

BERKELEY LAW FOUNDATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR ONE-YEAR PUBLIC INTEREST LAW GRANTS STARTING IN 2010

Request for Proposals for One-Year Public Interest Law Grants
Starting in 2010

October 7, 2009

The Berkeley Law Foundation (BLF) is now soliciting proposals for one-year public interest legal projects starting in 2009. To be considered, proposals must be received electronically by **11:59 p.m. on Friday January 15, 2010.**

BLF traditionally awards one to two grants per year to individuals undertaking public interest law projects that will serve legally disadvantaged or politically under-represented groups. We view our grants as seed money for innovative projects that will immediately provide sorely needed legal services and will continue providing such services for years to come.

This document consists of a Request For Proposals (RFP) and grant application materials. For a list of our previous grantees, their project titles and their sponsoring organizations, please visit the BLF website at <http://boalt.org/blf/grants.html>. Although many of our grantees have been located in the San Francisco Bay Area, we have funded projects in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Southern California, the Central Valley, Florida, and Arizona, among other locales.

Each year's grant amounts depend on the availability of funds. Proposals postmarked by January 15, 2010 will be reviewed over the next several weeks. Finalists will be selected in March 2010 and interviewed via teleconference in early April 2010. BLF will select its 2010-2011 grantees by May 1, 2010.

The end of this document notes contact information for queries and how to submit your proposal, which we look forward to receiving.

Marc-Tizoc González and Michelle Leung
BLF Grants Co-Chairs

Berkeley Law Foundation / 221 Pine Street., 3rd Floor / San Francisco, CA 94104

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Berkeley Law Foundation (BLF) is to fund new lawyers and innovative public interest law projects that serve disadvantaged people. BLF members invest directly in the public interest work of our peers, emphasizing a shared-income approach to social change. We make this choice because we recognize that lawyers have a personal and professional responsibility to dismantle inequalities and to improve access to justice. Recognizing that the responsibility to challenge systemic inequality applies equally to the structure of our organization, BLF incorporates diversity as a core value.

Our approach to funding public interest law, first established by BLF in 1976, empowers lawyers to pursue careers in the public interest, launches creative public interest projects and organizations, provides legal services to thousands of disadvantaged people, and deploys the power of the law in the service of social justice.

How To Apply For A Grant

BLF now invites proposals for grants for the 2010-2011 funding year. After reviewing the funding criteria described below, please follow our grant proposal format and e-mail your proposal to:

Berkeley Law Foundation
Telephone: (415) 394-7144
Fax: (415) 394-7140
Email: blfgrants@gmail.com

PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 11:59PM OF JANUARY 15, 2010.

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Criteria For Funding

What BLF Will Fund

BLF seeks to fund projects that include the following components: legal advocacy, community education, and/or policy change in areas affecting groups of people who generally lack access to the legal system.

Because grants are for one year only, proposed projects must be designed so that they can achieve results within that time, and can either demonstrate the capacity to become self-supporting or can develop other funding sources after the grant year. BLF prefers to make grants that provide seed money for new projects rather than assist established, ongoing projects. While we understand that administrative or overhead costs may be a part of a project's expenses, BLF will not fund grants primarily or exclusively targeted toward administrative or overhead costs. Factors also considered in awarding grants include:

- need for the proposed project
- impact of the proposed project
- availability or lack of other funding sources
- level of existing legal services that address the project's identified problem
- quality of the proposal
- applicant's connection to the community served
- diversity of applicant
- stability of sponsoring organization
- date of graduation
- applicant's demonstrated commitment to community service
- qualifications of the applicant

Visit <http://www.boalt.org/BLF/grants.html> for a list of programs that BLF has previously funded. BLF encourages proposals that address needs and issues not addressed by previous BLF projects.

International Projects

BLF has never before funded an international project, but if you wish to propose an international project, please address these following considerations:

- How is your proposed project a *legal* project?
- How is a U.S. legal education necessary to your project?
- How will your work on the project be supervised adequately?
- Where does the project require you to be licensed? Will you be filing lawsuits in U.S. courts or international tribunals? How long will you reside outside of the U.S.?

The Applicant

BLF seeks to fund original projects developed by individual applicants, not organizations. The applicant must have a leadership role in developing, writing and submitting the grant proposal. Current 3Ls or recent law school graduates (less than five years out of law school) may apply.

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Grantees may work independently, but BLF strongly favors affiliation with a preexisting public interest group. At an earlier historic moment, BLF funded individuals who established organizations that have since changed the face of legal services, e.g., the East Bay Community Law Center, the Homeless Action Center, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project.

However, at this moment in time, BLF prefers funding projects that will be affiliated with an established organization. Association with a public interest group helps grantees secure supplemental funding (either financial or in-kind) to cover the full cost of the project, establish connections with the client community, and obtain supervision from more experienced attorneys. However, BLF is funding the grantee and project set forth in the application, not the regular work of the sponsoring organization.

If BLF has enough funds to offer more than one fellowship, BLF will exercise a preference for a University of California, Berkeley Law School graduate for one of the fellowships. If there is only enough funding for one fellowship, no preference will be used.

How Much BLF Will Fund

In 2010, BLF expects to award one to two grants for full-time work for twelve months. For the last several funding cycles, our full-time grant has been approximately \$35,000, depending on available funds.

The Selection Process

Committees made up of BLF directors and members initially review the proposals and then propose finalists to the BLF board of directors, which selects the finalists after consulting with the BLF membership. Finalists are notified in mid-March and invited to the San Francisco Bay Area for a personal interview at the finalist's expense before the BLF board of directors. If an interview in the Bay Area is not feasible, finalists may interview by telephone. Last year (2009), for the first time we interviewed all of our finalists via Skype, and we anticipate doing the same this year.

The announcement of new grantees can be expected by May 1, 2010. New grantees generally begin their projects in the Fall although contracts are negotiated individually to accommodate the specific needs of the grantees and their projects.

Further Information

Examples of successful grant proposals are available from the BLF office. If you have questions regarding the submission of a proposal, the criteria for funding, or related matters, please contact our current Grants Co-Chairs, **Marc-Tizoc González**, and **Michelle Leung**, whom you may email at blfgrants@gmail.com.

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Format For Grant Proposals

Proposals shall be submitted electronically. DOC and PDF formats are preferred. Please send a **single** email before 11:59 p.m. on Friday, January 15, 2010 to blfgrants@gmail.com, attaching the various documents described below.

The proposal shall include the following components:

1. The **cover or title page**, including the name, address, phone number, the applicant's e-mail, the brief title of the project, and the amount of funding requested.
2. A **one page summary of the application** (on an 8.5 x 11" page, one side only), giving:
 - (a) the name of the applicant
 - (b) project title
 - (c) brief description of applicant and sponsoring organization, if any
 - (d) summary of the problem
 - (e) overall objectives
 - (f) the steps the project proposes to take to address the problem
 - (g) amount requested

NOTE: Your one-page summary should be able to stand on its own and give a complete description of you and your project. While every project proposal is thoroughly reviewed by the committees (described above), subsequently BLF directors who were not on a particular committee will only have your one-page summary for review at the board meeting where we determine our finalists.

3. A **description of the project** (4 to 6 double-spaced pages) should address the following points:
 - (a) *The need or problem the project addresses.* Include a discussion of what, if any, has already been done in the area of need and by whom, why past efforts have been inadequate, the target group, the geographical focus of the project, and other problems shared by the target group.
 - (b) *Project Goals.* Define and discuss the goals of your project, including a discussion of the intended impact of the project on the identified problem.
 - (c) *Proposed Action Steps.* Discuss how the project will meet the goals identified above. Please include a timetable for the accomplishment of these steps.
4. A **description of the applicant** (up to 2 double spaced pages). Please describe your prior community service experience, your connection to the community that you propose to serve, how you would contribute to the diversity of the public interest legal profession, and any other reasons you are qualified to undertake your proposed project.

One of the goals of BLF is to diversify the legal profession. This portion of the application offers you the opportunity to describe how you would contribute to BLF's mission of diversifying the legal profession. By "diversity" we mean individuals who are: people of color; gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/queer; economically disadvantaged; mentally, developmentally or physically disabled; immigrants; non-native English speakers; and members of other disadvantaged groups.

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According to the State Bar of California in its *Report & Recommendations from the Diversity Pipeline Task Force* (August 2006), in 2001, racial minority individuals constituted 17% of the bar and 53.3% of the populace, with Caucasians constituting the other 83% of the bar and 46.7% of the populace. (African Americans were 2.4% and 6.7% respectively; Asian Pacific islanders were 6% and 11.2%; Latinas/os were 3.7% and 32.4%; other minorities were 4.9% and 3%.) LGBT individuals were 2.4% of the bar and 2.1% of the populace, and people with disabilities were 4% of the bar and 17.4% of the populace.

5. **Material supporting your proposal including:**

- (a) If there is a sponsoring organization, a **description of the organization** and how it can contribute to the success of the project.
- (b) A **list of the people involved** in the project, including respective roles and relevant experience.
- (c) The applicant's **resume**.
- (d) **One letter of support from your sponsoring organization**, if there is one.
- (e) **Two letters of recommendation**. Submit letters only from those who either know your work well or are very familiar with the proposed project. Letters from persons involved in the proposed project's area would be particularly helpful. Do not ask persons currently serving on the BLF Board of Directors to write letters of recommendation.
- (f) **Overall Budget**. Please provide a budget, describing how you will fund your project's expenses, including details on how you will cover salary, benefits (if any), payroll taxes and office overhead. Further details about project expenses such as travel, copying, translation, etc. should also be provided.
- (g) **Other Funding**. Please mention any other sources that you have approached for funding. For each source of support, state whether the proposed project has a commitment from that source and/or if there are contingencies on such support. Please include a discussion of potential future sources of support.

E-mail Instructions

The proposal, including all letters of support and other supporting materials, must be emailed as one document in DOC or PDF format. Letters of recommendation and materials about the sponsoring organization should be scanned and emailed as PDFs.

Please attach your proposal and supporting documents in one email, and use the following file naming conventions:

Last Name, First Name, Document type, and number

E.g., González, Marc-Tizoc Proposal,
González, Marc-Tizoc Recommendation 1,
González, Marc-Tizoc Recommendation 2,
González, Marc-Tizoc Map of Oakland, CA
González, Marc-Tizoc Homeless Action Center Promotional Material

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The subject of your email should include your name and the name of your project, e.g., Marc-Tizoc González, Multidimensional Social Justice Advocacy: Transformative Community Lawyering in Oakland, CA.

Deadline

Your complete proposal, including all letters of support and other supporting materials, **must be received by 11:59 p.m. on Friday January 15, 2010.** Late proposals shall not be considered.

Good luck! We look forward to reviewing your proposals.

Marc-Tizoc González and Michelle Leung,
BLF Grants Co-Chairs
blfgrants@gmail.com