

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Assessment and Strategic Recommendations for Legal Aid Fundraising Support

Issued By: Connecticut Bar Foundation (CBF)

RFP Release Date: August 4, 2026

Project Inquiries : Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by **September 9, 2026**.

Responses to all submitted questions will be posted by **September 16, 2026**, at

<https://www.ctbarfdn.org/about/careers.html>.

Proposal Due Date: September 30, 2026

Primary Contact: Angela Schlingheyde, Executive Director

1. Organizational Background

The Connecticut Bar Foundation (CBF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing access to justice and supporting civil legal aid services throughout Connecticut. Through grantmaking and related initiatives, CBF funds organizations that provide legal assistance to low-income residents and vulnerable populations.

As demands for civil legal services continue to grow, CBF seeks to evaluate whether it should play a more active role in supporting fundraising efforts that benefit its grantees. CBF is interested in understanding both the opportunities and challenges associated with various fundraising models and identifying strategies that could increase philanthropic investment in legal aid services across Connecticut.

CBF is seeking an experienced consultant to conduct an objective assessment and provide actionable recommendations regarding CBF's potential role in supporting, facilitating, or leading fundraising efforts for legal aid organizations.

2. Project Purpose

The purpose of this engagement is to help CBF answer the following strategic question:

What role, if any, should the Connecticut Bar Foundation play in supporting or advancing fundraising efforts that directly benefit its grantees, and what approaches would be most effective in achieving that goal?

The consultant will conduct research and analysis to assess the current legal aid fundraising environment and develop recommendations for CBF to consider. The final product should enable CBF's Board and leadership to make informed decisions regarding fundraising strategy, organizational positioning, resource allocation, and implementation priorities.

3. Project Objectives

- Assess the current legal aid fundraising landscape in Connecticut.
- Evaluate donor trends, motivations, opportunities, and challenges.

- Examine successful models used by bar foundations and comparable organizations.
- Identify opportunities for increasing philanthropic support for CBF grantees.
- Assess whether CBF should assume a direct fundraising role, serve as a support organization, or pursue another model.
- Develop actionable recommendations and implementation options, including resource requirements, risks, and expected outcomes.

4. Scope of Work

The consultant will be expected to complete the following tasks:

Task 1: Fundraising Landscape Assessment

Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current fundraising environment for legal aid organizations in Connecticut. The assessment could examine:

- Current sources of charitable support for legal aid organizations.
- Major individual, corporate, law firm, foundation, and institutional donors.
- Geographic patterns of giving, including analysis of contributions from regions such as Fairfield County.
- Compare legal aid fundraising in Connecticut with peer states.
- Trends affecting charitable giving nationally and regionally.
- Areas of unmet opportunity or market gaps – potential new sources of funding for civil legal aid not yet being accessed by the civil legal aid organizations.

Task 2: Peer and Comparative Analysis

Conduct research on comparable organizations that support legal aid fundraising.

The analysis could include:

- Research bar foundations, legal aid support organizations, collaborative funding models, and related initiatives.
- Identify best practices and lessons learned.

Task 3: Donor Perception and Messaging Assessment

Evaluate how legal aid is perceived by potential donors and identify messaging approaches that may increase engagement and giving.

The consultant could assess:

- Donor perceptions, motivations, messaging effectiveness, and barriers to giving.
- Motivational drivers for giving by audience (ie: law firms, individual donors, corps)

Task 4: Strategic Role Assessment for CBF

Evaluate alternative roles CBF could play in supporting fundraising for grantees.

Potential models for consideration may include:

- No formal fundraising role
- Capacity-building and technical-assistance support
- Coordinated fundraising campaigns

Task 5: Resource, Capacity, and Feasibility Analysis

Assess the organizational implications of recommended approaches.

The consultant should identify:

- CBF staffing requirements.
- Technology and infrastructure needs for CB and/or grantees.
- Budget considerations/return on investment.
- Implementation challenges.
- Governance implications/Operational risks for CBF

Task 6: Strategic Recommendations and Roadmap

Based on findings, provide a set of prioritized recommendations.

Recommendations should include:

- Preferred strategic option.
- Rationale and supporting analysis.
- Expected benefits and risks.
- Resource requirements.
- Potential fundraising outcomes.
- Success measures and performance indicators.
- Implementation steps

These tasks align with CBF's goals under this RFP, but we are open to ideas and suggestions from the consultants on areas we may have neglected to address.

5. Stakeholder Engagement

The consultant should gather input from CBF leadership, board members, grantees, legal aid organizations, members of the legal community, other legal aid funders, and other stakeholders identified during the engagement. CBF will provide consultant with materials previously gathered.

6. Deliverables

- Project Work Plan
- Landscape and Findings Report
- Analysis of data collected
- Final Strategic Recommendations Report
- Committee and Board Presentations

7. Desired Qualifications

Experience in nonprofit fundraising strategy, philanthropic research, strategic planning, feasibility studies, and legal aid or access-to-justice initiatives is preferred.

8. Project Timeline

Estimated duration: 4–6 months.

9. Proposal Requirements

- Organizational information
- Project understanding
- Methodology
- Project team qualifications
- Relevant experience and references
- Timeline
- Budget

Please include a disclosure whether generative AI tools were used in the preparation of your proposal and briefly describe the extent and purpose of such use. Please also indicate whether you intend to use generative AI tools in completing any of the requested deliverables, and if so, how.

10. Evaluation Criteria

- Understanding of project objectives
- Quality of methodology
- Relevant experience
- Subject matter expertise
- Team qualifications
- Cost effectiveness
- References

11. Additional Considerations

CBF seeks evidence-based, actionable recommendations that will help CBF determine whether and how it should engage in fundraising efforts that benefit grantees.

Submission Instructions

Please submit proposals electronically to:

Email: apply@ctbarfdn.org

Subject Line: Proposal – Legal Aid Fundraising Strategy Assessment

RFP Inquiries: Questions regarding this RFP will be accepted until **September 9, 2026**, by email, only, and can be sent to apply@ctbarfdn.org (subject line: “Inquiry – Legal Aid Fundraising Strategy Assessment”). A summary of the questions and answers will be posted on the CBF website by **September 16, 2026**.

CBF reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, request additional information, negotiate scope and fees, and select the proposal that best meets its needs.