REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TO INCREASE EFFECTIVE LEGAL SUPPORT TO VETERANS FROM LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

ABA VETERANS LEGAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

The ABA Military and Veterans Legal Center (MVLC) invites applications from legal service providers to apply for a grant opportunity to increase effective legal support to veterans. The MVLC has created the competitive ABA Veterans Legal Assistance Grant available to state and local programs, so they can better meet the legal needs of underserved veteran populations within their communities.

I. Background

The ABA received funding for the MVLC as a result of the efforts by former ABA President Linda Klein, who established a commission that, during its 2016-2018 duration, produced educational programming, ABA policy, technology projects, key partnerships with outside entities, and other resources. This work highlighted the vast need for legal services in the veteran population, the existing gaps in providing these services, and an intent to implement the efforts of regional programs to more effectively support legal needs of veterans. Through the ABA Veterans Legal Assistance Grant (“Grant”), MVLC aims to meet these needs from this funding, along with potential future funders that support these efforts, by providing seed grants to regional veteran-focused legal projects.

II. Project Guidelines

A. Who is eligible to apply for a Grant?

In 2020, the MVLC is accepting grant applications from non-profit organizations with a project based in Georgia that delivers legal services to veterans primarily in Georgia. After 2020, MVLC will accept applications from non-profit organizations with a project based in any state that delivers legal services to veterans in the United States. Eligible projects must deliver legal services for veterans only in the United States.

B. What types of projects will be funded?

The MVLC seeks to provide financial support to up to three projects a year—which could be increased with additional future funding—that focus on developing regional solutions for improving local legal services capacity and direct services for the veteran population.

With the ability to leverage existing resources, the project should focus on meeting the legal needs of underserved veteran populations through community outreach, legal service provider collaboration,
identification of legal needs and gaps in services, attorney education, resource consolidation, and providing legal services and referrals to veterans.

C. What are the Grant’s primary objectives?

In evaluating proposals, preference will be given to programs that meet at least one of the Grant’s three primary objectives:

1. **Providing Outreach and Legal Services**
   Conduct direct outreach with underserved veterans to identify their legal needs and connect them to available resources. This may involve in-person, community-based outreach, such as supporting or conducting legal clinics, or providing direct legal services and consultations at veteran events or facilities.

2. **Collaborating with Other Legal Services**
   Collaborate with other legal services providers, preferably to further develop multi-regional (e.g., multi-city or statewide) service improvement. This may involve creating or improving collaborative case intake, screening, placement, and referral systems, along with volunteer attorney recruitment. This may also involve joint efforts to identify and assist with veterans’ areas of need and gaps in services, along with increasing cultural competency for veteran issues with other legal service providers.

3. **Creating or Improving Referral Databases**
   Conduct effective outreach, compile a comprehensive databank of provider resources that includes both legal and non-legal providers (e.g., mental health, housing, financial services), including details essential to appropriate holistic referrals. This may also include convening meetings of local legal and non-legal service providers to facilitate discussions about services, trends in the veteran population, resources, and best practices.

D. What are the program requirements?

The Grant recipient will be required to submit two reports to the ABA—at six and twelve months after receiving the Grant—with information capturing the lessons learned that the ABA may share with other entities interested in similar initiatives. The report will also include an objective evaluation component designed to provide the Grant’s sponsoring organization and the ABA with qualitative and quantitative data on areas of need, services delivered, and outcomes achieved through the Grant. With this information, the report will help indicate how the ABA could assist or collaborate with the recipient’s efforts, such as through training on substantive issues and cultural competency, volunteer attorney recruitment, mentoring, creation of guidance documents or publications, referrals to the ABA’s existing pro bono programs, and other support for which the MVLC is uniquely positioned.

The Grant may not be used to (1) influence any legislation or the outcome of any election for public office, (2) carry on any voter registration drive, (3) induce or encourage violations of law or public policy, (4) cause any private inurement or improper private benefit to occur, or (5) take any other action inconsistent with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.
E. What level of funding can be requested?

Up to three organizations will receive Grants ranging from $5,000 to $40,000. The decisions of the ABA, acting through the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP), concerning Grant recipients and amounts awarded, shall be final. LAMP has sole discretion to make these decisions and its decisions shall be deemed to be the decisions of the ABA. The ABA is not liable for any costs the applicant incurs in preparation and submission of its proposal, in participating in the Request for Proposals (RFP) process or in anticipation of the award of the contract. No rights or obligations are created by this solicitation of applications. The ABA reserves the right to award no grants.

F. What are the Grant application requirements and procedures?

The application must be submitted online by May 15, 2020.

Grant recipients will be announced in the summer of 2020. Each grant will be a lump sum distribution to support the recipient’s program over a period of twelve months.

Questions about the grant program or application procedures may be directed via email to Mary.Meixner@americanbar.org.