

VERMONT BAR FOUNDATION
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IOLTA Grant and Social Justice Initiative Grant Application Information and Guidelines

I. THE IOLTA PROGRAM

The Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Program is a successful partnership between Vermont lawyers and the banking community resulting in a statewide grants program to promote justice. Through IOLTA, client funds which are small in amount or held for a short period of time are placed in pooled interest-bearing accounts. The interest generated in these IOLTA accounts is forwarded to the Vermont Bar Foundation to be used for charitable purposes under guidelines set forth by the Vermont Supreme Court.

Vermont IOLTA Program funds have been designated for use solely for the following purposes:

- A. The preponderance of the funds shall be used to support legal services for the disadvantaged;
- B. Remaining funds may be used for public education relating to the courts and legal matters.

II. SOCIAL JUSTICE GRANTS INITIATIVE

In January 2022 the Vermont Bar Foundation will pilot a Social Justice Grants initiative in addition to our existing competitive grants program. This initiative aims to support projects that specifically identify, address and challenge systemic racism and prejudice which hinder the administration of justice for historically marginalized communities of color in Vermont.

Proposals submitted for the Social Justice Grants program must have a strong connection to our mission. Advancing the understanding of the actual effects of the law within our society and improving the administration of justice are central to the Vermont Bar Foundation's purpose and funding decisions for all grant programs.

Additionally, the VBF encourages proposals for the Social Justice Grants program to:

- Identify and address systemic biases in the justice system;
- Educate the public or other external stakeholders on racial justice issues affecting our legal system;
- Collaborate with Vermont courts and other providers of civil legal services to work towards institutional change for racial justice;
- And/or provide innovative solutions for eliminating legal barriers for BIPOC collectively.

At this time, the Vermont Bar Foundation must discourage against proposals aimed at improving internal organizational issues surrounding social and racial justice issues, such as implementing diversity, equity and inclusion programs or performing internal equitability assessments. While these tools provide meaningful insight and guide organizations toward equitable practices, VBF grant funding is limited and focused more on public-facing access to justice issues.

III. VERMONT BAR FOUNDATION GRANT POLICY

The Foundation Board has the discretion to set policy as to the allocation of IOLTA monies between and within the above two categories. Given this discretion, at least 90% of the funds available for grants are awarded to legal services for the disadvantaged and up to 10% are awarded to public education. The Board believes that Foundation monies should allow grantees to explore creative ways of providing needed legal services or law-related public education.

Programs for which IOLTA funds are requested must not be in direct competition with the private bar.

IV. IMPORTANT GRANT APPLICATION NOTES

- A. Legal services projects should involve the direct delivery of legal services by an attorney or by a qualified person under the supervision of an attorney.
- B. Public education projects should involve the direct education of a population group or groups about the courts or legal matters.
- C. The Foundation's grant cycle is July 1 - June 30.
- D. Submit Letter of Intent to apply by **January 21, 2022**. Forms can be found at vtbarfoundation.org, go to Grants tab, then to the sidebar "Forms & Reports". Applicant conference call – Required for "NEW" applicants, optional for repeat applicants. **January 28, 2022, noon - 1:00 p.m.**
- E. **The deadline for completed applications is Monday, March 7, 2022 by 4:00 p.m. The application and all attachments must be emailed as ONE pdf file titled with your organization's name to j.leavitt@vtbarfoundation.org.** Upon submission, all proposals become the property of the Vermont Bar Foundation, which has the right to use any or all ideas presented in any proposal submitted, whether or not the proposal is accepted.

V. IOLTA GRANT APPLICATION FORMAT

A. **Cover Sheet**

Please include all of the following on the cover sheet:

1. The name, address and telephone number of the program/agency making application for funds;
2. The name of the chief administrative officer along with email address;
3. The name and title of the person preparing this application;
4. The amount requested;
5. The category(ies) under which these funds are requested (grant categories include (1) civil legal services to the disadvantaged and (2) public education relating to the courts and legal matters). If the application requests funds in both categories because they

are interrelated, specify the amount of funds requested for each category. If the application requests funds in both categories and they are not interrelated, a separate application must be submitted for each category;

6. A one paragraph summary of the grant request. This summary should be a description that is suitable for publication;
7. Time line of proposed program;
8. Date and signature of person preparing application along with their email address.

B. Grant Narrative

1. Program History and Scope

- a) Describe the mission and history of the program/agency, and specifically how the requested IOLTA funds will be used - the goals and objectives, priorities and needs to be addressed, the population to be served, staff resources, and time-line.
- b) Please address the process by which the sponsoring program/agency determines client eligibility, if applicable, and attach a statistical summary of caseload data for the most recent year in which complete statistics are available.

2. Financial Need/Resources

Describe the program/agency=s efforts to obtain other funding and community support, and provide a listing of all current funding sources and the amount received in the current fiscal year from each source. Indicate if this same funding application or a similar application is being submitted to any other funding source and, if so, provide details about the funding source(s) being pursued and the amount(s) being requested.

NOTE: Please inform the IOLTA Program of grant awards received for the same or similar services(s) or project(s) while this IOLTA application is under consideration.

3. Tax Status

Applicants for IOLTA funds must be Vermont not-for-profit entities, and restrict the use of Foundation funds to law-related activities and purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

C. Budget

Provide the program/agency proposed budget for a twelve-month period and detail the amount requested through IOLTA. The budget should follow the format of the attached sample budget.

Attach to the budget a program/agency audit/financial review for the most recent year in which a complete audit/review is available.

Audit/reviews should clearly segregate and track the expenditure - and ending balance - of previously awarded IOLTA funds.

D. Report Requirement (Current Grantees Only)

Current IOLTA grantees will receive consideration for funding only if the six-month interim report describing activities and expenditures for the current grant cycle has been submitted to the Foundation by **January 30, 2022**.

Current grantees are encouraged to attach samples of any publicity, articles, printed acknowledgments, etc. through which the recipient has acknowledged the receipt and use of IOLTA funding.

Current grantees are encouraged to conduct surveys of user satisfaction for the service or program, and attach copies of the survey and results to their applications.

VI. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All attorneys whose representation of individual clients or client groups is made possible in full or in part by the Vermont Bar Foundation IOLTA Program are expected to adhere fully to the provisions of the Vermont Rules of Professional Conduct and to be guided by the American Bar Association Standards for the Providers of Civil Services to the Poor.

VII. APPLICATION EVALUATION

The Grants Committee evaluates the extent to which applicants and programs meet the criteria listed below. These criteria do not represent eligibility requirements--many applicants or programs could not possibly meet them all--but instead represent considerations for the Grants Committee to use in deciding among competing applications.

The Grants Committee evaluates the extent to which PROGRAMS:

- a. provide direct legal services to low-income Vermonters;
- b. address underserved needs or populations;
- c. avoid duplication of services in the service area;
- d. achieve broad geographic or demographic benefits, or, if local, have the potential for state-wide applicability;
- e. demonstrate innovative approaches or new ideas;
- f. have potential for independent continuity, or use challenge grants or other fund-matching arrangements to augment Foundation funds;
- g. demonstrate community support

The Grants Committee evaluates the extent to which APPLICANTS:

- a. have a history of service reflecting clear ability to deliver quality services;
- b. demonstrate cooperative efforts between service providers in their area;
- c. request funds for program rather than capital expenses;
- d. have sources of income in addition to Foundation funds.

VIII. THE MONITORING OF GRANTS

The VBF uses three monitoring procedures in order to insure accountability from its grant recipients. First, each applicant signs a GRANT CONTRACT as part of the application process, agreeing to certain terms and conditions.

Second, all competitive grantees submit both an INTERIM SIX-MONTH REPORT and a FINAL REPORT to the Bar

Foundation. In the Interim Report, grantees highlight the specific contributions or impact of IOLTA funding and describe and quantify the services or programs made possible by the grant expenditure to date. In the Final Report, grantees relate impact of funding, covering the entire grant cycle, and include a program narrative and a financial statement summarizing the expenditure of the IOLTA funds. *Grantees must either return any unspent funds at the end of the grant cycle, or submit a carry forward request with a full grant application for the next cycle.*

Third, the Board of Directors reserves the right to conduct on-site monitoring visits to any grantee of IOLTA funds.

IX. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about the IOLTA program or any aspect of the above described grant application guidelines and format, contact:

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Vermont Bar Foundation
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802-223-1400/Cell: 802-238-3208
j.leavitt@vtbarfoundation.org.

(Sample) BUDGET (Sample)

This is a sample budget. You may adjust categories if needed as long as the format is followed.

Please explain below how the requested IOLTA funds are to be used in each category. Please provide details below as to what other funding you have, either in hand or as a pending application to another source or sources.

	IOLTA	Other Funding Source	Total
Personnel Costs:			
Professional Staff Salary			
Support Staff Salary			
Payroll Taxes			
Fringe Benefits			
Total Personnel Costs:			
Non-Personnel Costs:			
Equipment			
Postage/Delivery			
Printing and Copying			
Rent and Utilities			
Supplies			
Telephone and Fax			
Training			
Travel			
Other (explain)			
Non-Personnel Costs:			
Total Project Budget			