



2024/2025 Statement of IOLTA Grant Funding Priorities

The following priorities have been established by the Massachusetts Bar Foundation (MBF) Board of Trustees. These priorities will serve as a guideline throughout the IOLTA grant application review and funding process. Please be advised that these priorities represent only one component of the review and funding process; meeting them does not guarantee funding.

Civil Legal Services to Low-Income Clients:

Priority, in Order:

1. Programs that provide direct representation by attorneys (and 3:03 certified law students) to indigent clients in Massachusetts, including individuals and families from underserved and marginalized communities, on civil legal matters relating to basic subsistence needs and access to the legal system. Strong pro bono involvement can strengthen these programs, although Trustees recognize that some legal services functions are difficult to direct to pro bono attorneys.
2. Programs that provide legal consultation and advice by attorneys (and 3:03 certified law students).
3. Programs that provide assistance by paralegals and certified (SAFEPLAN or Board of Immigration Appeals) advocates, supervised by attorneys.

Administration of Justice:

Priority, in Order:

1. Programs that provide independent judicial education.
2. Programs that directly impact the courts' effectiveness, for example: mediation and conciliation programs that settle cases, consequently removing existing cases from court dockets.
3. Programs that address systemic problems in the Massachusetts court system and include a demonstrated interface with the courts (for example, a lawyer for the day program that can help pro se litigants navigate the court system and ease the strain pro se litigants place on the courts).
4. Training or educational programs that serve as a leveraging tool for pro bono resources. Competitive training programs will not only provide legal education to attorneys, paralegals, and other legal professionals serving low-income clients in particularly complicated and/or underserved areas of the law, but also include a mechanism to involve the newly trained legal professionals in the provision of related pro bono services for the agency at which they received the legal education or training.

All Highly Competitive Programs Will:

- Demonstrate a well-organized and cost-effective approach.
- Utilize technology to enhance service delivery, with greater weight given to innovative uses of technology.
- Leverage MBF support with private bar pro bono involvement, as well as other sources of financial support (where possible), including seeking attorneys' fees pursuant to statutory fee shifting provisions of the law.
- Collaborate with existing programs, expanding the scope of available services, and avoiding duplication of services.
- Produce models that can attract funding from other sources and be replicated across the state.

Types of Programs Deemed Non-Competitive Pursuant to IOLTA Committee Funding Guidelines:

- Programs involving criminal or delinquency legal matters
- Alternative sentencing programs
- Court-ordered supervised visitation centers
- Court-sponsored programs
- Free-standing conferences (other than programs that provide independent judicial education as discussed above)
- Free-standing research and/or studies
- Juvenile or criminal diversion programs
- Legal services to businesses and other economic development organizations/initiatives
- Mediation programs that focus on disputes that are not likely to reach the court system
- Mock trial and law-related education programs
- Programs run by student organizations (secondary, undergraduate, or graduate level)
- Programs that provide legal education to attorneys, paralegals, and other legal professionals serving low-income clients if the program's purpose is solely to provide the education rather than use the education to leverage pro bono resources
- Programs that provide legal information and advice by non-attorney/non-legal professional advocates, despite being supervised by attorneys and/or having referral agreements with legal services agencies.
- Social service advocacy programs for court-involved individuals
- Stipend programs for law student internships or clinics
- Free-standing translation services

For more information, please visit <https://www.massbarfoundation.org/iolta-grants-program> or contact the MBF Grants Office at 617-338-0534.