

MAINE CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND COMMISSION

APPLICATION PACKET FOR 2026 and 2027

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KEY DATES

Friday, September 5, 2025

As instructed in Part V of this Application Packet, applications may be submitted via email, in hand or mail no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, September 5, 2025 to:

Michelle Draeger, Executive Director
Maine Justice Foundation
124 State Street, Suite 2
Augusta, Maine 04330
mdraeger@justicemaine.org

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

The Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission will hold a public meeting beginning at 9:00 AM until finished on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, to make final decisions regarding awards for 2026 and 2027. The meeting will be held in Room 208, Burton M. Cross State Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta, Maine 04333.

Part I

Overview of Funding Guidelines for Application

1. **The Maine Civil Legal Services Fund.** The Maine Civil Legal Services Fund (Fund) was established by the Legislature (4 M.R.S. §18-A) to provide funding to support the provision of free civil legal services to low-income people or the needy elderly in Maine. The Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission (Commission) is composed of three Commissioners appointed for three-year terms by the Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. The Maine Supreme Judicial Court promulgated rules on July 1, 2007 (last revised September 19, 2019) to guide the Commission in its allocation of funding to legal service providers. These rules can be found online at: https://www.courts.maine.gov/rules/text/mr_civ_legal_svcs_fund_commn_2019-09.pdf#:~:text=RULES%20FOR%20THE%20MAINE%20CIVIL%20LEGAL%20SERVICES%20FUND,and%20grants%20for%20programs%20%28sometimes%20collectively%20referred%20to
2. **Eligible Providers.** Only the following legal service providers are eligible to receive disbursements from the Fund:
 - Nonprofit organizations whose missions include the statewide provision of free civil legal services and who have at least five years of experience providing free civil legal services;
 - Legal aid clinics of accredited law schools operating exclusively in Maine; and
 - Programs whose primary mission is to coordinate pro bono legal services on a statewide basis for low-income people in Maine.

Eligible providers may apply to receive disbursements from the Fund either separately or jointly. Two or more providers submitting a joint application will not be given preference solely on the basis of their joint application. One application is preferred. However, a separate application involving the provision of new services will be considered.
3. **Exclusions.** Disbursements from the Fund received by providers may not be used for:
 - Lobbying as defined in 3 M.R.S.A. §312-A (9), unless the recipient is responding to a request by a Legislator or a member of the Executive Department; and
 - Work done by for-profit entities, although under appropriate circumstances sub-contracting with for-profit entities could be considered.
4. **Funding Level, Allocations and Use.** The Commission will make funding allocations for general operational support or for specific programs, on the basis of information provided by applicants in a written application pursuant to this Application Packet.
5. **Selection Criteria.** The Commission will use the selection criteria identified in Rule 4 of the “Rules for the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission.”

Part II
Application Cover Sheet
to be completed by applicant

MAINE CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND COMMISSION
Application for Funds for 2026 and 2027

NAME OF ORGANIZATION:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

STATE/ZIP:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

PURPOSE OF REQUEST: *Check applicable box.*

☐ General Operational Support ☐ Project to Support a Specific Program

TITLE OF PROJECT (if requested funding is for a specific program):

NAME OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

STATE/ZIP:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED:

PERCENTAGE OF FUND REQUESTED: %

PAYABLE TO:

PERSON PREPARING APPLICATION:

If different from above...

TITLE:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

TAX EXEMPT? *Check applicable box(es). Attach copy of IRS exemption letter, if any.*

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ PENDING

TYPE OF APPLICANT: *Check applicable box(es).*

☐ NON-PROFIT CORPORATION ☐ LAW SCHOOL CLINIC
☐ PRO BONO PROJECT ☐ UNINCORPORATED
☐ OTHER (describe)

Part III
APPLICATION NARRATIVE & BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS
to be completed by applicant

MAINE CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND COMMISSION
Application for Funds for 2026 and 2027

- 1. Overview of Applicant Organization:** Use no more than **one** page to describe: the form of organization (i.e., corporation, partnership, unincorporated association); date established; brief history; mission/purpose; staffing and management structure including staff qualifications and requirements for service (i.e., criteria by which clients are determined to be eligible).
- 2. Narrative Describing Request for Operational or Specific Program Support:** Use up to **six** pages to describe the following activities and areas related to this application for funds from the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund.
 - A. Identify the needs to be addressed;
 - B. Describe the target population(s), including their characteristics and the anticipated number to be served (specify whether the number to be served is individuals, cases or some other category);
 - C. Describe the services provided and to be provided with the requested funds (if different);
 - D. Specify the geographic area(s) to be covered;
 - E. State the overarching goal and anticipated outcomes for the target population(s) and any other aspects of the proposed work;
 - F. Spell out the objectives and action steps that will be taken as the applicant works to achieve the anticipated outcomes;
 - G. Describe the community support for the organization/project;
 - H. Explain whether and the extent to which any other organization provides services similar to those proposed in this application and, if so:
 - i. How the proposed services are different or necessary, and
 - ii. How coordination will be accomplished.
 - I. Identify the evaluation methods to be used;
 - J. Elaborate on information staffing and management information already provided in section 1 to describe how the organization will ensure the successful implementation of objectives and action steps proposed in this application; and
 - K. Describe the fee structure for court fees or litigation expenses if such fees are charged and describe means of assuring that legal services obtained through this award will be provided without charge to the clients.

3. **Attach Financial Information.** Attach the applicant organization's most current operating budget, including a breakdown of all current funding sources, but not including in-kind contributions. The applicant should note any significant funding challenges for the organization or program. Also attach the applicant organization's audited financial statements for the last fiscal year. If an audit was not conducted, attach a financial accounting for the period that has been certified correct by the responsible financial officer.
4. **Attach Form 990.** Attach the applicant organization's most current IRS Form 990.
5. **Specific Budget.** If a specific program-related project is proposed in this application, attach an annual budget specifically for this project. Be sure to include all income sources and amounts necessary to fully fund the project.
6. **Specific Rationale for Increase in Allocation of Fund from Last Funding Cycle.** In no more than **one** page, if the applicant was previously awarded funds from the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund and is requesting an increase in the percent allocation of the fund from the last funding cycle, provide specific rationale for the increased funding request, including measurable goals—e.g., objective, data-driven goals—to be obtained by the organization should the Commission grant the applicant's increased funding request.

Part IV
Application Assurances
to be completed by applicant

MAINE CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND COMMISSION
Application for Funds for 2026 and 2027

NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Applicant assures that:

1. It will restrict the use of Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission funds to law-related activities and purposes that are charitable or educational within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and to the proposed uses described in this application.
2. It will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, handicap, or national origin against (a) any person applying for employment or employed by the applicant with respect to any personnel action proposed or taken concerning the applicant or employee; or (b) any person seeking participation in, or the benefits or proceeds of, the program or projects supported in whole or part by this grant.
3. It will, upon request, cooperate with all data collection and evaluation activities undertaken by the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission and give any authorized representative of the Commission access to any copies of all financial records, books, papers, or documents.
4. It will provide a final written report as required under applicable statutes and rules of how the grant money was spent and the results achieved, and other interim reports on the project's status as requested by the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission.

We have read these assurances and understand that if this application is approved, any funding will be subject to these assurances. We certify that the applicant will comply with these assurances if the application is approved.

DIRECTOR OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION OR PROGRAM:

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

APPLICANT BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Part V

Technical Instructions for Preparing and Submitting Application

1. **Paper and Font Size.** In preparing the Application Overview and Narrative under Part III, Sections 1 and 2 of this Application Packet, information must be typed on 8.5 inch x 11 inch paper or equivalent format if filing electronically. Font size should be no smaller than 10 and margins should be no smaller than 1 inch. The Application Overview should not exceed one page and the Application Narrative should not exceed 6 pages.
2. **Page Headings.** Throughout the entire application described under Part III of this Application Packet, list the applicant, date and relevant section on the header of each page.
3. **Application Submission.** Applicants may submit a hardcopy or electronic copy of the application and attached materials. Applicants may submit these via email, in hand or mail.
4. **Application Deadline.** Applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, September 5, 2025 to:

Michelle Draeger, Executive Director
Maine Justice Foundation
124 State Street, Suite 2
Augusta, Maine 04330
mdraeger@justicemaine.org

5. **Additional Information.** The Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission may request an applicant to provide additional or clarifying information when needed for proper review of the application.