

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Strategic Planning

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (LASNNY) seeks proposals to assist the organization with strategic planning.

Organizational Background

LASNNY's mission is to provide effective, free civil legal services and education to and advocacy for people with low income or other barriers to accessing the legal system. We secure basic needs, protect and preserve legal rights, provide equal access to justice and seek fairness and dignity for our clients. LASNNY provides free civil legal help to individuals and families struggling with poverty in a 15,549 square mile, 16 county service area. The service area includes the Cities of Albany, Schenectady and Troy, along with 13 rural counties in northeastern New York, Adirondacks and the Champlain Valley. We provide direct legal services through five staffed offices located in Albany, Amsterdam, Canton, Plattsburgh and Saratoga Springs. We have 62 staff, senior, supervising and managing attorneys, 12 paralegals and 10 management staff. We presently have a total of 100 staff members and 10 openings.

LASNNY has revenue of over \$11 million in 2017. We have 36 contracts with federal, state, county and city agencies, we well as area foundations and private donations. We are a Legal Services Corporation funded provider and about 11% of our revenue comes from LSC. We have almost doubled in size over the past seven years or so, both in terms of staff and financial resources.

In 2016, LASNNY closed 10,137 cases benefitting 21,401 people. The breakout of closed cases was as follows: income maintenance (21%), housing (32%), family (23%), health (2%), consumer (8%), employment (3%) and other (11%). We are growing our practice in the areas of consumer, economic justice and re-entry.

LASNNY is the successor organization to the Legal Aid Society of Albany, founded in 1923. In 2004, we merged with North Country Legal Services. Our Executive Management Team (EMT) consists of the Executive Director, Deputy Director of Strategic Operations, Deputy Director for Regional Offices, Chief Financial Director, Director of HR & Facilities, Director of Development, Advocacy Coordinator and Executive Assistant. There are also five managing attorneys. The EMT has a video conference call every week and we get together for an in-person meeting about once every three months. The EMT meets with the Managing Attorneys monthly. All project staff meet in person twice per year.

We recently completed a Program Quality Visit by the Legal Services Corporation. We expect the final report soon. In Fall 2015, LASNNY completed a year-long Leadership Academy which resulted in four significant priorities: community lawyering, impact, internal cultural and knowledge management. We last did strategic planning in 2011 and that plan is available to responders. All relevant documents about the Leadership Academy, last Strategic Plan, our last (2016) priority-setting process and, once received, our Program Quality Visit report, are available in googledocs.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1P4uaRFD3CTFpAzJLejJdAGJfxxB_x_BT?ths=true

Planning Objectives

LASNNY seeks a consultant who can help facilitate a staff and Board owned strategic planning effort to (1) review our mission, vision and core values; (2) utilize available data to arrive at clearly articulated goals in the core areas identified as a focus for this strategic planning effort, that is racial justice, succession planning and preparation and fostering impact; (3) identify strategies and action steps to achieve these goals; and (4) identify the organizational structure and capacity changes that we need to adopt or develop in order to best position the organization for the future.

As noted, there are three broad themes that we would like to address through a strategic planning process. The first is succession planning. The Executive Director and many of the senior management staff will retire within the next five to ten years. It is important for everyone on the Board and in the organization to see the future that is coming at us very quickly, take ownership of it and start preparing for and transitioning toward that future now.

Second, the EMT recommends that LASNNY explore a racial justice priority. The EMT reached a consensus that we should enhance staff understanding of the impact of structural and individual racism before having an informed program-wide discussion on adopting a racial justice initiative.

Third, we think it is important to examine our philosophy toward client services. Our culture has been that we want to be both a neighborhood law office and a regional law firm with a well-developed capacity for impact advocacy. We are making intentional efforts to grow our impact advocacy, and we want to enhance structural reforms that will help us grow our capacity for impact work.

We would like the planning process to begin in early 2018. We would like the entire staff and the Board of Directors to be aware of and invested in process. We would like the strategic planning process to culminate with a full day program-wide meeting in Fall 2018, and we would like our consultant to take the lead in planning for that event.

Consultant attributes

- Prior strategic planning experience
- Familiarity with the delivery of legal services to the poor
- Demonstrated commitment to making meaningful change for low-income communities and community members
- Experience in and commitment to succession planning, racial justice and fostering a culture of impact.

Proposal Deadline: January 30, 2018

Proposals may be submitted electronically to:

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(518) 689-6304 or (518) 810-8859 (c)

Proposal contents:

- Resume or CV for project personnel
- Summary of prior relevant experience of project personnel
- Narrative proposal, including timelines and methods
- Budget
- Three references
- Sample of similar work