

Alaska Legal Services Corporation
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP): Pro Bono Department
Assessment and Processes Audit

Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) requests proposals from an experienced and qualified vendor (or vendors) who can conduct a detailed evaluation and assessment of ALSC's pro bono program. This project is funded by a grant from the Legal Services Corporation.

1. BACKGROUND

ALSC was established in 1967 as a private, nonprofit law firm with a mission to provide high quality civil legal services to low income and disadvantaged people and communities to protect their safety, their health and promote family stability. Through advocacy, education, collaboration and litigation we empower individuals, protect fundamental rights, strengthen communities, create opportunities and achieve justice.

Legal assistance is provided by ALSC staff and pro bono volunteers who donate their time and services to further our efforts. Additionally, ALSC offers self-help resources to help individuals independently navigate the court system. ALSC's legal experts publish information on a variety of issues, offer community legal education, and refer clients to other social services as needed.

ALSC has approximately 60 staff members throughout 12 offices located in Anchorage, Utqiagvik, Bethel, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Nome, and Palmer. There are also staff members embedded within Medical Legal Partnership sites at tribal healthcare facilities. ALSC's service area covers the state of Alaska, which is larger than the states of Texas, California, and Montana combined.

ALSC is Alaska's only provider of free civil legal aid, and operates the largest pro bono program in Alaska. There are currently 3.52 ALSC attorneys available per every 10,000 Alaskan's in poverty. As such, there is great need for pro bono service. However, Alaska does not require pro bono work as a condition to bar membership and so most attorneys do not volunteer. There are over 3000 active members of the Alaska Bar. ALSC's pro bono program had 108 individual volunteers in 2019, 69 in 2020 (the drop likely due to COVID cancellations and roadblocks) and 94 in 2021. The unmet legal needs of low income Alaskans, however, have not dropped. For every case that ALSC accepts, we are forced to reject one for lack of resources.

Over the last several years, ALSC has taken incremental steps towards more robust pro bono. We created a pro bono training academy--focused on training and recruiting pro bono attorneys. This support system for our traditional volunteer attorneys began in 2015 when we created training CLEs and a resource library to assist as resources in representation. From that project grew the Community Justice Worker (CJW) training modules; training non-attorney CJWs in discrete areas of law who then volunteer to serve clients needing help in those areas. We have developed 6 high quality, remote, and asynchronous CJW training modules. The CJW program has grown quickly. ALSC has successfully recruited over 200 volunteer CJWs (and counting) who are in various stages of training and deployment and they are located in over 40 communities statewide.

The CJW program has grown into a significant addition to pro bono delivery in Alaska. In 2021, CJW case placements accounted for approximately 20% of total pro bono placements. In 2021 94 individual attorneys volunteered, and 21 individual CJWs volunteered, with most CJWs taking multiple cases. These measures show significant value added to our pro bono delivery model. There are so many more community leaders and helpers in Alaska than there are licensed attorneys that we expect the Community Justice Worker Program to grow exponentially in the future.

2. PURPOSE AND DELIVERABLES

ALSC received a Legal Services Pro Bono Innovation Fund grant to fund a pro bono processes and technology audit to assess the organization's use of pro bono, use of technology in pro bono, and develop a plan to integrate the traditional pro bono and community justice worker pro bono together, and integrate it into day to day operations across offices statewide. This project will be ALSC's first external assessment of pro bono delivery. The selected vendor will identify opportunities for improvement and propose recommendations for better streamlining of pro bono, integration into ALSC service delivery, and an appropriate staffing model as our pro bono department grows. ALSC will use the assessment findings and recommendations to develop strategies that will address current inefficiencies and create steps to achieve long-term pro bono goals.

Deliverables

- I. A written Project Plan that sets out the scope of work, tasks, schedules, and dependencies
- II. At least bi-weekly status report meetings with the vendor and ALSC staff detailing progress made on the Project Plan.
- III. A Pro Bono Assessment Final Report that includes but is not limited to:

- A. A summary of ALSC’s pro bono position, including strengths and areas for improvement.
 - B. Summary of findings from internal and external data collection with an emphasis on trends and effectiveness.
 - C. Summary and findings from staff interviews or surveys concerning pro bono staffing, usage of pro bono, workflow, and satisfaction that can be used to make additional decisions/recommendations regarding pro bono planning and training.
 - D. Analysis of pro bono policies and procedures with recommendations for improvement and policies that should be implemented.
 - E. Analysis of pro bono’s use in rural offices with recommendations on how to integrate pro bono into rural offices to provide better support for rural offices and communities.
 - F. Analysis of use of technology in pro bono with recommendations for improvement and policies that should be implemented.
 - G. Analysis of workflow between traditional pro bono and the CJW program, and recommendations for how to streamline or merge the two programs into one cohesive unit.
 - H. Recommendations for pro bono department staffing and oversight, including a five year staffing plan.
 - I. Estimated costs for any proposed component or solution.
- IV. A presentation of findings to ALSC’s Pro Bono leadership team and board of directors. Presentations can be virtual.

3. RFP SCHEDULE

| DATE | ACTIVITY |
|---------------------------------|---|
| October 26, 2022 | RFP Released |
| November 15, 2022 | Proposals are due by 5PM (Alaska Time) |
| November 18, 2022 | Vendor will be selected. All vendors will be notified of decision by 5 PM (Alaska Time) |
| No later than December 15, 2022 | Contract signed and work commences shortly after |

4. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND SUBMISSION

Proposals should contain the following:

- I. Vendor name, address, Federal Tax Identification Number, and description of legal status
- II. Vendor primary contact name, telephone number and email
- III. A statement guaranteeing the proposal constitutes a firm offer valid for 60 days following receipt and that ALSC may accept the offer at any time within the 60 day period
- IV. Vendor qualifications and background including experience and background in data collection and evaluation
- V. Vendor history of working with both legal services providers and evaluating pro bono delivery
- VI. Scope of work and proposed approach. Vendors may take the liberty of submitting a proposal with multiple options
- VII. Description of client expectations and deliverables
- VIII. Qualifications of assigned Staff.
- IX. Timeline/Schedule, including an approximate start date.
- X. Project Budget and cost estimates. If vendor chooses to submit a proposal with multiple options, a budget for each option should be included
- XI. Disclosure of any relevant conflicts of interest and pending lawsuits in which the vendor is a party
- XII. Two references for other legal services, law firm, or pro bono audits you have completed or participated in with name, phone, and email contact

Vendors are encouraged to submit any samples of previous relevant work or other documentation to support their proposal.

Proposals should be submitted by email to Sarah Carver at scarver@alsc-law.org. The email subject should include "RFP-Pro Bono Department Assessment." ALSC will respond to each submission to confirm receipt.

5. EVALUATION PROCESS

This RFP will be released October 26, 2022. Vendors should email questions to Sarah Carver, Justice for All Coordinator, at scarver@alsc-law.org referencing "RFP-Pro Bono Department Assessment" in the subject line. Proposals are due by November 15th. **5pm Alaska time**. An evaluation team of no less than two persons will review proposals, possibly conduct interviews, or submit written questions to vendors, and select a final vendor by November 18th. The selected vendor will be expected to enter into a contract with ALSC no later than December 15, 2022 with work to begin shortly thereafter. Vendors whose responses have not been selected for further negotiations or award will be notified by 5 PM Alaska Time on November 18, 2022..

6. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- I. **Costs of Preparing Responses**

ALSC will not pay any vendor costs associated with preparing proposals submitted in response to this RFP.
- II. **No Obligation to Enter Contract**

ALSC has no obligation to enter into a contract for services with the selected vendor or any vendor. ALSC may select more than one vendor or no vendor.
- III. **Responses Property of ALSC**

All proposals should include a statement that guarantees that the proposal is valid for 60 days from its receipt by ALSC and that ALSC may accept the offer at any time during the 60 day period.
- IV. **Proprietary Information/Public Disclosure**

All proposals received shall remain confidential until the evaluation is completed and the vendor is selected and approved. Thereafter, proposals shall be deemed public records.
- V. **Non-Endorsement**

The selection of a vendor does not constitute an endorsement of the vendor's services. The vendor agrees to make no reference to ALSC in any written materials, promotions, or presentations without the express written consent of ALSC.
- VI. **RFP Amendments/Cancellation/Reissue/Reopen**

ALSC reserves the right to change the RFP Schedule or issue amendments to this RFP at any time. ALSC also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP. All such actions will be noted on ALSC's website, www.alsc-law.org
- VII. **Payment**

Payment terms will be negotiated with the successful vendor and incorporated into the contract agreement between ALSC and the vendor. No payment will be made for work which is not properly authorized and contracted for.

7. COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

ALSC is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to building a diverse workplace and strongly encourage women, persons of color, LGBTQ individuals, veterans, persons with disabilities, and persons from other underrepresented groups to submit a proposal.