



## Application for RFP #10054-2021

### Community Development Division

#### Emergency Rental Assistance and Legal Support Services

Submit application to: [CDDapplications@cityofmadison.com](mailto:CDDapplications@cityofmadison.com)

Applications are due by **12:00pm on Wednesday August 4, 2021.**

Please limit your proposal and responses to the form provided. Any materials submitted in addition to this application form will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal. *Do not attempt to unlock or alter this form.*

<b>Applicant Organization:</b>	Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc.		
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Stacia Conneely		
<b>Address:</b>	744 Williamson Street, Suite 200, Madison, WI, 53703		
<b>E-Mail:</b>	src@legalaction.org		
<b>Website:</b>	www.legalaction.org	<b>Telephone:</b>	608-256-3304
<b>Federal Tax ID or EIN</b>	39-1077192		
<b>DUNS Number</b>	078952942		
<b>Legal Status:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Liability Company <input type="checkbox"/> General Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Sole Proprietor <input type="checkbox"/> Unincorporated Association <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
<b>Tax Exempt Status:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 501 (c)(3) since 10/20/1965		

Check which proposed service your organization is intending to provide:

- ☐ Assist eligible applicants through application process, provide outreach and education
- ☐ Evaluate and process completed applications
- ☒ Provide legal support and mediation services as necessary (If interested in providing **only** this service skip to **Program C**)

## PART 1: Program Description

### **Program A:** Assist eligible applicants through application process, provide outreach and education *(Administrative costs only)*

1. What Madison neighborhoods and/or vulnerable populations does your organization serve? How will your organization ensure these resources are accessible to those most in need? Be specific (e.g. language capacity, culturally relevant service models, collaboration with other culturally competent community-based organizations, etc.)?
2. What is your organization's experience disbursing and navigating clients through housing-related financial assistance in Madison (e.g. Emergency Rental Assistance, Dane CORE, tenant-based rental subsidies, etc.)?
3. Describe the staffing plan for your proposal, including all leadership, direct service and supportive roles (e.g. finance, intake coordinator, etc.). Include job titles, brief job descriptions necessary experience for each staff member, including for staff who need to be hired?
4. Describe the proposed client-level outcomes, including the total number of people to be served, and timeline of services (e.g. 6 months, 12 months).

### **Program B:** Evaluate and process completed applications *(only complete if interested in providing this service.)*

1. Describe the history of effective organizational and fiscal management of federal funds, including understanding of 2CFR Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards", please identify staff positions and job experience responsible for fiscal management and reporting.
2. Describe how your agency monitors and verifies the accuracy and sufficiency of its billing system to assure all claims made are proper and that adjustment is sought when issues are identified.
3. Describe staff experience with Federal Funds allocated through the United States Department of the Treasury pursuant to Title V, Section 501 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 that has been funding source for Emergency Rental Assistance programs. Please include training plan for new hires to learn about federal requirements.

4. If additional staff required than described above please add detail of staff needed to evaluate applications and process payments. Include job titles, brief job descriptions necessary experience for each staff member, including for staff who need to be hired and timeline for hiring?

**Program C: Provide legal support and mediation services as necessary (*only complete if interested in providing these services.*)**

1. Describe the project for which funding is being requested. Include project details, the need addressed by the project, and the populations to be served.

Legal Action will provide free legal representation to tenants impacted by eviction through our Dane County Eviction Defense Project. We provide advocacy and representation to tenants at the precise moment they need it the most, in court and at trial, in order to improve their housing stability by mitigating the harmful effects of eviction.

We defend low-income tenants when they are threatened with an eviction (before a court action) or when a landlord files an eviction in court. We seek an outcome to the threatened eviction, or the filed eviction, that is fair to the low-income tenant, that complies with the law, and allows for a reasonable resolution. Often, a reasonable resolution is getting an agreement to a payment plan or a planned move-out, rather than a forceful eviction by a court and law enforcement. We do request that the court seal eviction filings from the online court records, when appropriate. We advise low-income tenants about both their rights and their responsibilities.

The community need for legal representation of tenants facing homelessness is always critical, but perhaps never more so than now, as the CDC eviction moratorium expired on July 31 for some counties and will expire on October 2, 2021 for those counties in substantial or high COVID-19 transmission rates. The eviction filings that have been on hold over the past several months, as well as record numbers of new filings, will now come flooding through the court system. The U.S. Census Bureau's household pulse survey ([https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/?measures=EVICTFOR&s\\_state=00055&periodSelector=32](https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/?measures=EVICTFOR&s_state=00055&periodSelector=32)) estimates that about 25.2% of Wisconsinites are currently in danger of either eviction or foreclosure. Rental assistance funds, while critical, will likely be insufficient to meet this need. Even in situations where a tenant can obtain sufficient and timely rental assistance funds, attorneys are critical to negotiating settlements with landlords that secure tenants' housing stability for as long as possible. Without this critical legal assistance in place, record numbers of eviction judgments and homelessness will follow.

Low-income households have suffered greatly due to the pandemic, with staggering increases in unemployment, especially in what are already low-wage jobs. Wisconsin State's unemployment insurance system has many waiting for benefits. With this reduction in income and delay in receiving relief, many low-income households have been and will be unable to pay rent at least through 2022.

2. Describe the agency's experience in administering this type of program. Describe the qualification of the staff assigned to the proposed program, including their knowledge and experience.

Legal Action's Dane County Eviction Defense Project has been in operation since January 2018 and has been, by far, the largest provider of non-profit legal representation to tenants in the County. In the over three years that the EDP has been in operation, we have provided civil legal aid to more than 650 clients. We

have successfully melded ourselves into the small claims court process and have developed working relationships with the Court, opposing landlords and their attorneys, and our numerous community partners.

In addition to the EDP itself, Legal Action is the largest non-profit law firm in the state, with a roster of 79 attorneys. We specialize in the areas of law that affect low-income people most often: housing, family, consumer, public benefits and health insurance, and barriers to employment law. Since its inception in 1968, the firm has identified housing as one of our priorities, and we have a dedicated housing committee and numerous attorneys with expertise in eviction, landlord-tenant, and other housing related areas. As the largest non-profit legal aid provider in the state and County, we are uniquely positioned to have the expertise and experience to provide the services in this area in the fashion proposed.

This project will leverage current staff and volunteers and hire additional staff as detailed below. This application is requesting funding for two attorneys and a paralegal, as well as staff that support them, even though the Dane County EDP will hopefully have additional staff funded by other grants.

Managing Attorney Stacia Conneely: Attorney Conneely is the direct supervisor of the attorneys and paralegals for this project. She has practiced in poverty law for over 16 years. She manages the Madison office.

Staff Attorney Heidi Wegleitner: Attorney Wegleitner is the expert housing attorney with the Eviction Defense Project. She has practiced in poverty law, with an emphasis on eviction prevention, for over 15 years. She trains and mentors the EDP volunteer attorneys and represents our low-income clients at the EDP.

Staff Attorney Erica Lopez: Attorney Lopez is a housing attorney with the Eviction Defense Project, as well as an experienced representative in Social Security disability hearings. She has represented low-income clients for over 10 years, with 5 years' experience in housing law.

Attorney to be hired or reassigned. We hope to hire or reassign a lawyer with 1 year or more of experience, preferably in housing or eviction cases.

Paralegal to be hired or reassigned. We hope to hire or reassign a new paralegal, with experience in quickly processing case files and interacting with many clients.

Volunteers: The EDP engages with volunteer attorneys who help clients free of charge. This allows us to meet growing and changing needs that our staff alone cannot accommodate. The volunteers are trained by our staff and many have been volunteering with us for years and help mentor new volunteers.

3. What Madison vulnerable populations does your organization serve? How will your organization ensure these resources are accessible to those most in need? Be specific (e.g. language capacity, culturally relevant service models, collaboration with other culturally competent community-based organizations, etc)?  
The population to be served consists of low- and moderate-income residents who are at risk of eviction or are facing other eviction-related concerns that interfere with their housing stability. Those circumstances include, but are not limited to, individuals and families who:
  - Have been threatened with an eviction;
  - Have received a notice terminating tenancy (e.g., a 5-day pay or quit notice for non-payment, a 28-day notice);

- Have a court date scheduled for eviction proceedings;
- Have been subject to an eviction lawsuit in the past and:
  - Were subject to an unjust eviction judgment and want to have a closed case re-opened, dismissed, and sealed;
  - Need to have an already dismissed case sealed; or
  - Previously negotiated terms for stipulated dismissal but need to renegotiate those terms.
- Have not been evicted themselves but are facing challenges securing housing due to landlords mistaking them for parties with eviction records.

We serve clients from every age, racial, and ethnic background. We supply interpreters to non-English speaking clients when necessary and have bilingual staff in both Spanish and Hmong. Legal Action uses interpreters to serve clients in any language and translates our outreach materials to Spanish and Hmong.

Federal regulation (45 C.F.R. Part 1626) restricts us from representing certain non-U.S. citizen foreign nationals. In emergency circumstances, we are able to provide representation absent proof of legal residence but require subsequent written proof of lawful residency. If we cannot continue representation, we provide a direct referral to other possible legal aid providers in the area. In circumstances involving domestic violence or human trafficking, we are able to serve clients regardless of citizenship status under the Kennedy Amendment and Victims of Trafficking Protection Act respectively.

Legal Action and the EDP's availability will be publicized via social media and working in coordination with the Tenant Resource Center, other community-based organizations, the court, and government agencies. The TRC sends postcards to all Dane County residents with eviction cases filed in court, and the postcards inform them of the availability of the EDP's services.

EDP staff will engage with neighborhoods where eviction is most likely, working in coordination with community-based organizations and government agencies and using results from research about those neighborhoods. Staff will attend Dane County Homeless Services Consortium meetings.

Legal Action has handouts and videos available on our website, Facebook page, and YouTube page that give information on issues such as eviction, unemployment insurance, and public benefits. Most of these are in English, Spanish, and Hmong. To see the eviction pieces, go to <https://www.legalaction.org/additional-resources/housing>.

## PART 2: Project Budget

BUDGET EXPENDITURES	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	AMOUNT OF CITY \$ REQUESTED	AMOUNT OF NON-CITY REVENUE	SOURCE OF NON CITY FUNDED PORTION
A. Personnel Costs (Complete Personnel chart below)				

BUDGET EXPENDITURES	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	AMOUNT OF CITY \$ REQUESTED	AMOUNT OF NON-CITY REVENUE	SOURCE OF NON CITY FUNDED PORTION
1. Salaries/Wages (show detail below)	278,946.47	210,430	68,516.47	4 other grants: 3 run through 2021 only (City ESG, City GPR, Dane CDBG-CV, and one runs through April 2022 (Dane CoC ESG-CV)
2. Fringe Benefits and Payroll Taxes	126,514.54	99,978	26,536.54	
<b>B. Program/Operations Costs</b>				
1. Program supplies and equipment		0		
2. Office Supplies	19,151.18	14,801	4350.18	
3. Marketing		0		
4. Rent/Utilities/Telephone	37,026.60	30,318	6708.60	
5. Other (explain*)	57,209.60	44,473	12736.60	
<b>C. Direct Rental Assistance</b>				
1. Rental Assistance	0	0	0	
2. Other (explain*):	0	0	0	
<b>D. TOTAL (A + B + C)</b>	518,848.53	\$400,000	118,848.53	

\*Explanation of "Other" expenses:

Training: \$1,000

Travel/Transportation: \$3,204

Court Cost: \$4,500

Translation: \$1,500

Indirect Cost (10% De Minimus): \$34,269

### PART 3: Personnel Chart

Identify and describe the role of key staff positions and affiliate partners who would become directly responsible for the various aspects of the contract, if awarded. For each position, please note if duties will be provided by a

current staff position (no additional FTE), a new position, or expanded hours for a current staff position (additional FTE) in the hiring plan column.

<b>Title of Staff Position</b>	<b>Hiring Plan (Current, New, or Expanded)</b>	<b>Expected hours to be spent in this project per week</b>	<b>Proposed Hourly Wage</b>	<b>Role With This Project</b>
Attorney	Current	2	\$35.48	supervisor
Attorney	Expanded	40	\$31.12	FT housing lawyer, from 50%
Attorney	Expanded	40	\$24.06	FT housing lawyer, from 50%
Paralegal	Current	40	\$16.12	support of lawyers
Intake Staff	Expanded	2.5	\$21.22	review callers for eligibility and assign cases to lawyers