

Questions and Answers

RFP: Second Regional Immigration Assistance Centers

Date Posted: February 18, 2020

(1) Question: What is the earliest possible start date of an agreement entered into as part of this RFP?

Answer: The contract start date is yet to be determined.

(2) Question: If a request is made for additional attorneys in the proposal, with the idea that additional attorneys may be required in the future, and the proposal is accepted and a contract with ILS is signed based on the approved proposal, is the Regional Immigration Center (RIAC) *required* to hire the additional attorney(s) under the ILS contract even though they may not be needed?

Answer: The Office of Indigent Legal Services (ILS) will review and score each proposal in accordance with the criteria set forth in the RFP, pages 12-20. In accordance with the "Awarding Grants" section of the RFP (page 21), ILS reserves the right to negotiate a final budget and workplan with successful applicants prior to issuing a contract. ILS recognizes that after a contract is received, there may be instances in which the awardee seeks to amend the budget and workplan to better meet the needs of the project. In such instances, the awardee must notify ILS in advance of the requested amendment, setting forth an explanation and justification for the requested amendment. See also Question 4 below.

(3) Question: Is there a minimum percentage of time that ILS requires for additional attorneys to spend doing RIAC work? In other words, can the RIAC hire an additional attorney who devotes less than 50% of his or her time to the RIAC?

Answer: As set forth on pages 6-7 of the RFP, each RIAC will be required to have at least two qualified attorney positions serving as RIAC attorneys, who will dedicate 100% of their time to grant activities throughout the entirety of the grant. ILS will consider proposals that include more than two attorneys, as the budget allows, who are not 100% dedicated to grant activities ("additional attorneys."). ILS encourages applicants to specify the amount of time these additional attorneys will devote to grant activities.

(4) Question: If we run out of money in one area/line of the budget, can we move money from another area/line of the budget without ILS approval?

Answer: No. ILS issues the grant funding to awardees via contracts. The contract specifically states that budget amendments are permissible only when the parties "mutually agree in writing to the terms of such modification." Additionally, in some instances, approval from the Office of the State Comptroller and the Attorney General's Office may be required before an amendment is finalized. Thus, awardees must contact ILS regarding any proposed budget amendment.

(5) Question: The RFP notes that RIACs will be required to consult with ILS when hiring professional staff (p. 6). At what point in the RFP process are we required to consult with ILS regarding hiring staff?

Answer: Grant awardees are required to consult with ILS about hiring professional staff after notification of the award and a contract between the awardee and ILS has been finalized. Grant awardees are also requested to consult with ILS regarding any subsequent changes in staffing throughout the duration of the contract period.

- (6) **Question:** The RFP notes that each RIAC will be required to have at least two or more qualified attorney positions serving as RIAC attorneys (p. 6-7). Are the attorney positions required to be filled before the notification of the award?

Answer: No.

- (7) **Question:** The RFP notes that awardees will be required to consult with ILS in advance of the appointment of the supervising attorney (p. 7). Does this include job descriptions?

Answer: Grant awardees are encouraged to consult with ILS regarding job descriptions of supervising attorneys prior to finalizing these job descriptions.

- (8) **Question:** The RFP notes that each county will be reimbursed for expenses incurred pursuant to grant related activities including salary, benefits, travel, and related expenses. Should applicants wait until they receive a notice of award before hiring or purchasing program related materials or services?

Answer: Yes. ILS cannot guarantee the reimbursement of any expenses incurred prior to notification of an award.

- (9) **Question:** The RFP notes that providers are strongly encouraged to develop and maintain consistent and accurate record keeping of the assistance provided to noncitizen clients (p. 17). Is there a specific length of time providers are required to store records?

Answer: For purposes of ILS reporting requirements, awardees are required to collect and maintain accurate data about the services provided to non-citizen clients for the life of the contract (including any contract extension) and until all ILS grant-related reporting requirements have been met.

- (10) **Question:** The RFP sets forth two levels of review for all proposals. The first level of review is a Pass/Fail review (p. 20). If an applicant fails, will they be given a chance to make adjustments to advance to the second level.

Answer: No.