



**Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc.**  
**Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse Civil Legal Services State Appropriation Grant**  
**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** Friday, May 12, 2017 by 5:00 p.m.

**PURPOSE & DESCRIPTION**

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As specified in 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc. (WisTAF) is administering a program that provides funding for legal services in civil matters related to domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or restraining orders or injunctions for individuals at risk under section 813.123 of the statutes. The grant program will be funded by Temporary Assistance To Needy Families (TANF) funds available through the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to enhance stated W-2 program objectives.

WISTAF will make grants to domestic abuse agencies and providers of civil legal services that share the W-2 program's goal of helping TANF-eligible parents prepare for, obtain, and keep unsubsidized employment, and to help parents provide for their families and become self-sufficient. Funds may be used only to provide legal services in civil matters related to domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or restraining orders or injunctions for individuals at risk under section 813.123 of the statutes, in matters for which federal TANF block grant funds under 42 USC 601 et seq. may be used.

***Background Information Pertaining to July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016 Funding***

Section 9106 (2q) of 2015 Wisconsin Act 55 (the biennial budget) requires the Wisconsin Dept. of Children and Families (DCF) to award a grant of \$500,000 in each fiscal year of the 2015-17 biennium to WisTAF. WisTAF will administer a grants program which provides state funding for providers of civil legal services to TANF eligible recipients of legal services statewide, for the purposes as stated.

Funding will focus primarily on two purposes which further statutory TANF goals:

1. To end dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage, and
2. To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Grant awards will be limited to \$75,000 per applicant, per fiscal year. Funding distributions will be made on a reimbursement basis. Providers of legal services will be reimbursed for personnel costs. Grantee agencies may also request administrative cost reimbursement of up to 10 percent of the total grant received. WisTAF will retain up to 10 percent of available funds to offset administrative costs associated with the management of the grant program.

***IMPORTANT: Note on July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018 Funding***

**Grants awarded by WisTAF as part of the 2017-18 Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse Civil Legal Services State Appropriation Grant Program are provisional and entirely dependent on funding inclusion in the 2017-2019 State Budget and approval by the Wisconsin Dept. of Children & Families (DCF). Provisional grant recipients will be notified upon signing of the 2017-2019 State Budget.**

***Grant Applicant Eligibility***

Providers of legal services applying for funding from WisTAF will need to demonstrate the ability to screen client eligibility, and track and report civil legal services outcomes either directly or through sub-contracts with civil legal services providers in a cost-effective, time-efficient manner.

***Client Eligibility***

Recipients of legal services must be TANF-eligible individuals under 42 USC 601 et seq., needing legal assistance in civil matters related to domestic abuse, sexual abuse or restraining orders or injunctions for individuals at risk under 813.123 of the Wisconsin statutes, whose gross incomes are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line. Income shall be determined in the same way as gross income is determined for purposes of eligibility for a Wisconsin Works employment position, as defined in section 49.145(3) of the statutes, including the exclusion of any payments or benefits made under any federal law that exempts those payments or benefits from consideration in determining eligibility for any federal means-tested program. WisTAF will provide a simple W-2-based income determination questionnaire if applicant does not already have W-2 income screening procedures established.

***Data Collection & Reporting***

Legal providers will be required to track and report a variety of program outcomes. See Appendix A for a sample list.

Providers of legal services will be required to submit expense requests for reimbursements at least quarterly. In addition, providers of legal services will be required to submit a brief mid-year report describing their progress towards their stated application goals, and a comprehensive final report that details all services provided and the outcomes that have been achieved. Providers of legal services will also be notified that they may be required to provide additional reporting as needed, or if required by DCF.

While it is not anticipated that detailed client information will be required, if it is, client confidentiality will be the first priority. Specific client information must be provided in a form that protects recipients of legal services' identities, privacy and safety.

Reporting deadlines will be strictly enforced. Reimbursements submitted by providers of legal services that do not adhere to guidelines will be placed on hold until the grantee is in compliance. WisTAF will have the right to withhold payment or defund any program that does not adhere to the requirements of the grant contract.

***Restrictions on Use of Funds***

Funds may not be used for legal services for litigation against the state.

**GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

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WisTAF's evaluation of grant applications will include a systematic review of each application to determine whether the applicant meets the following criteria.

***Ability to identify and serve specified target population:*** Only applicants with the ability to screen and identify clients who meet stated client eligibility requirements (refer to *Client Eligibility* above) will be considered for funding.

***Ability to track and report specified program outcomes:*** Only applicants with the ability to track and report specified program outcomes (refer to *Data Collection & Reporting* above) by the deadlines established by WisTAF should apply for funding. Grant recipients may be required to provide additional reporting as needed, or if required by DCF.

***Impact of services:*** WisTAF will consider the anticipated outcomes of the services, including the number of people that will be served, and the nature of the impact on the lives of targeted populations. A desire for overall geographic representation/coverage throughout the state also may impact individual applicant funding decisions.

***Partnerships, collaboration and community support:*** As relevant, WisTAF will consider the extent to which an applicant has developed beneficial partnerships, or has demonstrated the ability to partner with social services providers or local legal professionals such as family court commissioners, judges, and/or local bar associations.

***Financial stability and longevity of the applying program:*** Can the applicant demonstrate fiscal responsibility, program stability, effective governance and leadership?

Legal providers receiving 2015-16 Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse Civil Legal Services Grant Program funding will be required to track and report program outcomes. Outcomes may include, but are not limited to:

- Resolved a civil legal problem that was a barrier to employment or job training or to transportation to employment or job training with an outcome including:
  - Overturned a revoked or suspended driver's license;
  - Obtained a reasonable payment or community service plan for unpaid traffic/driving fees or fines that prevented the eligible client from obtaining a valid driver's license;
  - Cleared a barrier to obtain or keep an occupational license or another income-generating license; or
  - Cleared or clarified an inaccurate or misleading criminal background or arrest record.
- Assisted access to Wisconsin W2 services.
- Obtained a restraining order.
- Achieved a resolution to a family law matter with protections that ensure victim safety with an outcome including:
  - Obtained a reasonable child support order;
  - Obtained child placement and visitation orders; or
  - Obtained a divorce.
- Resolved a consumer law problem that was a barrier to economic security or obtaining and keeping a job with an outcome including:
  - Overcame illegal sales contracts and/or warranties; or
  - Prevented recovery of illegal deficiency judgments.
- Resolved a housing law problem with an outcome including:
  - Defended against an illegal eviction by a public or a private landlord;
  - Prevented homelessness;
  - Ensured a safe and legal exit from a lease; or
  - Obtained or prevented the loss of a housing subsidy or place in public housing.
- Obtained or removed a barrier to obtaining work supports such as food stamps, health insurance, and Earned Income Tax Credits.
- Obtained disability benefits (and related health insurance) when the client is too disabled to work in a family-sustaining job.
- Resolved a tax dispute.
- Resolved legal issues affecting families with children who have been witness to or victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse (not solely child abuse) and are traumatized, with outcomes including:
  - Obtained special education programming (ensuring appropriate services and supports are in place); or
  - Removed barriers to appropriate public education (stabilizing children in their educational setting, providing special educational services related to trauma).