



Memorandum

TO: Bar Associations

FROM: Betty Balli Torres, Executive Director
Jonathan W. Vickery, Director of Grants

SUBJECT: **Re-Posting Requests for Proposals for Pro Bono Legal Aid for Veterans**

DATE: July 20, 2010

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF) initially solicited proposals to fund a state-wide pro bono program that provides civil legal services for low-income Texas Veterans. The available funds were as a result of net proceeds of approximately \$230,000 from the Gala held by the Texas Access to Justice Commission. The Board of Directors was looking to make awards totaling \$230,000 for initiative(s) to address legal issues of access affecting low income Texas veterans by providing critical, often life-changing, civil legal services for Veterans in Texas.

There was some confusion as to whether noncurrent grantees could respond to the Request For Proposal (RFP and as a result several bar associations/bar foundations applied for funds to support or expand their veteran pro bono projects. In an effort to be fair and inclusive, the Board of Directors decided at its Board meeting on July 17 to open and extend the period for RFP's for bar associations only. Moreover, because of the tremendous interest in and the importance of this cause, the Foundation Board decided to add to the original available pool of funds and hopes to be able to match the \$230, 000 that was raised at the Gala. Please note that these are ONE TIME FUNDS and applicants must be 501 (c) (3) non profit corporations. Collaborations and partnerships with local legal aid and pro bono programs are strongly encouraged.

Grant proposals must be submitted by no later than **5:00 pm Friday, August 13th, 2010**. Attached is an application and budget that should be completed fully and e-mailed to jvickery@teajf.org

Background

Back on May 4, 2010, the Texas Access to Justice Commission hosted the "Champions of Justice Gala for Veterans". Proceeds from the event, have been designated to fund civil

legal services for Texas Veterans. The Champions of Justice Gala for Veterans coincides with the efforts of incoming State Bar of Texas President Terry Tottenham, of Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. in Austin, focus on assisting Texas Veterans. Tottenham's "Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans" initiative is to develop a network of lawyers to assist veterans with civil legal issues who otherwise could not afford counsel.

These funds are to address the increased demand for legal services at a time when many veterans are returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The selected grantee(s) will help increase, support and deliver civil legal services that help Texas veterans with many critical civil legal services in matters such as family law, employment, housing, consumer, bankruptcy and probate as well as including filing claims for compensation or pensions from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Claims are filed on behalf of indigent veterans suffering from service-connected disabilities such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Agent Orange related disabilities, and/or disabilities suffered by returning veterans from the Persian Gulf War. The scope of work to be funded can also help family members of living or deceased veterans apply for VA benefits.

Request for Proposals

TAJF is soliciting requests for proposals from current grantees to be used as seed money to staff and support a state wide pro bono project that compliments and furthers the mission of the Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans Project; enhancing Operation Enduring LAMP, an already existing military pro bono project as well as building on existing efforts and further support on efforts by the State Bar of Texas and Texas Lawyers Care and local pro bono and legal aid programs. Applicants' proposals must be identified as a lead grantee for state wide coverage or participating sub-recipient for coverage of one of the TAJF regions.

Interested applicants are encouraged to review the work being done by the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program of National Veterans Legal Services Program (www.nvlsp.org).

Applicants should demonstrate an ability to work with local bar associations, pro bono and legal aid programs and capitalize on their existing infrastructure to delivery pro bono services to Texas Veterans.

Any proposal submitted should be designed so that the project will continue to be supported in terms of recruiting, training, sponsoring clinics and placing cases after the grant period. Applicants' proposal should include a variety of pro bono and legal aid providers involved in the implementation of the project- Submitted applicants' proposals should include one or more of the following features:

- Designing and holding pro bono training for private and legal aid attorneys in representing veterans in one or each of the 3 TAJF regions
- Recruiting and supporting pro bono attorneys in providing legal services to veterans

- Establishing regular and ongoing clinical modules utilizing volunteers and legal aid staff targeting eligible low income veterans in heavily populated areas

Geographic Service Area

The geographic service area of any selected project is statewide. There are approximately 290 local, county, and specialty bar associations in Texas. TAJF also wants to ensure that the needs of hard-to-reach veterans in smaller communities and rural areas receive the same attention by working with the network of local bar associations across the state to help them create their own legal clinics. The selected grantee(s) will be a natural addition to those services to the public.

GOAL

The successful applicant proposal should include and address in their application the following stated goals and objectives:

Increase access to basic legal services for veterans who otherwise cannot afford or do not have access to legal assistance with measurable outcomes through a combination model of pro bono and in-house staff attorneys.

DESIRED OBJECTIVES:

- Designing and holding pro bono training for private and legal aid attorneys in representing veterans in each of the 3 TAJF regions
- Recruiting and supporting pro bono attorneys in providing legal services to veterans
- Establishing regular and ongoing clinical modules utilizing volunteers and legal aid staff targeting eligible low income veterans in heavily populated areas
- Support the State Bar of Texas, local bar associations with recruiting and training volunteer lawyers and help sponsor and coordinate pro bono civil legal clinics for veterans
- Through partnerships with veterans organizations, social service agencies and local legal aid programs, generate awareness among veterans about the funded veterans legal advocacy project and other available civil legal services
- Provide veterans with the resources they need to seek and receive civil legal assistance
- Create and provide a telephone hotline for veterans without regard to income eligibility, legal information for their civil legal problems

- Coordinate with Texas' three federally funded legal aid organizations, existing pro bono programs as well as veterans organizations, to identify veterans in need of basic civil legal services and recruit and train together private attorneys to offer free legal help to these veterans
- Provide local bar associations with the materials and other resources to successfully conduct legal clinics
- Recruit and train a measurable number of lawyers and track the number lawyers attending specially created clinics for veterans and to offer legal assistance to veterans.
- Create an online legal resource center for the veteran community by contributing content and materials to www.texaslawhelp.org and www.texaslawyershelp.org .

Collaborative Stakeholders

Any selected grantee would be expected to work with, coordinate and collaborate with existing stakeholders working to expand civil legal services to low-income Texas Veterans. This would include having the capacity to enter into collaborative arrangements with providers to offer assistance and support in specific regions and cities where there are large populations of veterans (see attachment) In addition to the three federally funded legal aid programs in Texas and the bar association pro bono programs, these stakeholders include:

The Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans (TLTV) project focuses on expanding and increasing the delivery of pro bono civil legal services to veterans or their family members who cannot afford or do not have access to basic legal services. The TLTV project expands to a statewide level a veterans' initiative begun in 2008. The TLTV project works with state legal aid organizations and veterans' organizations, including the VA Medical Centers, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion. The goal is to identify and assist hard-to-reach veterans seeking legal assistance for benefit claims and civil matters, such as family law issues, consumer law issues, bankruptcy or tax issues, landlord/tenant disputes, and probate or estate planning.

Operation Enduring LAMP- (Legal Assistance for Military Personnel) is a program of the State Bar of Texas (SBOT) whereby local bar members provide pro bono legal assistance to include some court actions, to qualifying active duty military, members of the Reserves and National Guard called to active duty, and their families, occasioned by action in Afghanistan and Iraq. The program is provided by the SBOT' Texas Lawyers Care Department, and Military Law Section. Most cases today involve divorce, child support, custody, or child visitation, occasioned by the stress occasioned by repeated deployments, especially for the Army.

Texas Lawyers Care- (TLC) is the pro bono/legal services support project of the State Bar of Texas. Established in 1982 to advocate on behalf of low-income Texans on

poverty issues of statewide importance, TLC is the only statewide organization providing training to local legal aid program staff and private bar attorneys, relating exclusively to the legal rights of poor Texans. TLC provides support, technical assistance, training, resource materials, and publications to staff and volunteers of all providers of legal services to the poor in Texas. TLC's annual statewide Poverty Law Conference, Pro Bono Coordinators Retreat, and LegalFront newsletter continue to provide a foundation for the delivery of quality legal services in Texas.

Project Time Period

The Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans is scheduled to launch project in June 2010 and will be promoted to local bar association leaders at the annual Bar Leaders Conference in Houston, July 23-24 and is expect to run approximately one year, from June 2010 to June 2011, to properly assist local bar associations in establishing their own pro bono civil legal clinics. The goal is for local bar associations to host pro bono civil legal clinics in their communities at least annually up to one per week, depending on the size and location of the local bar association and the legal needs of the local veteran community. A statewide effort for local bar associations to host a clinic on Veterans Day this year will be promoted to local bar leaders.

Funding decisions will be made sometime in mid-July and will begin September 1, 2010 and run for 12 or 24 months. Any selected grantee will be expected to meet with collaborative stakeholders immediately on how their TAJF funded efforts can assist and supplement their current efforts and build upon them.

Grant proposals parameters are:

- Grant Proposal should be submitted by no later than August 13, 2010 by 5:00 pm to jvickery@teajf.org
- The grants awarded may be for a 12 or 24 month period, beginning September 1, 2010.
- Income eligibility for funded services and support will be 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. Selected applicants must have the capacity and be willing to insure that all applicants are screened for income eligibility and that only TAJF eligible clients are served with TAJF funds.
- Preference will be given to applicants that have a demonstrated experience in recruiting, training and coordinating volunteer attorneys as well as in-house attorneys that can serve as mentors and oversee the quality of the legal work.
- These funds shall not supplant or be used in lieu of already existing programs and projects. The project proposal must be new or additional to the applicant or increase the current level of quantifiable services to veterans that the applicant has already providing through a specialized program specifically designed to serve veterans.

ATTACHMENT- Counties within the Three TAJF Service Areas

Northwest Region

Andrews County	Gaines County	Nolan County
Archer County	Garza County	Ochiltree County
Armstrong County	Glasscock County	Oldham County
Bailey County	Gray County	Palo Pinto County
Baylor County	Grayson County	Parker County
Borden County	Hale County	Parmer County
Briscoe County	Hall County	Potter County
Brown County	Hansford County	Randall County
Callahan County	Hardeman County	Reagan County
Carson County	Hartley County	Roberts County
Castro County	Haskell County	Rockwall County
Childress County	Hemphill County	Runnels County
Clay County	Hockley County	San Saba County
Cochran County	Hood County	Schleicher County
Coke County	Howard County	Scurry County
Coleman County	Hunt County	Shackelford County
Collin County	Hutchinson County	Sherman County
Collingsworth County	Irion County	Somervell County
Comanche County	Jack County	Stephens County
Concho County	Johnson County	Sterling County
Cooke County	Jones County	Stonewall County
Cottle County	Kaufman County	Swisher County
Crane County	Kent County	Tarrant County
Crosby County	King County	Taylor County
Dallam County	Knox County	Terry County
Dallas County	Lamb County	Throckmorton County
Dawson County	Lipscomb County	Tom Green County
Deaf Smith County	Loving County	Upton County
Denton County	Lubbock County	Ward County
Dickens County	Lynn County	Wheeler County
Donley County	Martin County	Wichita County
Eastland County	McCulloch County	Wilbarger County
Ector County	Menard County	Winkler County
Ellis County	Midland County	Wise County
Erath County	Mills County	Yoakum County
Fannin County	Mitchell County	Young County
Fisher County	Montague County	
Floyd County	Moore County	
Foard County	Motley County	

East Region

Anderson County
Angelina County
Austin County
Bell County
Bosque County
Bowie County
Brazoria County
Brazos County
Burlson County
Camp County
Cass County
Chambers County
Cherokee County
Colorado County
Coryell County
Delta County
Falls County
Fayette County
Fort Bend County
Franklin County
Freestone County
Galveston County
Gregg County
Grimes County
Wood County

Hamilton County
Hardin County
Harris County
Harrison County
Henderson County
Hill County
Hopkins County
Houston County
Jasper County
Jefferson County
Lamar County
Lampasas County
Lee County
Leon County
Liberty County
Limestone County
Madison County
Marion County
Matagorda County
McLennan County
Milam County
Montgomery County
Morris County
Nacogdoches County

Navarro County
Newton County
Orange County
Panola County
Polk County
Rains County
Red River County
Robertson County
Rusk County
Sabine County
San Augustine County
San Jacinto County
Shelby County
Smith County
Titus County
Trinity County
Tyler County
Upshur County
Van Zandt County
Walker County
Waller County
Washington County
Wharton County

SouthWest Region

Aransas County
Atascosa County
Bandera County
Bastrop County
Bee County
Bexar County
Blanco County
Brewster County
Brooks County
Burnet County
Caldwell County
Calhoun County
Cameron County
Comal County
Crockett County
Culberson County
DeWitt County
Dimmit County
Duval County
Edwards County
El Paso County
Frio County
Gillespie County

Goliad County
Gonzales County
Guadalupe County
Hays County
Hidalgo County
Hudspeth County
Jackson County
Jeff Davis County
Jim Hogg County
Jim Wells County
Karnes County
Kendall County
Kenedy County
Kerr County
Kimble County
Kinney County
Kleberg County
La Salle County
Lavaca County
Live Oak County
Llano County
Mason County
Maverick County

McMullen County
Medina County
Nueces County
Pecos County
Presidio County
Real County
Reeves County
Refugio County
San Patricio County
Starr County
Sutton County
Terrell County
Travis County
Uvalde County
Val Verde County
Victoria County
Webb County
Willacy County
Williamson County
Wilson County
Zapata County
Zavala County

