



Legal Aid Society

NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

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This office serves Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Anti-Racism/Race Equity Training

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (“LASNNY”) seeks proposals to assist the organization to provide the LASNNY with anti-racism/race equity training to create a common vocabulary and understanding amongst all staff prior to engaging in priority setting and possible consideration of establishing a race equity priority.

Organizational Background

LASNNY’s mission is to provide effective, free civil legal services and education to and advocacy for people with low income or other barriers to accessing the legal system. We secure basic needs, protect and preserve legal rights, provide equal access to justice and seek fairness and dignity for our clients. LASNNY provides free civil legal help to individuals and families struggling with poverty in a 15,549 square mile, 16 county service area. The service area includes the Cities of Albany, Schenectady and Troy, along with 13 rural counties in northeastern New York, Adirondacks and the Champlain Valley. We provide direct legal services through five staffed offices located in Albany, Amsterdam, Canton, Plattsburgh and Saratoga Springs. We have 56 staff, senior, supervising and managing attorneys, 35 paralegals and support staff, and 10 administrative staff. We presently have a total of 101 staff members and 2 openings.

LASNNY has revenue of over \$12 million in 2019. We have 46 contracts with federal, state, county and city agencies, as well as area foundations, and also receive private donations. We are a Legal Services Corporation funded provider and about 11.49% of our revenue comes from LSC. We have doubled in size over the past nine years, both in terms of staff and financial resources.

In 2018, LASNNY closed 11,804 cases benefitting 24,537 people. The breakout of closed cases was as follows: income maintenance (23.2%), housing (31.9%), family (21.2%), health (1.9%), consumer (8.0%), employment (3.2%) and other (10.6%). We are growing our practice in the areas of consumer, economic justice and re-entry.

LASNNY is the successor organization to the Legal Aid Society of Albany, founded in 1923. In 2004, we merged with North Country Legal Services. Our Executive Management Team (EMT) consists of the Executive Director, Deputy Director of Strategic Operations, Deputy Director for Regional Offices, Chief Financial Director, Director of Facilities, HR Manager, Director of Development, Advocacy Coordinator and Executive Assistant. There are also five managing attorneys. The EMT has a video conference call every week and we get together for an in-person meeting about once every three months. The EMT meets with the Managing Attorneys monthly. All project staff meet in person twice per year and monthly via video conference.

Our Strategic Plan was adopted in December 2018 and includes a focus on establishing a race equity work priority. As part of our 2019 Action Plan, we want to offer staff a comprehensive anti-racism/race equity training. Our goal is to create a common vocabulary and common understanding to form the base of our 2020 priority setting process which will include consideration of establishing a race equity work priority. Our strategic plan, mission/vision/value statement, priorities, summary of cases closed in 2018, non-discrimination AA EEO plans and a description of our last (2016) priority setting process are available at: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Nm1pvfqzDKwamtlxwIC1fJitB8A2VRTg?usp=sharing>.

Planning Objectives

LASNNY seeks a consultant who can help facilitate a staff and Board anti-racism/anti-bias educational process so that we can:

1. Speak with a common understanding and vocabulary about race equity issues throughout the service area.
2. Design a priority setting process that is race conscious and help us have a fair, open, and informed discussion of whether to adopt race equity work priority during our 2020 Priority Setting Process.

At the start of our Strategic Planning Process, the Executive Management Team (EMT) reached a consensus that we should enhance staff understanding of the impact of structural and individual racism before having an informed program-wide discussion on adopting a racial justice initiative. The EMT then recommended that LASNNY explore a racial justice priority

The educational process should begin as early in 2019 as possible. We would like the entire staff and select members of the Board of Directors as desired to participate in the educational process. We would like the educational process to inform planning and implementation of our next priority setting process in 2020.

Project wide, the current diversity of our staff is 85% White/Caucasian, 2% Black/African American, 7% Asian, 4% Hispanic/Latino, and 2% Other. Project wide, the current diversity of our client community is:

69.4% White/Caucasian, 11.3% Black/African American, .9% American Indian and Alaska Native, 2.9% Asian, 8.2% Hispanic or Latino origin, and 7.3% Other.

The discussion about establishing a race equity or racial justice work priority to improve conditions in communities of color we serve, stands side-by-side with our commitment to increasing the impact of all our legal work. LASNNY will work closely with the consultant to develop the training to enhance both goals. Subject to the consultant's ideas, LASNNY envisions a half-day or full-day interactive training for full staff (some in small groups). We will consider a longer training depending on cost.

Consultant Attributes

- Significant prior anti-bias/race equity training experience.
- Diverse and inclusive staff
- Familiarity with the delivery of legal services to the poor.
- Demonstrated commitment to making meaningful change for low-income communities and community members.
- Experience in and commitment to racial justice and fostering a culture of impact.
- Conflict resolution skills for racial conflicts.
- Prior experience in priority setting in a legal services organization helpful.

LASNNY may make inquiries as it deems necessary to determine the ability of each proposer to perform the services contemplated by this RFP. Proposers must promptly furnish all information and data for this purpose as may be requested by LASNNY.

Scope of Services

Content of training: LASNNY seeks proposals for a vendor to design a training program collaboratively with LASNNY so that the program is relevant to its needs. The vendor must be able to provide anti-bias/race equity training, with a particular emphasis on anti-racism for the entirety of LASNNY's workforce.

LASNNY is seeking an interactive training that will help develop a vocabulary, a shared understanding of core concepts described below, and skills necessary to manage change and transformation in ourselves, LAS and our communities.

Core topics that LASNNY intends to address in the training program are:

- Why the Legal Aid organization is concerned about bias in any form in the workplace, particularly race-based bias and racism.
- White privilege
- Maintaining a respectful work environment.
- Improving client relationships and interactions across race, gender and sexual orientation.

- Valuing and not tokenizing diversity.
- Addressing bias, including:
 - Implicit bias
 - Anti-racism
 - Intersectionality
 - Racial Identity
 - History of Racism
 - The impact of racism on our client community.
 - The connection between race equity and anti-poverty legal services
 - What is a race equity lens, some models and what can be accomplished

LASNNY may give preference to proposals that provide training for which attorneys can receive Continuing Legal Education credit for the biennial bar registration process in New York State.

Deliverables to Include

- Shared or common understanding of and familiarity with racism and racial justice terms/concepts/theories to facilitate shared discussion across offices of a possible racial justice priority.
- Helps internal champions of racial justice/race equity work priority discuss, emerge and nurture.
- Allows LASNNY to consider and possibly embrace a racial justice/race equity priority.
- Helps staff address the feelings and concerns that the training brings up in them.
- Helps inform our priority setting process.
- Generates ideas and possible actions for a racial justice/race equity work priority in 2020, including assessment and recommendations for further training and skill development
- Implementation has a significant role for EMT and middle management.
- Project-wide curriculum to include development of shared language, terms, analytical frameworks, and basic social and historical contexts, and key factors that relate to legal advocacy.
- Develop staff capacity at a personal level to manage the learning, and to develop and utilize inclusive and equitable communication, conflict resolution, decision making and group norms.
- Providing training videos for replay.

Work Proposal

Each proposer shall address the Scope of Services and Deliverables to Include referenced above, including a detailed work plan and project approach that includes task definitions and methodologies, milestones, and a project schedule. The firm must be prepared to go forward with its training session on or before September

15, 2019. LASNNY will consider a program-wide training with breakout groups. Please also provide three professional references.

Cost Proposal

LASNNY's resources are extremely limited. The expense for the proposed training services will have to be reimbursed through LASNNY's contracts with New York State, and various private funders, including foundations. Therefore, all costs associated with this program will be closely scrutinized for cost-effectiveness. The costs will also be evaluated in light of LASNNY's track record of obtaining pro bono or deeply discounted services from major vendors.

Each proposer shall specify the basic fee it proposes to charge for the services requested. The fee should be broken down into a lump sum amount per training workshop. Any and all additional expenses for which reimbursement will be requested must be specified by category and in detail. Each proposer must provide a guarantee that no additional fees or costs will be charged without the prior written consent of LASNNY. The selected proposer must submit itemized vouchers for training sessions conducted and itemized bills and supporting documentation as may be requested for reimbursement of additional expenses.

Submission of and Inquiries Concerning Proposals

Inquiries with respect to this RFP, and final proposals must be submitted by 5pm April 12, 2019 via e-mail to Lillian M. Moy, Executive Director of Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, at lmoy@lasnny.org.

Evaluation, Selection, and Contract

Proposals shall remain valid until the execution of a contract with LASNNY for the provision of services. The selection of a proposal will be based on cost and on consideration of the experience, qualifications, and track record of the proposer as documented in the submissions and subsequent inquiries. In accordance with its obligations as a State contractor, LASNNY may take into consideration whether a vendor has been certified as a Women or Minority Owned Business by the State of New York.

Following a review of the proposals, as part of the selection process, the most competitive proposers may be asked to make a presentation at LASNNY's offices. At the final stage of the process, LASNNY will negotiate the substantive and financial terms that are most cost-effective for LASNNY.

Alternatives

Proposals may include alternative matters or items not specified or requested in this RFP. However, all such alternative matters or items must be listed separately from this proposal and the cost(s) thereof must be separate and itemized. For example, the proposer may submit additional components including conducting

training on a per person basis for selected employees or alternative proposals that the proposer thinks we should consider.

Indemnification

The selected proposer will be required to defend, indemnify, and save harmless LASNNY, its employees and agents from and against all claims, damages, losses and expenses (including, without limitation, reasonable attorney’s fees) arising out of or in consequence of, any negligent or intentional act or omission of the selected proposer, its employees or agents, to the extent of its or their responsibility for such claims, damages, losses, and expenses.

Proposals

All proposals are the property of LASNNY.