

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW FOUNDATION COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

The Public Interest Law foundation (PILF) is a not-for-profit organization of law students, faculty and alumni that raises funds to promote the practice of public interest law at Columbia Law School and across the country. The organization distributes funds in two ways: through stipends to law students for summer public interest employment and through the Community Grants program. Each year, through its Community Grants program, PILF awards grants to organizations committed to providing legal services to communities in need. Since its inception, PILF has awarded over \$500,000 to public interest legal organizations.

In selecting projects for funding, we are guided by PILF's commitment to supporting public interest activities, including but not limited to: reforming the criminal and civil justice systems, eradicating discrimination, expanding educational and economic opportunities, improving living standards, increasing citizen access to judicial, legislative and administrative forums, and encouraging law students and the bar to devote greater resources to public interest legal work. PILF prefers to fund discrete projects that can be completed within a year or organizations seeking gap funding. PILF generally does not provide grants for standard operating expenses.

I. CRITERIA FOR PROJECT SELECTION

Applicants:

Both individuals and organizations are eligible for funding. Organizations should explain how the proposed project relates to their existing goals and projects. Individual applicants must demonstrate a strong commitment to public interest law.

Proposals:

Proposals should be innovative, well conceived, and practical to implement. *While we encourage all applications that seek to further public interest law activities, special consideration will be given to projects:*

- Addressing issues or aiding groups that currently receive inadequate attention or representation by individuals, organizations or government bodies;
- Performed in coordination with a sponsoring organization that could not undertake the project in the absence of the grant;
- Proposed by graduates of Columbia Law School; or
- Affording an opportunity for involvement by PILF members through pro bono work or summer internships.

PILF does NOT fund projects that primarily propose to conduct:

- Research not associated with an activity otherwise eligible for funding;
- Private practice on behalf of particular clients or any other profit-seeking activity;
- Activities that replicate recognized governmental functions or which duplicate projects that are principally supported by governmental and other public funds.

II. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Length: Maximum of ten (10) double-spaced typed pages, **not** including appendices.

Copies: Six (6) complete copies and **one email copy**, mailed to PILF@law.columbia.edu. (Any organization not submitting six copies and an e-mail copy will not be considered)

Deadline: Applications must be received by Monday, January 12, 2009 (any applications not conforming to this date will not be considered, though exceptions will be made for applications postmarked by January 7).

Mail To:

Public Interest Law Foundation
Attn: Andrew Haber
Columbia Law School
435 West 116th St.
New York, NY 10027

Additional Information: For questions or requests please contact PILF's Vice President of Community Grants (Andrew Haber at ash2130@cornell.edu) or Directors of Community Grants (Jacob Croke at jmc2198@columbia.edu and Maria Nonaka at men2114@columbia.edu).

III. APPLICATION FORMAT

Abstract (1 page):

- (1) Name of applicant (organization) and/or contact person.
- (2) Address, telephone number, email address, and website of applicant.
- (3) Project title.
- (4) Project summary. Please include a specific statement of the project's goals, an estimate of the project's duration, and a description of the people that the project seeks to benefit.
- (5) Total amount of funding requested.

Proposal (9 pages):

- (1) Project Description: Please address the questions below and add any additional relevant information. Applicants must address each question separately in the order below.
 - What problem/need will the project address?
 - Is there a specific geographic focus or target population?
 - What are the specific goals of the project and how will they be achieved?
 - What other work is being done in this area; why is this project needed?
 - What specific organizations, communities, and/or individuals do you anticipate working with on the project? Have they been contacted regarding your project?
 - How does this project fit with the overall strategy of your organization? Does it support the overall organization or a sub-element of the organization?

(2) Project Timetable: Provide a specific timetable of tasks, events, goals, and target dates for the funding year. If the project will continue for more than one year, your timetable should detail the specific portion that will be accomplished within the first year. Applicants are also encouraged to describe their vision of the project's development in subsequent years. Projects are expected to begin before the end of the 2008 calendar year.

Please note that the timetable is of particular importance to us as we are interested in funding projects that we feel confident can realistically meet their stated goals within the funding year.

(3) Evaluation: Grant recipients will be evaluated by both the applicant or sponsoring organization and by PILF for the duration of the grant. Describe the evaluation mechanisms you intend to use to measure your progress in meeting your project goals and objectives.

(4) Opportunities for Student Involvement (if applicable): Please note any opportunities your organization may be able to offer for law students at Columbia to become involved in your project. Similarly, please note any Columbia Law School connections your organization may have.

Appendices:

(1) Proposed Project Budget: Include estimated costs for salary/wages (itemized), equipment and supplies, office space, and any additional projected expenses. Individuals applying for grants are encouraged to seek office space, secretarial assistance, and other support services by associating with an existing public interest organization. If your project will extend beyond one year, please discuss your plans for obtaining continued funding.

(2) Project Funding Beyond PILF Support: If your project will require additional funding, above and beyond that requested from PILF, please explain how you intend to secure such funds. Please describe in detail any funds that you have already received or that you foresee obtaining in the future.

(3) Organization Budget: The overall budget for the organization. This should include a list of your other sources of funding, the amounts received, and the purpose of the funding received. This helps us understand how your project fits into the organization as a whole.

(4) Non-Profit Status: Please provide a copy of your Internal Revenue Service letter of determination verifying the 501(c)(3) status of your organization or of the organization with which your project will be affiliated. If you do not have such status, describe what steps you have taken or will take to acquire 501(c)(3) status

(5) Optional Letter of Support: Should you wish to supplement your application with a letter of support, you need not enclose this letter within the application itself. However all such letters must be received by PILF by the application deadline or they will not be reviewed.

NOTE: All applications must be complete. Any incomplete application will not be considered

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

Proposal Selection: PILF intends to notify grant recipients by April 2008.

Average Grant: In recent years, PILF has awarded four to five grants per year to organizations both in New York and elsewhere ranging from \$1,500 to \$15,000, with the typical grant being approximately \$10,000. This past practice, however, is not dispositive of the number or amount of awards PILF will grant in 2008.

Grant Disbursement: Grants will be disbursed quarterly.

Evaluation Reports: Grantees are required to furnish a report biannually, detailing the allocation of grant funds and the progress of the project to date.