

Notice of Funding Opportunity
Application due Tuesday, August 25, 2026



Administration for Community Living

Administration on Aging







Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services

Legal Assistance Enhancement Program Grants

Opportunity number: HHS-2026-ACL-AOA-LAEP-0055



Contents

Before you begin	<u>3</u>
 Step 1: Review the Opportunity	<u>4</u>
Basic information	<u>5</u>
Eligibility	<u>7</u>
Program description	<u>9</u>
 Step 2: Get Ready to Apply	<u>18</u>
Find the application package	<u>19</u>
Get registered	<u>20</u>
 Step 3: Build Your Application	<u>21</u>
Application checklist	<u>22</u>
Application contents and format	<u>23</u>
 Step 4: Learn About Review and Award	<u>34</u>
Application review	<u>35</u>
Award notices	<u>37</u>
 Step 5: Submit Your Application	<u>38</u>
Application submission and deadlines	<u>39</u>
 Step 6: Learn What Happens After Award	<u>41</u>
Post-award requirements and administration	<u>42</u>
 Contacts and Support	<u>44</u>
Endnotes	<u>47</u>



Before you begin

If you believe you are a good candidate for this funding opportunity, secure your [SAM.gov](#) and [Grants.gov](#) registrations now. If you are already registered, make sure your registrations are active and up to date.

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

You must have an active Grants.gov registration. Doing so requires a Login.gov registration as well.

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Apply by the application due date

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, August 25, 2026.



To help you find what you need, this NOFO uses internal links. In Adobe Reader, you can go back to where you were by pressing Alt + Left Arrow (Windows) or Command + Left Arrow (Mac) on your keyboard.



Step 1:

Review the Opportunity

In this step

Basic information	<u>5</u>
Eligibility	<u>7</u>
Program description	<u>9</u>

Basic information

Administration for Community Living (ACL)

Administration on Aging

Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services

Supporting innovative projects to expand or improve the delivery of legal assistance to older adults with social or economic needs.

Summary

The Legal Assistance Enhancement Program (LAEP) advances HHS and ACL priorities to “Improve Health,” “Connect People to Services,” and “Protect Rights and Prevent Abuse” by giving older adults access to dedicated attorney advocates. By piloting innovative interventions aimed at addressing community needs with targeted legal interventions, older adults will be able to age in place and be protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

As required in the Older Americans Act^[1], the Legal Assistance Enhancement Program (LAEP) supports innovative projects to expand or improve the delivery of legal services to older adults with social or economic needs. The Administration for Community Living will award up to four (4) grants to support collaborative pilot projects involving legal service providers and the legal assistance developer in that state. The goal of the pilot projects is to address a community legal need for older adults with social or economic needs^[2] related to one (1) Older Americans Act priority legal area.^[3] The awarded legal service providers will partner with their state’s legal assistance developer to implement the pilot program, conduct an evaluation of its effectiveness, and plan to replicate the project in other areas of their state.



Have questions?

See [Contacts and Support](#).

Key facts

Opportunity name:

Legal Assistance Enhancement Program Grants

Opportunity number:

HHS-2026-ACL-AOA-LAEP-0055

Federal assistance listing:

93.048

Cost sharing: 25%

NOFO version: Original

Key dates

Application

submission deadline:

August 25, 2026

Optional notice of

intent deadline:

July 24, 2026

Expected award date:

September 30, 2026

Expected project

start date:

September 30, 2026

Funding details

Type: Cooperative agreement

Expected total program funding over the performance period: \$2,000,000

Expected total program funding per budget period: \$1,000,000

Total expected awards: 4

Funding range per applicant per budget period: \$200,000 to \$300,000

We plan to fund awards in two 12-month budget periods for a two-year period of performance from September 30, 2026 to September 29, 2028.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

Only these types of organizations may apply:

- Unrestricted.

Disqualifying factors

We will review your application to make sure it meets these responsiveness requirements.

We won't consider an application that:

- Is submitted after the [deadline](#).
- Is from an individual, including a sole proprietorship, or a foreign entity.
- Is received in paper format that didn't have a previously approved exemption from ACL.
- Does not include the Meaningful Collaboration Plan with the listed minimum requirements (see Program Description section).
- Does not include a Work Plan covering each of the two years (24 months) of the project.
- Does not include a Budget covering each of the two years (24 months) of the project.

Application limits

If you submit the same application more than once under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), we will only acknowledge the last on-time submission.

Cost sharing

Under this program, ACL will fund no more than 75% of the project's total cost. This means you must cover at least 25% of the project's total cost with non-federal resources. In other words, for every three dollars received in federal funding, you must contribute at least one dollar in non-federal resources. This three-to-one ratio is reflected in the formula included under Item 18 in the Instructions for Completing Requested Forms. You can use this formula to calculate your minimum required match. A common error applicants make is matching 25% of the federal share, rather than 25% of the project's total cost.

There are two types of match:

- Non-federal cash. This may include:
 - Costs you pay.
 - Cash contributions from all third parties involved in the project, including sub-grantees, contractors and consultants.
 - Budgetary funds provided by your agency's budget for costs associated with the project.
- Non-federal in-kind. This may include:
 - Volunteered time.
 - Use of facilities to hold meetings or conduct project activities.

ACL encourages you to not exceed the minimum match requirement. Applications with a match greater than the minimum required won't be favored.

Types of cost sharing

You can meet your match requirement through any combination of:

- Cash contributed by your organization, partners, or other third parties.
- In-kind (non-cash) contributions from partners or other third parties.

Cost-sharing commitments

If awarded, you must provide the amount of cost-sharing funds you promised, even if you promised more than the required minimum. We put these commitments in the Notice of Award.

If you don't provide your promised amount, we may decrease the amount of funding we give you or use other enforcement actions.

You'll have to include your cost-sharing funds when you fill out your [federal financial reports](#).

Post-award requirements

Before you apply, make sure you understand the requirements that come with an award.

See [Step 6: Learn What Happens After Award](#) for information on regulations that apply, reporting, and more.

Statutory authority

Older Americans Act of 1965, As Amended, (P.L. 116-131), Title IV, Section 420(a)(2).

Program description

Background

The Older Americans Act (OAA) identifies services and programs critical to helping older adults assert their rights and independence to live in a place of their choosing free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) administers grants and programs authorized under the OAA, including legal assistance. The OAA defines legal assistance as advice or representation provided by an attorney (or paralegal or law student under the direct supervision of an attorney, or nonlawyers where permitted by law) to older individuals with economic or social needs.^[4] The OAA identifies priority legal issue areas disproportionately affecting older adults with economic or social needs: income, health care, long-term care, nutrition, housing, utilities, protective services, defense of guardianship, abuse, neglect, and age discrimination.^[5]

Two key stakeholders to OAA legal assistance are the legal assistance providers and the state legal assistance developer (LAD). The providers work directly with older adults to provide OAA legal assistance services, while the LAD provides leadership at the state level to improve the capacity and quality of those services.^[6] About 70% of older adults experience a civil legal need at least once per year, but do not seek or receive enough help for 91% of civil legal needs.^[7] While national data points to trends of common legal issues,^[8] those at the state and local levels are best situated to identify the most pressing needs in their own communities. The relative strengths and perspectives of LADs and providers offers a great opportunity for collaboration, as well as innovative and impactful solutions to community needs.

Overview

LAEP funding advances HHS and ACL priorities to “Improve Health,” “Connect People to Services,” and “Protect[] Rights and Prevent[] Abuse” by giving older adults access to dedicated attorney advocates. By piloting innovative interventions aimed at addressing community needs with targeted legal interventions, older adults will be able to age in place and be protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

To help support projects aimed at improving or expanding the delivery of legal assistance to older adults with economic or social needs, ACL provides competitive grant awards under the Legal Assistance Enhancement Program (LAEP).^[9]

In FY 2026, ACL invites legal assistance providers to propose innovative projects which directly address an identified community legal need. These projects must include the implementation of a pilot program and a substantive, meaningful collaboration with the

state's LAD. The proposed project must primarily focus on expanding or improving the delivery of legal assistance to address one (1) of the OAA priority legal issue areas.^[10] Examples of legal issues in each OAA priority areas are:^[11]

- Income: TANF, Social Security (SSI, SSDI, Social Security Retirement), Veterans Benefits, Unemployment Compensation.
- Health care: Medicaid, Medicare, Private Health Insurance disputes.
- Long-term care: Home and Community Based Services, Long-Care Facilities.
- Nutrition: Food Stamps (SNAP).
- Housing: Landlord-tenant, Federally-Subsidized Housing, Mortgage Foreclosures, Predatory Mortgage Lending, Other Public Housing.
- Utilities: Utility Disputes, Utility Assistance Programs.
- Abuse/Neglect: Civil Protective/Restraining Orders.
- Defense of Guardianship/Protective Services: Guardianship Defense, Preventing Guardianship.
- Age Discrimination: Age Discrimination in Housing, Employment.

Goal

Per OAA Section 420(a)(2), the LAEP grants' goal is to expand or improve the delivery of legal assistance to older individuals with social or economic needs.

Every project must have the following project outcomes, regardless of legal issue area of focus:

- A measurable improvement in the health or financial well-being of all older adults participating in the pilot project.
- After working with the LAD, the provider has a measurable improvement in their capacity to obtain positive outcomes for older adults facing the identified legal need.

Examples of additional outcomes may include:

- Reduced wait times between referral and receiving services.
- A measurable improvement in the quality of legal assistance received by older adults receiving services from participating providers.
- Reduction in adverse legal consequences related to the project's legal issue area of focus.
- Improvement in knowledge of legal and community resources available to help older adults address the identified issue area.

Applications must include the following:

- A description of an innovative pilot program, which: is implemented by the legal services provider; addresses one (1) OAA priority legal area; and is targeted to older adults with economic or social needs. The pilot program must include significant planning and implementation contributions from their state's LAD, as well as other community partners as appropriate to the project. The Applicant must include details of what they expect to produce, accomplish, or achieve with this funding.
 - Note: A project which only proposes document drafting clinics (e.g., Powers of Attorney/Advance Directives) or legal education outreach is NOT sufficient. Per the requirements of OAA Sections 420(b) and 307(a)(11), the project must include services ranging from advice through representation.
- Meaningful Collaboration Plan: This is an agreement between the legal assistance provider and the LAD. It must be signed by both entities and included as part of the application (it does NOT count towards the Project Narrative page limit). This Plan will describe the relationship between the legal assistance provider and the LAD. The Meaningful Collaboration Plan is a detailed Memorandum of Understanding and must at a minimum include an outline of the following project responsibilities (by role):
 - LAD:
 - How the LAD will use their position at the state level and connections within the aging network to facilitate pilot project success (e.g., remove barriers, identify/make connections for the provider).
 - How the LAD will meaningfully participate in the project's implementation, evaluation, and creation of the Project Replication Plan.
 - How the LAD will provide support to the provider, pursuant to their obligations in 45 C.F.R. § 1324.303 and OAA Section 731.
 - How the LAD plans to facilitate project replication in other regions of the state, and provide support throughout the replication process to ensure its success.
 - Legal assistance provider:
 - How the provider plans to use their expertise and community connections to implement the proposed project.
 - How the provider will meaningfully participate in the project's evaluation, and creation of the Project Replication Plan.
 - How the provider plans to utilize the technical assistance and advice from the LAD to create a replication strategy for other areas of the state.
- Commitment to uphold the assurances in OAA Section 307(a)(11), as required by OAA Section 420(b).

- ***Due to the short project period, it is critical for project success to have this agreement in place with specific, actionable, operational details included so that the project may begin immediately upon award.
- Project Evaluation Plan: Applicants must explain how they will determine if the pilot project was a success, and how they will present their approach, findings, and lessons learned in a narrative form (e.g., report, article). Applicants should make sure to leave enough time at the end of the grant to complete the evaluation.
- All applications must explain how their projects will advance the following HHS and ACL priorities:
 - **Improve Health:** Applicants must explain how the proposed pilot project and selected legal issue area will lead to a measurable improvement to the health of older adults in the pilot community, and how the results and replication of the project will improve health outcomes in more communities across the state.
 - **Connect People to Services:** Applicants must provide specific examples of how the pilot program plans to assess service needs beyond the scope of their legal case, and how the Applicant will create a referral system that ensures referred individuals actually receive services.
 - **Protect Rights and Prevent Abuse:** Applicants must detail how older adults in the pilot community experiencing the selected legal issue area will be adequately protected through responsive (e.g., representation in court proceedings) and preventative (e.g., legal education) means. Applicants must also describe how the pilot will provide services which help older adults remedy experienced abuse and help prevent future abuse.
- In addition to the required ACL Final Report, Applicants will also be required to submit a Replication Plan, which takes the findings and lessons learned from the Project Evaluation and uses it to create a plan to replicate the pilot in other parts of the state.
 - Note: Only creating a presentation or “manual” is NOT sufficient to meet the replication requirement. There must be a meaningful and substantive plan for replication, which includes expanding the program or intervention services into other areas of the state.

Cooperative agreement terms

Cooperative agreements require substantial ACL project involvement after an award is made. There are specific roles for both you and ACL.

Your responsibilities

- Fulfill all the requirements of the grant initiative as outlined in this program announcement, as well as carry out project activities in their application as reviewed, approved, and awarded.
- Collaborate with the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in the execution of the work plan and collaborate with ACL in understanding the programmatic and budgetary issues of the project. Based on these negotiations and emerging issues in the field, the grantee will revise the project work plan and/or budget as necessary.
- Evaluate the impact of project activities and provide recommendations to ACL on ways to enhance the program.
- The LAD and legal services provider will meet with the ACL project officer at least once each month, or at such other times as are agreed upon, to improve the effectiveness of the activities carried out under this Agreement.
- Create products and/or materials under this award that are accurate, objective, unbiased, and of high professional quality, and that do not violate federal, departmental, or agency grant rules. Before publicly disseminating materials developed under this grant, grantee will provide the ACL project officer a copy of the final product for the ACL project officer to have at least 15 business days to ensure the product meets the requirements set forth in the program announcement and cooperative agreement.
- Submit to the ACL project officer a final, clean copy of all data developed or supported with these grant funds, in the format in which it was developed or produced, as provided for under 2 CFR Part 200. This means that grantees may not withhold from ACL data or information produced from or by this project, including, but not limited to, outcome and evaluation data and materials produced by the grant. Grantees will also be required to submit case statistics with each semi-annual programmatic report, consistent with the data parameters required for OAA Title III-B legal assistance grantees.
- Include the following disclaimer on all products produced using grant funding, including those produced by sub-awards:
 - “This [project/publication/program/website, etc.] [is/was] supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$XX with XX percentage funded by ACL/HHS and \$XX amount and XX percentage funded by non-government source(s). The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.”

Our responsibilities

- Perform the day-to-day federal responsibilities of managing a grant initiative and will work with the grantee to ensure that the minimum requirements for the grant are met.
- Work cooperatively with the grantee to clarify the programmatic and budgetary issues to be addressed by the grantee project, and, as necessary, negotiate with grantee to achieve a mutually agreed upon solution to any needs identified by the grantee or ACL.
- Assist the grantee project leadership in understanding the policy concerns and/or priorities of ACL, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Federal government by conducting periodic briefings and by carrying out ongoing consultations. ACL will also share information with the grantee about other federally sponsored projects and activities relevant to the interests of the grantees and their activities.
- Provide technical advice to the grantee on activities and tasks related to the fulfillment of the goals and objectives of this grant.
- Provide technical advice on grantee work products to ensure they are accurate, objective, unbiased, and of high professional quality, and that they do not violate federal, departmental, or agency grant rules. Before publicly disseminating materials developed under this grant, grantee will provide the ACL project officer a copy of the final product, and within 15 business days, the ACL project officer will provide guidance and feedback on whether the product meets the requirements set forth in the program announcement and this cooperative agreement.
- Provide consultation to the grantee in identifying emerging issues and modifying work plan priorities as necessary as they relate to the goals and objectives of the grant program.
- Meet with the grantee project director at least once each month, or at such other times as are agreed upon, to improve the effectiveness of the activities carried out under this Agreement.

Upon execution of this cooperative agreement, requests to modify or amend it or the work plan may be made by ACL or the awardee at any time. Modifications and/or amendments of the Cooperative Agreement or work plan shall be effective upon the mutual agreement of both parties, except where ACL is authorized under the Terms and Conditions of award, 2 CFR Part 200, or other applicable regulation or statute to make unilateral amendments. When an award is issued the cooperative agreement terms and conditions from the program announcement are incorporated by reference.

Funding policies and limitations

Changes in HHS regulations

As of October 1, 2025, HHS adopted [2 CFR 200](#), with some exceptions included in [2 CFR 300](#). These regulations replace those in 45 CFR 75.

Policies

All activities proposed in your application and budget narrative must align with applicable law, including but not limited to statutes, executive orders, federal regulations, and applicable judicial holdings. Accordingly, discretionary awards shall not be used to fund, promote, encourage, subsidize, or facilitate: racial preferences or other forms of racial discrimination by the recipient, including activities where race or intentional proxies for race will be used as a selection criterion for employment or program participation; denial by the recipient of the sex binary in humans, or the belief that sex is a chosen or mutable characteristic; illegal immigration; or any other initiatives that compromise public safety. If an application does not align, the application will not receive funding to the extent permitted by law and applicable court orders.

- We will only make awards if this program receives funding. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
- Support beyond the first budget period will depend on:
 - Appropriation of funds.
 - Satisfactory progress in meeting your project's objectives.
 - A decision that continued funding is in the government's best interest.
- If we receive more funding for this program, we will consider:
 - Funding more applicants.
 - Extending the period of performance.
 - Awarding supplemental funding.
- You may not use funds from this NOFO for any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEI and DEIA) activities. This includes:
 - DEI- or DEIA-related research.
 - Activities that discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or other protected traits.
- Under this NOFO, you can't continue existing projects without expansion or new and innovative approaches.
- Meals are allowed only in limited circumstances linked to program activities, like during travel or when approved in advance by ACL. See Allowable Costs and

Activities, Exhibit 4: Selected Items of Cost, Meals in the [HHS Grants Policy Statement](#).

- There are restrictions on certain telecommunications and video surveillance equipment. See [2 CFR 200.216](#) to make sure this does not apply to any proposed equipment in your application.

Unallowable costs

- Construction or major rehabilitation of buildings.
- Basic research, such as scientific or medical experiments.
- For guidance on other types of costs that we restrict or do not allow, see General Provisions for Selected Items of Costs of the Uniform Guidance, [2 CFR 200.420](#).

Program-specific limitations and policies

Meals are generally unallowable except for the following:

- For subjects and patients under study.
- Where specifically approved as part of the project or program activity, e.g. in programs providing children's services.
- When an organization customarily provides meals to employees working beyond the normal workday, as part of a formal compensation agreement; as part of a per diem or subsistence allowance provided in conjunction with allowable travel.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those shared across multiple projects and not easily separated.

To charge indirect costs you can select one of two methods:

Method 1 — Approved rate. If you currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency, you may use that rate.

Method 2 — *De minimis* rate. If you do not have a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate (see [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#)). This rate may be up to 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See the definition of MTDC ([2 CFR 200.1](#)). You can use this rate indefinitely.

You may not charge costs included in your indirect cost pool as direct costs.

Subawards

As the prime recipient, you must maintain a substantive role in the project. This means that you conduct funded activities and provide services necessary and integral to completing the project.

Monitoring your subrecipient's activities alone as described in [2 CFR 200.332](#) is not a substantive role.

We do not fund awards where your role is primarily a conduit for passing funds to other organizations unless that arrangement is authorized by statute.

All subrecipients must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

Subrecipients must meet the [eligibility requirements](#) of this NOFO.

Salary rate limitation

The salary rate limitation in the current appropriations act applies to this program. You may not use awarded funds to pay a salary at a higher rate than the rate for Executive Level II.

For the Executive Level II salary, please see [the Office of Personnel Management information on executive and senior level employee pay](#).

The salary limitation reflects a person's base salary (including any portion of the salary that is paid with indirect costs). It does not include fringe benefits or any income the person is allowed to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization.

This salary limitation also applies to subawards, contracts, and subcontracts under an ACL grant or cooperative agreement.

Program income

If you earn any money from your award-supported project activities (known as program income), you must use it for the purposes and under the conditions of the award. Find more about program income at [2 CFR 200.307](#).



Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

In this step

Find the application package 19

Get registered 20

Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can search for it at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) using opportunity number HHS-2026-ACL-AOA-LAEP-0055. Then select the Package tab.

We recommend that you select the **Subscribe button** from the View Grant Opportunity page for this NOFO to get updates.

You can also find materials at [Applying for Grants on ACL's website](#).

If you can't use Grants.gov to download application materials or have other technical difficulties, including issues with application submission, [contact Grants.gov](#) for assistance.

Get registered

SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov to apply. SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. Begin that process today.

To register:

- Go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and select Get Started. From the same page, you can also select the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register.
- You must agree to the [financial assistance general certifications and representations \[PDF\]](#) specifically. Those for contracts are different.

When you register, you will also receive your required Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Once you register:

- You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.
- If your organization has multiple UEIs, use the one associated with your physical location.

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with [Grants.gov](#). You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

Need help? See [Contacts and Support](#).



Step 3:

Build Your Application

In this step

Application checklist	<u>22</u>
Application contents and format	<u>23</u>

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply. You will find the forms in Grants.gov.

Narratives

Item	Grants.gov form	Page limit
<input type="checkbox"/> Project narrative	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.	20 pages
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget narrative	Use the Budget Narrative Attachment form.	None

Attachments

Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.

Item	Page limit
<input type="checkbox"/> Work plan	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment letters	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Proof of nonprofit status	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Resumes and job descriptions	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful collaboration plan	None

Other required forms

Use each required form in Grants.gov.

Item	Page limit
<input type="checkbox"/> Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Key Contacts form	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Grants.gov Lobbying form (Certification Regarding Lobbying)	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Project/Performance Site Location form	None

Application contents and format

This section includes guidance on each component found in the application checklist.

Application page limit: 20 pages

Submit your information in English and express whole number budget figures using U.S. dollars.

Required format

Required format for project and budget narratives.

Font: Times New Roman or Arial

Format: PDF

Size: 11-point font

Footnotes and text in graphics may be 10-point.

Spacing for project narrative main content: Double-spaced

Spacing for budget narrative: As needed

Spacing for project summary, tables, footnotes: Single-spaced

Margins: 1-inch

Include page numbers.

Project narrative

Page limit: 20

The project narrative is the most important part of the application. We use it as the primary basis to decide whether your project meets the statutory requirements and to review its merit. The project narrative should give a clear and concise description of your project.

Be sure to cite all your sources. Merit reviewers may lower your score if you do not.

Also study the merit review criteria under each section to make sure you answer all questions and cover all topics reviewers will look at.

Project summary

Provide a brief project summary of no more than 265 words. Write it for the general public. You will need to include:

- **Goals:** Broad overall purpose, like a mission statement that says what you want to do and where you want to be.
- **Objectives:** Narrow, specific, and clear steps toward the goals. These are the “hows” to achieve the goals.
- **Overall approach:** General overview of what you will do.
- **Outcomes:** These are the measurable results of a project. Include expected changes among those served, such as clients, systems, organizations, and communities. These should tie directly to your goals and those of this funding.
- **Products:** The materials and other deliverables you expect to generate through the project.
- **Duration:** The anticipated start and end dates of the period of performance.

Project relevance and current need

Problem statement

Describe the nature and scope of the problem or issue the proposed intervention is designed to address, and connect to the 1 selected OAA legal issue area. Use both quantitative and qualitative terms.

Goals and objectives

Applications should describe their proposed project’s goal(s) and major objectives, particularly in relation to HHS, ACL, and LAEP program goals/objectives, as described above.

Table: Scoring criteria

Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant provides:	Point value
The proposal is relevant to the intent, goals, and objectives of this funding announcement. The proposed project clearly and adequately identifies the current issues the proposal intends to address. The proposed project is justified in terms of the most recent, relevant, and available information and knowledge about the legal needs of older adults with social or economic needs (with an emphasis on the identified focus area), evidence-based practices, case statistics, and/or new and cutting-edge research.	5 points
All goals and objectives are clearly identified, and are consistent with the purpose, goals, and objectives of this funding opportunity.	5 points
Total points	10 points

Approach

Proposed intervention

Describe the intervention you're proposing to address the problem described in the Problem statement, and how the provider will utilize all levels of service (advice, limited representation, and representation) to address the need. Be clear and concise. Also describe the rationale for using this particular intervention.

Also note any major barriers you anticipate encountering, and how your project will be able to overcome those barriers. Be sure to describe, with specificity, the roles of the legal assistance provider and LAD (referencing the Meaningful Collaboration Plan), as well as any other strategic partnerships.

Project management

Delineate the roles and responsibilities of project staff, consultants, the LAD, and partner organizations. Be clear. Describe how they'll contribute to achieving the project's objectives and outcomes. Specify who would have day-to-day responsibility for key tasks such as:

- Leading the project.
- Monitoring the project's on-going progress.
- Preparing reports.
- Communicating with other partners and ACL.

Also describe the approach you'll use to monitor and track progress on the project's tasks and objectives.

Stakeholder involvement

This section should describe how you plan to work with the LAD to achieve project success. In addition to referencing the Meaningful Collaboration Plan, this section should detail how the Meaningful Collaboration Plan is structured to ensure success during and after the pilot project. This section should detail how the applicant and LAD are prepared to begin the project immediately upon award.

For any stakeholders other than the LAD, this section should describe how you plan to involve them in a meaningful way in the planning and implementation of the proposed project. It should explain why the specific stakeholders are vital or essential for the project's overall success.

Letters of Commitment are required if an organization or entity that is not the LAD meets either of the following conditions:

- The entity was specifically named to have a significant role in carrying out the project (either in the narrative, work plan, or budget).

OR

- The entity is identified as a key or essential partner for the success of the project.

The Letters of Commitment must be on the letterhead of the committing agency, must specify the role and resources/activities that will be provided in support of the applicant's project, and must be signed by an individual with authority to commit to the proposed project. The organization's expertise, experience, and access to targeted population(s), if applicable, should also be described in the Letter of Commitment. Signed Letters of Commitment should be scanned and included as attachments in your application package, and they will not count towards the narrative page limit.

Work plan

You must provide a work plan for your project. The work plan connects your period of performance outcomes, strategies and activities, and measures. It provides more detail on how you will measure outcomes and processes.

To create your work plan:

- Use the [Project Work Plan Sample Template](#) on our website.
- Include the project's overall goal, expected outcomes, key objectives, and the major action steps needed to achieve them.
- For each major action step, include start and end dates and the lead responsible person.
- Reflect and be consistent with the Project Narrative and Budget.
- Cover all 2 years of the project period.

Table: Scoring criteria

Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant provides:	Point value
<p>The activities or interventions are clearly defined and justified, and the proposal reflects a coherent and feasible approach for successfully addressing the identified problem and achieving the identified outcomes, goals, and objectives. The application clearly described how the proposed activities will be carried out (including detailing how it will ensure access to all levels of service to potential clients). The applicant identifies potential barriers and describes how they will avert or minimize risks. The applicant details, with specificity, the relative roles of the legal assistance provider and LAD, and how their collaboration will help ensure project success.</p>	25 points
<p>There is a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities. The proposal includes a clear and coherent management plan that addresses: monitoring the project's on-going progress; preparation of reports; and communications with other partners and ACL. The approach to monitor and track progress on the project's tasks and objectives is reasonable and feasible. The proposed project director(s) is dedicating an appropriate amount of time to manage the project and fulfills their obligations to the project.</p>	5 points
<p>The proposed approach specifically identifies the role of the LAD and other stakeholder groups (if applicable) that are critical for project success and sustainability. The relative roles and responsibilities of the legal assistance provider and LAD are clear, reasonable given the project goals and objectives, and lay the foundation for success in the pilot project and beyond. The Meaningful Collaboration Plan is clear, detailed, and outlines responsibilities which ensure the project is rolled out quickly and is set up for success. For the entities/ partners other than the LAD identified by name as having a key role, the included Letters of Commitment express a clear commitment to the applicant's project details the areas of responsibility or the work the named entity will assume for the project, and is consistent with the work plan.</p>	15 points
<p>The Project Work Plan is clear and comprehensive and covers each of the two (2) years of the project. The Work Plan includes specific objectives and tasks that link to measurable outcomes and presents sensible and feasible timeframes for the accomplishment of tasks. The roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and linked to specific objectives and tasks and are consistent with the level of effort described in the approach.</p>	5 points
Total points	50 points

Project impact

Special target populations and organizations

Describe how you plan to meaningfully involve organizations that are representative of the diverse community of older individuals to plan and implement the proposed project. This should help you reach the target population. Also describe how the proposed intervention will target older adults with social or economic needs.

Outcomes

Identify the measurable outcome(s) that will result from the project. Be clear. (NOTE: ACL will not fund any project that does not include measurable outcomes). List measurable outcomes in Measurable Outcomes section of the Project Work Plan – Sample Template. Describe the specific outcome(s) the project will produce.

Your application will be scored on the clarity and nature of your proposed outcomes, not on the number of outcomes cited. It's appropriate to have only one outcome.

A “measurable outcome” is an observable end-result that describes how a particular intervention will benefit older adults facing the identified legal issue. Every project must have the following two measurable outcomes:

- Measurable improvement in the health or financial well-being of all older adults participating in the pilot project.
- After working with the LAD, the provider has a measurable improvement in their capacity to obtain positive outcomes for older adults facing the identified legal need.

Applicants must also propose at least one additional measurable outcome, for a total of at least three (3) measurable outcomes. A measurable outcome is not a measurable “output”, such as the number of clients served; the number of training sessions held; or the number of service units provided.

Your application will be scored on the clarity and nature of your proposed outcomes, not on the number of outcomes cited.

Evaluation

This section should describe the methods, techniques, and tools that will be used to: 1) determine whether the pilot project achieved anticipated outcomes; 2) document “lessons learned” – both positive and negative – from the project; and 3) develop a Replication Plan for additional regions in the state. The Evaluation Plan should also include a discussion of how success will be measured at each stage of the project period and the project overall.

Dissemination

Describe the method you'll use to timely disseminate the project's results and findings, in easily understandable formats. Include how you'll reach parties who might be interested in using the results to inform practice, service delivery, program development, and/or policymaking. Include parties who would be interested in replicating the project. This section should also explain how the applicant will use the evaluation results to create a Replication Plan to expand the pilot program into other areas of the state.

Table: Scoring criteria

Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant provides:	Point value
How it will reach older adults with social or economic needs facing the one (1) OAA legal issue area of focus.	5 points
The application presents expected project outcomes that are clear, realistic, and consistent with the objectives and purpose of the project and this funding opportunity. The proposed outcomes are quantifiable and measurable and are likely to be achieved.	5 points
The project evaluation reflects a thoughtful and well-designed approach that measure whether the project has achieved its proposed outcome. The description of the evaluation plan includes the qualitative and/or quantitative methods used to reliably measure outcomes. The evaluation design will be able to capture "lessons learned" from the overall effort that might be of use to the field and to future pilot replication efforts in the state.	5 points
The dissemination plan will distribute the project's results and findings in a timely manner and in easily understandable formats to parties who might be interested in using the results of the project. The applicant makes clear how they will use the results of the project to produce a Replication Plan to expand the pilot's efforts in other areas of their state.	5 points
Total points	20 points

Capability and expertise

Organizational capability

Each application should include an organizational capacity statement, describing how the applicant agency (or the division of a larger agency which will have responsibility for this project) is organized, the nature and scope of its work and/or the capabilities it possesses. Include the organization's capability to sustain some or all project activities after federal financial assistance has ended.

Experience of the project team

Short vitae or resumes of only the named, key project staff and LAD must be included. Vitae/resumes should be included as attachments, and they will not count towards the narrative page limit. The Project Director and LAD must have substantial knowledge about, and involvement in, all aspects of the project.

This section should include current or previous relevant experience/expertise in providing legal assistance services in OAA priority legal areas (especially the one selected for this project) to older adults with economic or social needs, and any experience implementing projects of similar scope and magnitude.

Table: Scoring criteria

Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant provides:	Point value
The applicant organization clearly identifies their capacity for carrying out the proposed project and evaluation. The applicant demonstrates a successful history of projects similar in scope and magnitude. It is clear how the applicant agency is organized, the nature and scope of its work, and the capabilities it possesses, and these demonstrate the ability for the applicant to successfully complete the project. The applicant agency is significantly and meaningfully involved in carrying out the project.	5 points
The proposed project director(s), LAD, key staff, and consultants have the background, experience, and other qualifications required to carry out their designated roles, as demonstrated by submitted vitae or resumes. The project team demonstrates expertise in providing legal assistance services in OAA priority legal areas (especially the one identified for the project) to older adults with social or economic need, and has experience implementing programs/projects in the identified community. Key staff, the LAD, and consultants are dedicating an appropriate amount of time to fulfill their obligations to the project.	5 points
Total points	10 points

Budget narrative

Page limit: None

The budget narrative supports the information you provide in [Standard Form-424A](#).

It includes added detail and justifies the costs you ask for. As you think about your budget, consider:

- If the costs are reasonable and consistent with your project’s purpose and activities.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See [funding policies and limitations](#).

When you develop your budget narrative:

- We encourage you to use the [ACL Budget Narrative Sample Format \[PDF\]](#). This format shows the level of detail we are looking for in your application.
- Justify all the costs and show how you calculated them.
- You will need to create a budget narrative that shows all years combined along with separate, detailed budget narratives for each year.

Reviewers will assess your budget (SF-424A) and your budget narrative to score this section.

Table: Scoring criteria for budget and budget narrative

Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant provides:	Point value
<p>The budget narrative/justification is comprehensive, justified, and reasonable in terms of the type and amount of work that is planned, and what the applicant expects to be produced or achieved for the cost each individual year and overall, for the two (2) years of the project period. The budget line items are clearly delineated and there is a clear and strong relationship between the stated objectives, project activities, the work expected to be performed, and what it will cost. The time commitment of the proposed director and other key project personnel that is reflected in the budget is consistent with the work plan delineation of tasks, and it is sufficient to assure proper direction, management, and timely completion of the project.</p>	10 points

Attachments

You will upload attachments in Grants.gov using the Other Attachments Form.

Commitment letters

Include letters from any organization that will have a significant role in carrying out your project. The letter should explain their role and their commitment to the project.

Proof of nonprofit status

If your organization is a nonprofit, you need to attach proof. We will accept any of the following:

- A copy of a current tax exemption certificate from the IRS.
- A letter from your state's tax department, attorney general, or another state official saying that your group is a nonprofit and that none of your net earnings go to private shareholders or others.
- A certified copy of your certificate of incorporation. This document must show that your group is a nonprofit.
- Any of these documents for a parent organization. Also include a statement signed by an official of the parent group that your organization is a nonprofit affiliate.

Resumes and job descriptions

For key personnel, attach resumes for positions that are filled. For positions that aren't filled, attach the job descriptions with qualifications.

Meaningful collaboration plan

Include this agreement between the LAD and legal assistance provider. Please see Program Description section for details of what should be included in the Plan.

Other required forms

You will need to complete some other forms in Grants.gov. You can find them in the NOFO [application package](#) or review them and their instructions at [Grants.gov Forms](#).

Form	Submission requirement
<input type="checkbox"/> Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Key Contacts form	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Grants.gov Lobbying form (Certification Regarding Lobbying)	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Project/Performance Site Location form	None

Important: Public information

When filling out your SF-424 form, pay attention to Box 15: Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project.

We share what you put there with [USAspending](#). This is where the public goes to learn how the federal government spends their money.

Instead of just a title, insert a short description of your project and what it will do.

[See instructions and examples \[PDF\]](#).



Step 4:

Learn About Review and Award

In this step

Application review [35](#)

Award notices [37](#)

Application review

Initial review

We will review your application to make sure that it meets the responsiveness requirements listed in the [disqualifying factors section](#). If your application does not meet these criteria, we will disqualify it and we will not move it to the merit review (scoring) phase.

We will not review any pages over the page limit.

Scoring process

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The members use the merit review scoring criteria in the project narrative and budget narrative sections of this NOFO. You can find the specific criteria in each section of the project narrative and in the budget narrative section.

Criteria summary

Heading	Points
Project summary	0 points
Purpose and need	10 points
Response	50 points
Impact	20 points
Resources and capabilities	20 points

Risk review

Before making an award, we review the risk that you will mismanage federal funds or fail to complete the project objectives. We need to make sure you've handled any past federal awards well and demonstrated sound business practices.

We use [SAM.gov](#) Responsibility/Qualification to check this history for all awards likely to be over \$250,000. We also check Exclusions.

If we find a significant risk, we may choose not to fund your application or to place specific conditions on the award.

You can see more details about risk review at [2 CFR 200.206](#).

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review results. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects, including project type and geographic distribution.
- The past performance of the applicant. We may choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems.
- Reasonableness of proposed costs to the expected results and the likelihood you will achieve those results.
- Available funding.

We may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Choose to fund no applications under this funding opportunity.

The ACL administrator makes all final award decisions.

Funding preferences for alignment with agency priorities

Before we make final funding decisions, ACL leadership will review all potential awards.

They will check for:

- Adherence to applicable laws.
- Alignment to agency priorities (see [Administration for Community Living's \(ACL\) Mission, Vision & Strategic Priorities](#)).

To the extent allowed by law and court orders, we will give a funding preference to applications that align with agency priorities.

Your application may receive this preference if it includes activities which: Simplify and modernize systems so that the public knows where to go and how to get the supports they need; Expand elder justice initiatives that prevent, detect, and respond to abuse, neglect, and exploitation; Enhance collaboration among federal, state, and community partners to improve prevention and accountability; Invest in data and research to understand and address systemic risks to individual rights and safety; Reduce financial and bureaucratic barriers by making it easier for people to understand and access public benefits, eliminating unnecessary administrative obstacles, and strengthening oversight to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse; Increase awareness and access to essential

programs, supports, and tools that are cost-effective and enable affordable community living.

Merit review criteria also include factors related to ACL's priorities.

Award notices

If your application is successful, we will email a Notice of Award (NoA) to your authorized official. We will email you or write you a letter if your application is disqualified or unsuccessful.

The NoA is the only official award document. The NoA tells you the amount of the award, important dates, and the terms and conditions you need to follow. Until you receive the NoA, you don't have permission to start work.

[See an example NoA on our website \[PDF\]](#).



Step 5: Submit Your Application

In this step

Application submission and deadlines

39

Application submission and deadlines

See [find the application package](#) and the [application checklist](#) to make sure you have everything you need.

Make sure you are current with SAM.gov and UEI requirements. See [get registered](#). You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

Optional notice of intent

Due on July 24, 2026.

We ask that you let us know if you plan to apply for this opportunity. We do this to plan for the number of expert reviewers we will need to evaluate applications. You do not have to submit a notice of intent to apply.

Please email the notice to AoA.OAA@acl.hhs.gov.

In your email, include:

- The funding opportunity number and title.
- Your organization's name and address.
- A contact name, phone number, and email address.

Application

Deadline

Due on Tuesday, August 25, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application. If you submit the same application more than once, we will accept the last on-time submission.

The grants management officer may extend an application due date based on emergency situations such as documented natural disasters or a verifiable widespread disruption of electric or mail service.

Submission method

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. See [get registered](#).

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.

If you can't submit your application because of problems with Grants.gov, you will need verification for us to consider accepting your application. Call the [Federal Service Desk](#) before the application due time and record your tracking number. Save your tracking number and any error messages you receive.

See [Contacts and Support](#) if you need help.

Intergovernmental review

[Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#) does not apply to this NOFO. You do not need to take any action.



Step 6: Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration [42](#)

Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

There are important rules you need to know if you get an award. You must follow:

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award. You can find information at [Managing a Grant on our website](#). We incorporate this NOFO by reference.
- The rules listed in [2 CFR 200](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, effective October 1, 2025. These replace those in 45 CFR 75, with some exceptions in [2 CFR 300](#).
- The HHS [Grants Policy Statement \(GPS\)](#). This document has terms and conditions tied to your award. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your Notice of Award.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in the [HHS Grants Policy Statement](#), Appendix D: HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements.
- All anti-discrimination laws: By applying for or accepting federal funds from HHS, recipients certify compliance with all federal antidiscrimination laws and these requirements and that complying with those laws is a material condition of receiving federal funding streams. Recipients are responsible for ensuring subrecipients, contractors, and partners also comply.

Compliance and oversight

Recipients must demonstrate ongoing compliance with the [Administration for Community Living's \(ACL\) Mission, Vision & Strategic Priorities](#) through program design, implementation, performance reporting, fiscal management, and evaluation.

Failure to meaningfully align funded activities with applicable statutory authorities and agency priorities may result in corrective action, additional reporting requirements, enforcement actions, or other remedies consistent with 2 CFR Part 200 and the terms and conditions of the award.

Through alignment with these priorities, funded projects will help ensure that older adults and people with disabilities can live with dignity, independence, and full participation in the communities they call home.

Managing award changes

After award, either you or ACL may request changes. We manage these using the rules at 2 CFR 200 and 300, including [2 CFR 200.308](#) and [2 CFR 300.308](#).

Reporting

If your application is successful, you will have to submit financial and performance reports. To learn more about reporting, see [Managing a Grant, Funding Requirements on our website](#).

Financial and performance reports

The terms and conditions in the Notice of Award will have information on performance and financial reports including:

- How often you will report.
- Any required form or formatting.
- How to submit them.

FFATA and FSRS reporting

The Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires:

- Data entry at the FFATA Subaward Reporting System for all subawards and subcontracts you issue for \$30,000 or more.
- Reporting executive compensation for both recipient and subaward organizations.



Contacts and Support

In this step

Agency contacts	<u>45</u>
Help with systems	<u>45</u>
Reference websites	<u>46</u>

Agency contacts

Program and eligibility

Kari Benson

AoA.OAA@acl.hhs.gov

202-401-4634

Financial and budget

Tanielle Chandler

Tanielle.Chandler@acl.hhs.gov

202-795-7325

Review process and application status

Kari Benson

AoA.OAA@acl.hhs.gov

202-401-4634

Help with systems

Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. Hold on to your ticket number.

- Phone: 1-800-518-4726
- Email: support@Grants.gov

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can:

- Call 866-606-8220.
- Live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

Reference websites

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#)
- [Home Page | ACL Administration for Community Living](#)
- [Applying for Grants | ACL Administration for Community Living](#)
- [Application Tips | ACL Administration for Community Living](#)
- [How to Apply for a Competitive Grant | ACL Administration for Community Living](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#)
- [United States Code \(U.S.C.\)](#)

Endnotes

1. 42 U.S.C. 3032i(a)(2) (2024). [↑](#)
2. 42 U.S.C. 3020e-1k (2024). [↑](#)
3. 42 U.S.C. 3027(a)(11)(E) (2024). [↑](#)
4. 42 U.S.C. 3002(33) (2024). [↑](#)
5. 42 U.S.C. 3027(a)(11)(E) (2024). [↑](#)
6. 42 U.S.C. 3058j; 45 C.F.R. § 1324.303 (2024). [↑](#)
7. Legal Services Corporation, “Snapshot of Key Findings for: Seniors,” The Justice Gap: The Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans, April 2022 (hereinafter “The Justice Gap Report”) <https://justicegap.lsc.gov/resource/seniors/#:~:text=The%202021%20Justice%20Gap%20Measurement,health%20care%2C%20and%20income%20maintenance.>
[↑](#)
8. See The Justice Gap Report (e.g., consumer, health care, and income maintenance). [↑](#)
9. 42 U.S.C. 3032i(a)(2) (2024). [↑](#)
10. 42 U.S.C. 3027(a)(11)(E) (2024). [↑](#)
11. Some legal issues were combined to reflect ACL’s State Performance Reporting categories. [↑](#)