

Request for Proposals: AppalReD Legal Aid REGIONAL CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Issued: January 10, 2023

1. Introduction

Appalachian Research and Defense Fund of Kentucky, Inc. (AppalReD Legal Aid) seeks an independent consultant to conduct a civil legal needs assessment of its regional service area which is comprised of 37 counties¹ in eastern and south-central Kentucky. Under 45 CFR Part 1620, AppalReD Legal Aid must periodically assess the legal needs of the eligible population² in its service area as part of establishing priorities for use of its resources.

AppalReD Legal Aid has been providing high quality civil legal services to the low-income and vulnerable in its service region for over 50 years. These services are supported by funding from the Legal Services Corporation, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and other government and private sources. These services include housing, domestic violence, family, consumer protection, health, public benefits, expungement, and elder law. For more information about AppalReD Legal Aid, please visit our website www.ardfky.org.

2. Purpose of Needs Assessment

The needs assessment will be used as a key strategic planning tool to assist in better understanding how to allocate resources, track and improve client/case outcomes, and identify the region's most pressing legal needs for the low-income client-eligible population.

Results of the completed needs assessment will help identify:

- Predominant civil legal issues currently facing the region's overall client-eligible low-income population and whether those issues are being adequately addressed;
- Predominant civil legal issues currently facing the region's minority populations³ and whether those issues are being adequately addressed;
- Demographic and other relevant trends likely to affect the legal needs of low-income communities in the reasonably foreseeable future;

¹ Those counties are Adair, Bell, Breathitt, Casey, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Estill, Floyd, Garrard, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lincoln, McCreary, Madison, Magoffin, Martin, Monroe, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Powell, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, Wayne, Whitley, and Wolfe.

² That eligible population is legal residents with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG). Income eligibility is defined at 45 CFR Part 1611. Households at 125% of FPIG are categorically eligible and those with income above 125% up to 200% are eligible if they meet certain exceptions.

³ For the purposes of this needs assessment, these populations will include Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, people with limited English proficiency, and LGBTQ.

- Populations (demographic and geographic) considered over-served, well-served, moderately served, and underserved;
- Barriers to access that eligible clients currently face when seeking civil legal services, either when accessing a civil legal services attorney or navigating the court system on a pro se (self-represented) basis;
- Barriers that prevent eligible clients' identifying that the problem they face has a resolution through civil legal help;
- Whether particular services are duplicative and in need of consolidation, reduction, or elimination;
- How future funding, programming, and staff might be best allocated across the service area to better serve eligible populations;
- Whether technology should play a greater or different role in civil legal service delivery and if so, how; and
- What constitutes effective client outreach in the region.

3. **Project Budget**

AppalReD Legal Aid seeks proposals with budgets up to \$35,000.

4. **Description of Services**

The selected consultant will be responsible for:

A. Coordination of a fully completed written Regional Civil Legal Needs Assessment, following, at minimum, the outline below:

- An Executive Summary
- Description of Design and Methods Used
- Results of quantitative and qualitative data collection from: surveys, interviews, focus groups, relevant datasets, etc.
- Analysis of civil legal services needs and strengths
- Project findings
- Recommendations
- Supporting Appendices

B. Data Collection, Design, and Analysis:

The consultant will design all relevant surveys, interview questionnaires, and facilitation guides necessary to collect and analyze data regarding the civil legal service needs within AppalReD Legal Aid's service area.

The consultant will also be expected to either administer all interviews, surveys, and focus groups **OR**, where appropriate, effectively train staff/volunteers from AppalReD Legal Aid to undertake some of the surveying/interviewing.

Upon reviewing several other civil legal needs assessments that include rural populations, AppalReD Legal Aid tentatively prefers a “mixed-methods” approach. Ideally, the needs assessment will incorporate the below-listed data sources (but we remain open to the consultant’s guidance).

- *Surveys, Interviews, and/or Focus Groups* (whichever is most effective) of the following:
 - Board members, executive leadership, attorneys, and support staff at AppalReD Legal Aid;
 - Judges, court clerks, administrators, and other relevant court staff/officials;
 - Members of local bar associations;
 - Existing/recent AppalReD Legal Aid clients;
 - Existing/recent pro se low-income civil court consumers (those who have represented themselves in court without seeking out services from AppalReD Legal Aid—that is, “pro se”);
 - Potential clients (e.g., those eligible, but not yet using free civil legal services for whatever reason), including those in minority populations which we anticipate oversampling;
 - Staff from other legal, complementary organizations providing civil legal aid on a no-cost or low-cost basis to potential clients (e.g., Children’s Law Center, Appalachian Citizens’ Law Center, etc.);
 - Staff from non-legal, complementary organizations serving the same eligible client population (e.g., homeless shelters, victims’ service providers, Department of Community Based Services “DCBS” caseworkers, and other social service providers).

- *Trend Analysis of Open and Closed Cases at AppalReD Legal Aid.* Review of a random selection of civil cases opened between 2018–2022 by client legal issue and geographic distribution; and a review of cases closed by legal issue, level of service provided, and geographic distribution. (Note: we can pull and categorize the types of cases for the consultant, so that the consultant can focus on identifying trends.)

- *Trend Analysis of Civil Law Court Cases by Client Eligible Population:* Some eligible clients are not aware of our services or choose to represent themselves, rather than seek free legal counsel. An analysis of pro se court cases (2018–2022) will help identify how AppalReD Legal Aid can better reach out to potential clients and educate and prepare low-income residents who wish to self-represent.

- *Demographic Analysis (using existing publicly available data sources).* Gather and review demographic data about the service area’s eligible client population, including estimated number, geographic location, racial, gender, age, disability, and ethnic

composition, and other characteristics mapped in relation to availability of existing civil legal services for this region.

C. Respondent/Contractor Presentation:

The consultant shall provide at least one (1) in-person presentation, including opportunity for questions, to AppalReD Legal Aid at the end of the engagement highlighting the needs assessment process, findings, recommendations, and answering questions.

5. Proposal Contents and Submission Instructions

Consultant proposals should include:

A. A written narrative answering the following:

- i. With the information provided in this RFP (especially Section 4, A, B, & C), how does the RFP respondent propose implementing the needs assessment? (Where possible, RFP respondent should quantify how many interviews, surveys, or facilitated meetings they propose doing during the data collection stage.)
- ii. What additional analysis or processes does the RFP respondent suggest be undertaken as part of this needs assessment, if any, and why?
- iii. What cost or efficiency suggestions does the RFP respondent have for our proposed needs assessment project, if any?
- iv. How will the RFP respondent commit to meeting the deadlines listed in Section 6 (Timeline/Due Dates), if awarded this Contract?
- v. Price for the project.

B. A bio, resume and/or other items outlining RFP respondent's experience with community legal needs assessments and similar projects, and facility with skill sets commonly used in community legal needs assessments (e.g., statistical analysis, data visualization, survey design, project management, community outreach and technical writing, etc.);

C. A list of other personnel/subcontractors who will work on the project (please provide resumes or bios);

D. Samples or case studies of similar work projects that the RFP respondent has successfully completed; and

E. Contact name, title, affiliated organization, phone number and e-mail of three contacts for whom the RFP respondent has conducted similar work in the past five years.

All final proposals and supplementary attachments must be emailed to Robert Johns (robertj@ardfky.org) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (subject line: "AppalReD Legal Aid Needs Assessment Proposal") on March 3, 2023. If the RFP respondent would like to send an additional hard copy of the proposal or additional materials to supplement the e-mailed version, submit to: Robert Johns, AppalReD Legal Aid, 120 N. Front Avenue, Prestonsburg, KY 41653 by 5:00

p.m. Eastern Time on March 3, 2023. Proposals must be formatted on letter-size paper. Each page should be numbered and with the RFP respondent's name. RFP respondents shall bear and be responsible for all costs associated with preparing and submitting their bids.

6. Timeline/Due Dates

A.	RFP Release Date	January 10, 2023
B.	Proposals Due to AppalReD Legal Aid	March 3, 2023
C.	Notice of Award Released (on or before)	April 17, 2023
D.	Draft Assessment Submitted to AppalReD Legal Aid	October 13, 2023
E.	Final Assessment Submitted to AppalReD Legal Aid	November 17, 2023
F.	Consultant Presentation to AppalReD Legal Aid Board of Directors	December 2023

7. Inquiries

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Robert Johns by email (robertj@ardfky.org) or by telephone (606-889-1984).

8. Award of Contract

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

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

Proposals received will be evaluated by AppalReD Legal Aid on the following selection criteria:

- A. RFP respondent's demonstrated experience with community legal needs assessments and similar projects, and facility with skill sets commonly used in community needs assessments.
- B. Description of the approach the RFP respondent proposes in accordance with the questions asked in Section 5, A.
- C. Results of communications with the RFP respondent's client references.

- D. RFP respondent’s familiarity with the legal aid and/or human services landscape.
- E. Price, and the RFP respondent’s willingness to help AppalReD Legal Aid to find cost-effective solutions to complete the assessment.
- F. Quality of RFP respondent’s communications and responsiveness during the RFP process.

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

9. Confidentiality

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

10. Project Deliverables

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

11. Supplementary Information

RFP respondents may find it useful to review the following links and documents before submitting a proposal.

A. Legal Services Corporation’s website section on Comprehensive Needs Assessment & Priority Setting <https://www.lsc.gov/i-am-grantee/model-practices-innovations/plan-strategically/comprehensive-needs-assessment-priority>

B. The Legal Services Corporation’s performance criteria that incorporate its grant oversight experience with the American Bar Association (ABA) standards for the provision of civil legal aid is described under the “Performance Area One” section at the following link: <https://www.lsc.gov/media-center/publications/lsc-performance-criteria>.