

**Legal Aid of Western Ohio
Request for Proposal
Consultant for Race Equity Advocacy Project**

1. Background: Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. (LAWO)

LAWO is a non-profit regional law firm that provides high-quality legal assistance in civil matters to help eligible low-income individuals and groups in western Ohio achieve self-reliance, and equal justice and economic opportunity. We have 63 employees who work across seven offices to serve 32 counties for our basic field services and 88 counties (the entire state) for our agricultural worker services. We are a successful, thriving non-profit legal services firm ready and eager to align ourselves and our work with our commitment to race equity.

2. Project Summary: Racism pervades all aspects of our society and for our clients of color it compounds the effects of poverty in their lives. To tackle poverty and its resulting consequences effectively, advocates must understand race and racism and how both are present in the policies and systems our clients navigate each day and which produce racialized, unjust outcomes. Once these policies and systems have been identified and understood, we can advocate for change that will produce more equitable outcomes for our clients. Racism also affects our internal operations. Its mitigation or removal will make LAWO a more effective law firm.

The Race Equity Advocacy Project (REAP) will be an important step toward transforming LAWO into an anti-racist poverty law firm that centers race equity and racial justice in our internal operations and advocacy. We seek a consultant who can serve as a trainer, thought partner, facilitator, and strategist in planning, developing, and implementing our Race Equity Advocacy Project. This project will run through May 31, 2024, with a possible extension.

3. Project Deliverables: The main purpose of our REAP is to increase LAWO's internal capacity to engage in transformative, sustainable racial justice advocacy. We recognize that achieving such capacity will take time, consistency, patience, learning, and more learning. We envision a two-tiered approach:

- Presenting a sustained course of race-equity trainings for our staff, followed by small group sessions at which staff will have an opportunity to discuss what they learned and explore ways in which they might apply that learning to our internal operations and advocacy. We envision monthly trainings and sessions over a nine to twelve month period but will consider other proposals.
- Identifying, developing, and training a 5-member "Core Team" of advocates to become confident, skilled, and able to support, guide and lead LAWO's race equity efforts after the initial training period. The consultant would work closely with the Director of Advocacy throughout the process.

We anticipate the following deliverables and outcomes:

- Develop and implement an assessment tool to determine where LAWO is with respect to issues of race, equity, organizational alignment with our stated DEI values, and organizational readiness to engage in transformative racial justice advocacy. This assessment will be conducted at both the outset and conclusion of the grant period.
- Design a race equity curriculum for all staff that aligns with the various levels of knowledge, comfort, and familiarity staff have about race equity and racial justice concepts and why expertise in this area is crucial to our internal operations and client services.
- Implement the race equity curriculum through monthly trainings and small group sessions.
- Help select the members of the Core Team and equip them to lead, guide, and support LAWO's race equity efforts.
- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the staff training and small group sessions and make adjustments as needed.
- Identify and articulate reportable outcomes and methods for capturing said outcomes.
- Work with the Core Team to develop a plan to ensure continued race equity advocacy and growth beyond the conclusion of the initial training period.
- Develop and implement metrics and measures to evaluate the project and measure success.

4. Project Outcomes

- A staff that is more knowledgeable about race equity and racial justice and how the two impact our clients' daily lives.
- A staff that is more comfortable fully participating in critical conversations and analysis of race equity and racial justice issues as they pertain to our advocacy and internal operations.
- Improved organizational readiness to engage in racial justice advocacy.
- Greater staff and organizational support ("buy in") for racial justice advocacy.
- Improved internal capacity to train, guide, support, and lead continued race equity and racial justice advocacy.
- A core team of individual advocates who are "fluent" in race equity and racial advocacy and who are skilled and trained to share that knowledge with their peers and who can lead, guide, and support race equity efforts.

5. Proposal Submissions

Send proposals via email to LAWO's Director of Advocacy, Patricia Y. Hernández, at pyhernandez@lawolaw.org by **Friday, July 7, 2023**. **The email subject line should be clearly marked "REAP Consultant Proposal."** The proposal should address the following:

- Firm profile: Names, qualifications, and experience of staff assigned to the project
- If the firm anticipates engaging any other vendor to assist with the project, please describe in detail
- The project: A description of the process the firm proposes
- Description of the firm's experience in similar projects

- Names and contact information for three different client references, preferably legal services or nonprofit organizations
- Samples of similar projects
- Timeline: A proposed timeline for the project, beginning in August 2023 with staff training commencing in September 2023
- Budget: A budget, including any variables that may affect the proposed budget for the project
- Product: A description of the product that LAWO will have at the end of this process

6. Standard Terms and Conditions

- Applicants should allow enough electronic delivery time to ensure timely receipt of their proposals by the RFP Coordinator. Late proposals will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration.
- Cost of Preparing Responses: LAWO will not pay any costs associated with preparing proposals submitted in response to this RFP.
- Responses are the Property of LAWO: All proposals, accompanying documentation, and other materials submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of LAWO and will not be returned.
- Proprietary Information: All responses submitted to this RFP are and will remain confidential until the evaluation is complete, and the vendor is selected and approved.
- RFP Amendments/Cancellation/Reissue/Reopen: LAWO reserves the right to change the RFP schedule and to issue amendments to this RFP at any time. LAWO also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP.
- No Obligation to Execute a Contract: The release of this RFP does not compel LAWO to enter into any contract. LAWO reserves the right to refrain from contracting with any person or firm that responds to this RFP. Exercise of this reserved right does not affect LAWO's right to contract with any other person or firm.
- Non-Endorsement: The selection of a firm pursuant to this RFP does not constitute an endorsement of the firm's services. The firm agrees to make no reference to LAWO in any literature, promotional materials, brochures, sales presentations, or the like without the express written consent of LAWO.
- Contract Payment Limitations: The consultant should anticipate payment at the end of the invoice period in which they provide services or after they submit any deliverable for which payment is due.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - LAWO values diversity, equity, and inclusion and strives to work with diverse vendors and consultants who reflect the communities we serve. We encourage applications from diverse individuals and companies, including historically underrepresented and underutilized people, organizations, and businesses.

Questions: Interested parties may contact the Director of Advocacy at the email address listed above with any questions concerning this RFP. All questions must be received by July 3, 2023. The RFP deadline of Friday, July 7, 2023 will still apply.