

March 4, 2025

Request for Proposals (RFP) for Strategic Planning Services

Issued by: Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC)

I. Background

The Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) was established to ensure low-income Marylanders have access to critically needed civil legal aid. MLSC provides funding to nonprofit organizations offering legal assistance in areas such as housing, family law, public benefits, and consumer protection. Through our grant programs, MLSC strengthens the legal aid network to help vulnerable communities access justice.

II. Mission

MLSC's mission is to ensure equal access to justice by funding legal services organizations that provide civil legal assistance to Maryland residents who otherwise could not afford it. Our grants support a range of services, including legal representation, advice, outreach, and education, improving the lives of those facing financial hardships.

III. Organizational Structure

MLSC is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Governor of Maryland. The Board consists of members representing diverse perspectives within the legal community, including attorneys, judges, and public interest representatives. The Board is responsible for setting MLSC's strategic vision and ensuring sound financial stewardship. Their fiduciary role includes ensuring compliance with legal and financial regulations, maintaining the integrity of grant-making decisions, and overseeing adherence to MLSC statutes. MLSC's day-to-day operations, including program administration and grant execution, are managed by the Executive Director and staff.

IV. Types of Grants and Funding

MLSC administers several grant programs, including:

- General Support Grants: Sustaining legal aid organizations that provide broad-based civil legal services.
- Special Projects Grants: Targeted funding for initiatives addressing specific legal needs.
- Technology and Capacity-Building Grants: Enhancing infrastructure and efficiency in service delivery.

V. Scope of Work

MLSC seeks proposals from qualified consultants to facilitate a strategic planning process that will guide the organization's future direction. The selected consultant will work collaboratively with MLSC's leadership, staff, board, and key stakeholders. The ideal consultant would have a familiarity with either grantmaking or the civil legal services community or both. The scope of work includes:

1. Facilitating Stakeholder Input

- Conduct strategic planning stakeholder surveys and interviews with MLSC staff, board members, grantees, funders, and other key stakeholders.

- Synthesize stakeholder feedback to identify key themes and priorities.

2. Organizing and Facilitating a Strategic Planning Retreat

- Plan and execute a retreat for MLSC's board and leadership staff to review stakeholder input and set strategic priorities.
- Provide structured activities and discussions that promote engagement and clarity in goal-setting.

3. Guiding the Development of Goals and Outcomes

- Assist in formulating measurable goals and objectives aligned with MLSC's mission and long-term vision.
- Ensure the plan reflects the evolving needs of MLSC's stakeholders and the broader access-to-justice landscape.

4. Creating Implementation or Operational Plans

- Develop actionable steps to achieve strategic goals.
- Outline roles, responsibilities, and benchmarks for progress tracking.
- Recommend strategies for ongoing evaluation and adaptation.

VI. Timeline

All strategic planning activities must be completed within Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026). The proposed timeline should outline key milestones, including stakeholder engagement, the planning retreat, goal development, and finalization of the strategic plan.

VII. Budget Proposal

Proposals should include a detailed budget outlining estimated costs for consulting services, stakeholder engagement efforts, facilitation, materials, and any other relevant expenses.

VIII. Proposal Submission and Contact Information

Interested firms or individuals should submit their proposals electronically by April 4, 2025 to:

Michelle Siri, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
Maryland Legal Services Corporation
msiri@mlsc.org
443-961-5596

For additional information or questions, please contact Michelle Siri at msiri@mlsc.org.

We look forward to receiving your proposals and partnering in this important initiative to shape MLSC's strategic future.