects should begin upon receiving the funding, or on the start date given in the proposal. At the completion of services under the funding agreement, funding recipients will submit a report and present on that report within 45 days of completion of the contract. Reports will include a final account of the use of funds, a description of the accomplishments of the project and how they relate to the project goals, and a description of the issues encountered in the project and recommendations for further work needed to address these issues.

The Consultant may be expected to work with Legal Aid's leadership to evaluate the strategic operations and formulate future guidelines for those operations.

Section 1: Proposal Submittal and Closing Date

The Consultant shall submit their proposal to Danielle Shelton Walczak, Executive Director of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid and Jolene Chestnut, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, online at DEIConsultant@mylegalaid.org. **Proposals must be submitted at or before 4:30 P.M. CST, June 21, 2022.** All electronic submittals will receive receipt of submission via email if received and accepted.

NOTE: Late proposals will not be accepted.

Proposal Format

Information that is required from the applicant as part of the proposal must include:

- Contact information and indication of project leader.
- Clear narration of how the consultant proposes to meet the scope of work.
- Description of the consultant's qualifications to undertake the scope of work described and examples of similar projects in which the consultant has participated.
- Resumes of the consultant's team.

- Cost Proposal (inclusive of indirect and administrative costs)
- Proposed project timeline and milestones
- References, with contact information

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS – SELECTION OF CONSULTANT:

Proposals will be reviewed by an Evaluation Panel made up of the Executive Director, DEI Officer, Operations Director, and Human Resources Director. The Evaluation Panel reserves the right to select a "short list" of qualified Consultants who may be formally interviewed as part of the final selection, as deemed necessary by Legal Aid. Evaluations will be based on the required criteria listed in the Section titled "PROPOSAL FORMAT", and the following:

- Project understanding, responsiveness to and experience with the specific tasks in the scope of work.
- Goals and outcomes of the project are clear and succinct.
- Description of the consultant’s qualifications to undertake the scope of work described and examples of similar projects in which the consultant has participated.
- Capacity of the consultant to accomplish tasks on a timely basis, within Legal Aid’s requirements, and with appropriate reliance on Legal Aid’s resources
- Organizational and management capacity of the consultant is strong enough to successfully complete the project.
- Small & Underutilized Business participation.
- The budget fits the stated goals and outcomes.
- Supporting Information: resumes, brochures, case studies, previous work examples, etc.
- Diversity of the consultant team.
- References of past successful projects the consultant has conducted.

A formal Presentation/Interview may be requested of the “short list” Consultant/s. Specifically, Legal Aid requests that the Consultant’s Project Manager assigned to the proposed project team lead the Presentation and the actual members of the project team (including any sub-consultants) participate in the formal presentation/interview. Responders should be prepared to be available for a presentation/interview between Friday, June 24, 2022, through Wednesday, June 29, 2022. If held, the Presentation/Interview of the “short listed” Consultant’s may consist of the following elements:

- Discussion of the Consultant’s approach to providing services for this Project based upon the Scope of Services described herein.
- Overview of the Consultant’s experience as related to the Scope of Services, including qualifications and experience of assigned staff.

The Evaluation Panel may schedule and arrange the presentations.

***Section 2: Schedule: The following is a listing of key Proposal and Project milestones and duration:**

RFP Release	Wednesday, May 4, 2022
Questions on RFP due by:	Wednesday, May 18, 2022, EOB**
Responses to questions posted/responded by:	Tuesday, May 24, 2022, by 12:00 p.m.
Proposals due by:	Tuesday, June 21, 2022, EOB

Estimated Consultant Selection:	Friday, July 1, 2022, EOB
Estimated Services Start Date:	Wednesday, July 13, 2022
Estimated Services End Date:	Tuesday, January 19, 2023***

*Note: The above schedule is subject to change at the discretion of Legal Aid. ** End of business (EOB) is 4:30 p.m. CST ***Legal Aid extends the right to extend consulting services for an additional six (6) month period after consultation with the chosen vendor.

CONTRACT

The contracting parties will be Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid and the Contractor selected to provide the services as described herein. The selected proposal, along with the RFP and any counter proposal, will be incorporated into a formal agreement after negotiations. It is the intent of Legal Aid to award a single contract for a term of 6 to 12 months, with the option to extend the contract on an annual basis at the sole discretion of Legal Aid for up to two (2) additional years.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT/REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

The Contractor’s primary interface with Legal Aid will be with the Contract Manager who will act as Legal Aid’s designated representative for the Project. Prospective responders shall direct Inquiries/questions via email to DEIConsultant@mylegalaid.org.

All questions are due no later than 4:30 p.m. (CST), Wednesday, May 18, 2022, Responses to the questions will be sent no later than, 12:00 p.m. (CST) Tuesday, May 24, 2022, via email.

REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

Legal Aid reserves the right to reject any Contractor based on the proposals submitted.

ADDENDUMS OR CHANGES TO THE RFP

If any additional addendums or changes to the RFP are issued, they will be posted on the Legal Aid website at: <http://mylegalaid.org>

Legal Aid reserves the right to cancel or amend the RFP at any time.

SCOPE OF WORK

Project Description

Legal Aid seeks a consultant to assist the organization in creating a comprehensive plan to incorporate and imbed racial equity principles and strategies into operations, programs, services, and policies.

Areas to support and analyze are:

- **Legal Aid workforce: current demographics, hiring, retention, and promotion.**
- **Key administrative and workforce policies.**
- **Representation of diverse clientele and community partnerships.**
- **Data, metrics, and ongoing focus of improvement.**

In the creation of the comprehensive plan, our goal is to drive structural change within the organization and normalize conversations about race and equity; as well as create common

definitions and understandings of key terms such as implicit bias, structural and institutional racism, trauma, and antiracism. With this RFP, Legal Aid is also looking to operationalize a vision for racial equity. This means implementing tools of decision-making, measurement, and accountability. The chosen consultant's work should include, but not be limited to laying the proper foundation with clearly articulated goals and measurements from which to build on for the future and preparing leadership and staff to support the plan. This includes identifying necessary resources, skills, and competencies to advance our racial equity goals. Additionally sound racial equity principles and practices, as well as current and ongoing research should inform the process not only to influence the content of the plan but how it is framed. There must be a clear, articulable methodology attached to all aspects of the consultant's work which must include quantitative and qualitative data collection from internal and external sources. There should also be a clear set of findings that can provide a solid foundation to inform the plan.

Legal Aid's budget is traditionally geared toward annual investment into its substantive legal services. Used as a tactical tool it has been focused on ensuring adequate funding of existing work continues while proving modest additional investments. However, this time Legal Aid is unique in that there is a new Executive Director (ED), a first-time fully dedicated HR Director, and a fully dedicated DEI Officer. The new ED is interested in learning from this work how to redeploy and redistribute existing financial and human capital to better resource soon to be established DEI operational priorities and a clear process in doing so. Legal Aid expects of the consultant to help the organization take advantage of this unique time to establish an in-depth racial equity action plan with specific and measurable goals with clear connection to process owners and supporters across the organization.

A small internal work group will be formed to meet and work with the consultant. The expectation is that these meetings will take place weekly, or at the very least bi-weekly. This group will be tasked with collaborating with the consultant and providing the necessary internal qualitative and quantitative information; historical context; explanation of current process and procedures; administrative support; feedback on consultant work and ultimate prioritization of goals; joint oversight of the consultant's work plan progress inclusive of milestones and other indicators of movement and success. The Consultant is expected to assist Legal Aid in creating a 3-5 year plan.

Success will be defined by clear identification of operational priorities and a way to imbue DEI principals into them that are clearly defined and measurable, increased employee engagement, culture transformation, and building internal capacity to assess and sustain DEI efforts. Success will be measured by staff surveys, and evaluations from the internal workgroup(s), and the Management Committee.

General Scope of Work Assumptions

1. Weekly or bi-weekly in-person meetings (with a hybrid option, using Microsoft Teams software) with the internal workgroup.
2. Climate survey, analysis of the data to inform the plan. The collected information must be documented, provided to and communicated into meaningful and actionable information to the internal workgroup.
3. Conduct focus groups and observe the Legal Aid culture using a variety of methods. .
4. Facilitate strategic planning sessions.
5. Final presentation of the final report as directed by the workgroup.

