

Request for Proposals:
Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania (LASP)
Needs Assessment

Issued: June 30, 2023

1) Introduction:

LASP's mission is to provide quality legal representation to low-income and vulnerable people in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties Pennsylvania, to empower them to solve problems without legal representation through legal education and increased access to the courts, and to change community practices and systems that cause or aggravate poverty.

LASP was created on January 1, 2001, when four former legal services programs joined forces: Bucks County Legal Aid Society, Montgomery County Legal Aid Service, Legal Aid of Chester County, and Delaware County Legal Assistance Association.

2) Purpose of Needs Assessment:

As part of its commitment to providing high-quality legal services, LASP is seeking a consultant to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to identify the legal needs of low-income individuals and families in the counties LASP serves, and to determine how LASP can better address those needs. The assessment will also identify any gaps in services and potential barriers to accessing legal aid. Furthermore, the assessment will be used to develop a strategic planning tool to lead LASP's work in the community.

Results of the needs assessment will help identify:

- **Community Needs**
 - Identify priority needs in the community so LASP can align its priorities for programming and resource allocation;
 - Identify how LASP can better support community organizations dealing with evictions/housing when it cannot directly represent or serve their participants/clients;
 - Understand how people in the community would like to access LASP services;
 - Understand where LASP is serving people today. Are services available where we are and are there additional services we could be providing?
 - Determine whether access to LASP services is limited because of language barriers;

- Determine whether LASP is located in and accessible to low-income communities;
 - Determine whether LASP offices provide a safe, welcoming environment that maximizes client privacy.
 - Determine whether LASP buildings are accessible to individuals that are not typically abled.
- **Community Assets**
 - Resources available in the community to which LASP can align itself;
 - Gain Insight from individual donors, board members, institutional donors, and court systems;
 - Identify Community needs based on staff experience working with community partners.
- **Existing Services vs Identified Services**
 - Opportunities to expand and adjust LASP's services into areas that are not already being served in the community by other organizations;
 - Determine whether LASP offers technology solutions that are accessible and user friendly to its client population;
 - Identify opportunities to educate organizations and community groups about LASP's services;
- **Geographic and/or Demographic Disparities**
 - Determine how LASP may address, within our organization's restrictions, greater systemic and economic issues underlying our clients' current needs.
- **Regional and National Comparison**
 - Assess whether optimal working conditions are provided to staff;
 - Gather and analyze national/state/regional data regarding legal service practice areas and compare to our agency's data.

3) Request for Proposal (RFP)

Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania is issuing this RFP to qualified companies, non-profits, academic institutions, and individual consultants, to conduct a needs assessment of its service area as described above. LASP will award the consultancy based first and foremost on the quality of the proposal and will also consider cost.

4) Timeline/Due Dates

1 RFP Release Date - June 28, 2023

2 RFP Letter of Interest (LOI) Deadline July 14, 2023

3 RFP Questions Deadline July 7, 2023

4 Response to Questions Provided to LOI Respondents July 31, 2023

5 Proposals Due to LASP August 14, 2023

6 Notice of Award Released (on or before) August 20, 2023

7 Draft Document Submitted to LASP December 1, 2023

5) Description of Services

The selected contractor will be responsible for:

A. Coordination of a fully completed written community needs assessment, following, at minimum, the below outline:

- Executive Summary
- Description of Design and Methods Used
- Results of quantitative and qualitative data collection from: surveys, interviews, focus groups, relevant datasets, etc.
- Analysis of civil legal services needs and strengths
- Presentation of final needs assessment to staff and board
- Supporting Appendices

B. Data Collection, Design, and Analysis

Respondent/Contractor shall design all relevant surveys, interview questionnaires, and facilitation guides necessary to collect and analyze data regarding the civil legal service needs within LASP's service area.

Respondent/Contractor will administer all interviews or surveys, and facilitate all focus groups OR, where appropriate, effectively train staff/volunteers from LASP's civil legal service community to undertake a defined portion of the surveying/interviewing.

Upon reviewing several other civil legal needs assessments that include similar populations, LASP tentatively prefers a "mixed-methods" approach. Ideally, the needs assessment will incorporate the below-listed data sources (but LASP remains open to the contracted experts' guidance).

- Surveys, Interviews, and/or Focus Groups (whichever is most effective) of the following:
 - Board members, executive leadership, attorneys, paralegals and support staff at LASP;
 - Judges, court clerks, administrators, and other relevant court staff/officials;
 - Members and leadership of local bar associations;
 - Existing/recent LASP clients;
 - Existing/recent pro se low-income civil court consumers (those who have represented themselves in court without seeking out services from LASP—that is, "pro se");
 - Potential clients (e.g., those eligible, but not yet using free civil legal services for any reason), including those in minority populations which we anticipate oversampling;
 - Staff from other legal organizations providing free or low-cost civil legal aid to potential LASP clients;
 - Staff and students from local law school clinical programs engaged in serving the potential client populations;

- Staff from non-legal organizations serving the same client population (e.g., homeless shelters, victims' service providers, and other social service providers).

- Trend Analysis of Open and Closed Cases at LASP. Review of a random selection of civil cases opened between 2018–2022 by client legal issue and geographic distribution; and a review of cases closed by legal issue, level of service provided, and geographic distribution. (Note: we can pull and categorize the types of cases for the consultant, so that the consultant can focus on identifying trends.)
- Trend Analysis of Civil Law Court Cases by Client Eligible Population: Some eligible clients that are unaware of our services choose to represent themselves, rather than seek free legal counsel. An analysis of pro-se court cases (2018-2022) will help identify how the collaborative team can better educate and prepare low-income Southeastern Pennsylvania residents who wish to self-represent.
- Demographic Analysis (using existing publicly available data sources). Review of the service area's eligible client population, including estimated number, geographic location, and racial, gender, age, disability, and ethnic composition mapped in relation to availability of existing civil legal services for this community. If Respondent/Contractor deems it relevant, helpful, and affordable, we would also be interested in any data external to suburban Philadelphia.

C. Respondent/Contractor Presentation:

The consultant shall provide at least two (2) presentations, one (1) for the staff and one (1) for the board of directors, including opportunities for questions, to LASP at the end of the engagement highlighting the needs assessment process, and findings.

6) Proposal Contents and Submission Instructions

Consultant proposals should include:

- A. A written narrative answering the following:
 - i. With the information provided in this RFP (especially Section 6, A, B, & C), how does the RFP respondent propose implementing the needs assessment? (Where possible, RFP respondent should quantify how many interviews, surveys, or facilitated meetings they propose doing during the data collection stage.)
 - ii. What additional analysis or processes does the RFP respondent suggest being undertaken as part of this needs assessment, if any, and why?
 - iii. What cost or efficiency suggestions does the RFP respondent have for LASP's proposed needs assessment project, if any?
 - iv. How will the RFP respondent commit to meeting the deadlines listed in Section 5 (Timeline/Due Dates), if awarded this contract?

- v. Price and payment schedule for the project.
- B. A bio, resume and/or other items outlining RFP respondent's experience with community legal needs assessments and similar projects, and facility with skill sets commonly used in community legal needs assessments (e.g., statistical analysis, data visualization, survey design, project management, community outreach, and technical writing, etc.);
- C. A list of personnel/subcontractors who will work on the project (please provide resumes or bios);
- D. Samples or case studies of similar work projects that the RFP respondent has successfully completed; and
- E. Contact name, title, affiliated organization, phone number and e-mail of three contacts for whom the RFP respondent has conducted similar work in the past five years.

All final proposals and supplementary attachments must be emailed to RFP@lasp.org by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (subject line: "Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania Needs Assessment Proposal") on August 14, 2023.

7) Inquiries

Questions regarding this RFP are to be submitted to RFP@lasp.org (subject line: "LASP Assessment Questions"). A consolidated list of questions and their answers will then be emailed to respondents who provided valid contact information by the RFP inquiries deadline, July 24, 2023, as described in Section 5. Questions regarding this RFP will only be accepted by email at the e-mail address provided.

8) Award of Contract

Award of the contract resulting from this RFP will be based on the RFP respondent whose offer will be most advantageous to LASP and the client population in terms of quality, functionality, experience, effectiveness of past work, cost and other factors specified elsewhere in this RFP.

LASP reserves the right to: 1) Consider proposals based on their relative merit, risk, and values to the organization; 2) Negotiate with all service providers; 3) Reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability to any potential contractor, when it is in the organization's best interest; 4) Accept other than the lowest priced offer.

Proposals received will be evaluated by LASP on the following selection criteria:

1. Demonstrated experience with community needs assessments and similar projects, and facility with skill sets commonly used in community needs assessments.

2. Appropriateness and quality of the approach proposed in accordance with the questions asked in Section 7.
3. Results of communications with the RFP respondent's client references.
4. Familiarity with the legal aid and/or human services landscape.
5. Price, and the RFP respondent's willingness to help the collaborative team find cost-effective solutions to complete the assessment.
6. Quality of RFP respondent's communications and responsiveness during the RFP process.
7. Level of detail in respondent's description of staffing for the project.
8. Clarity of the description of services to be provided.
9. Clarity of the timeline for project, including payment schedule, information gathering, report production, and meetings.

RFP respondents may be asked to revise their proposal based on further negotiations. This document represents an initial request for proposals only and in no way should be construed as a contract or letter of intent.

9) Confidentiality

Unless otherwise required by law, all information disclosed by LASP during the proposal process shall be considered confidential and shall not be released to outside parties. Likewise, all proposals from RFP respondents will only be reviewed by LASP staff and/or Board as necessary for the fair selection of the contractor and will not be shared with outside parties, unless otherwise required by law.

10) Project Deliverables

All recommendations identified during this engagement will be documented and reviewed with LASP management. All deliverables produced during the engagement are for the sole use of LASP and will remain the property of LASP.

11) Supplementary Information

Respondents may find it useful to review the following links:

[Legal Services Corporation](#)

[Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network](#)

[Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Inc.](#)