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Promoting Equal Access to Justice for the People of Hennepin County

2021 COMMUNITY GRANT GUIDELINES

Since 1968, the Hennepin County Bar Foundation (“HCBF”) has made a positive impact on the community by funding legal projects and organizations that support those in need throughout Hennepin County. Serving as the charitable arm of the Hennepin County Bar Association, the Foundation was established with the express purpose of providing financial assistance to individuals, organizations, and projects related to the law and the legal system. The mission of the HCBF is: promoting access to justice for the people of Hennepin County. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation that derives virtually all of its funding from direct contributions made by individual HCBA lawyers, area law firms, and other organizations in the legal arena.

The Foundation seeks to improve the quality of people’s lives through the law, to elevate the public’s connection to the legal system, and to facilitate the delivery of legal services. The Foundation is specifically focused on efforts that serve individuals and families who face barriers in gaining access to justice, including those who are low income, and those who do not qualify for pro bono assistance but are unable to afford legal services.

Funding Strategy

The HCBF is focused on ensuring that its community grant giving has a meaningful impact in Hennepin County for those who have difficulty gaining access to justice. Funding provided is intended to represent a substantial portion of a proposed program budget. In 2020, the Foundation gave \$147,250 in community grants, ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000, to 27 organizations.

Eligibility Requirements

Nonprofit organizations that provide legal programs and/or services in Hennepin County, Minnesota are eligible for funding. Programs must engage in at least one of the following activities in Hennepin County:

- Provide legal services to individuals of limited resources;
- Educate the public about the legal system; and,
- Contribute to the improvement of the legal system and the administration of justice.

Grant Evaluation Criteria

Proposals submitted to the Hennepin County Bar Foundation will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The impact of the proposal on promoting equal access to justice.
- The impact on Hennepin County residents.
- The availability of funding from other sources, if additional funding is needed for the program.
- The organization's overall financial health.
- Whether the Foundation grant will have a material impact on the organization's operating budget and/or project budget.

Application Deadline

Applications are due to the Hennepin County Bar Foundation by 5:00 PM on Friday, March 5, 2020. Applications must be emailed to aidinge@mnbars.org.

Timeline for Application and Review

Applications submitted by the March 5, 2020 deadline will be reviewed in March and April and final approval will be made by the HCBF board of directors in May. Applicants will be informed of the board's decision in late May, by email. Funds will be distributed to grantee organizations in June 2021 for the grant period July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees shall submit evaluation reports as requested by the Foundation. There are no reporting requirements due at the time of application, but funded organizations may be asked to submit a brief report at the conclusion of the grant period.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If my organization received a grant last year do I need to complete the full application again?

A: Yes. Consideration of grant requests, and funding decisions, are independent from year to year.

Q: Is a report required with the application as it has been in the past?

A: No. Those who received grants may be contacted after the conclusion of the grant period to complete a brief report.

Q: Can organizations that are not located in Hennepin County apply for funding?

A: Yes. Organizations can be located outside of Hennepin County, but the program or project funded by the HCBF must be delivered in Hennepin County and benefit the Hennepin County community.

Q: If an organization does not receive funding, can they reapply in the future?

A: Yes. The HCBF has an annual funding cycle. Any organization, whether they have been funded in the past, or not, may apply each year if they wish.

Q: Are there any types of organizations or programs that are not likely to be funded?

A: Possibly. The HCBF grant committee and board of directors are interested in making a significant impact with each grant. A small grant request within a large budget, or requests from very large organizations, may be less likely to be funded.

Q: Does the application need to be for a specific project?

A: No, funds may be awarded for specific projects or general operating funds. However, the HCBF board of directors suggest that when applying for general operating funds, be specific when addressing the use of grant funds and the impact on Hennepin County.

Q: May I discuss my grant proposal idea with someone from the HCBF?

A: Yes. You are welcome to call Amanda Idinge at 612-752-6614 if you would like to discuss your grant proposal.

Q: Will there be site visits?

A: No. The HCBF does not do site visits as a part of the grant review process. If there is additional information needed you will be contacted by HCBF staff.

For More Information

If you have questions about the application process or timeline, or foundation priorities, please contact Amanda Idinge at aidinge@mnbars.org.