



2024/2025 IOLTA GRANTS PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 22, 2024

Apply online at www.MassBarFoundation.org

Mission Statement: The Massachusetts Bar Foundation represents the commitment of the lawyers and judges of Massachusetts to improve the administration of justice, to promote an understanding of the law, and to ensure equal access to the legal system for all residents of the Commonwealth, particularly those most vulnerable.

1. Massachusetts IOLTA Funds

By Supreme Judicial Court rule, the Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) in Massachusetts must be distributed to programs that either provide civil legal services to low-income clients or improve the administration of justice. Three charitable organizations distribute the Commonwealth's IOLTA funds: the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (67%), the Boston Bar Foundation (7%), and the Massachusetts Bar Foundation (26%).

The MBF awards its portion of the IOLTA funds to law-related programs of nonprofit organizations through an annual, highly competitive application process. All programs must address the civil legal needs of low-income clients and/or improve the administration of justice. Grants are provided only for programs that serve the citizens of Massachusetts. The MBF typically receives over 100 applications. Awards are often for less than the full amount requested.

In the 2023/2024 grant cycle, the MBF awarded 76 grants totaling \$3.4 million to 70 organizations across the state. The average grant award amounted to approximately \$29,000. A complete list of grant awards is available at www.MassBarFoundation.org. For the 2024/2025 grant cycle, the MBF expects to make grant awards in the range of **\$5.5 million**.

2. MBF Funding Priorities

The MBF invites applications from nonprofit organizations in Massachusetts for programs that meet its current funding priorities. Before applying, please carefully review the MBF's Grant Funding Priorities Statement which can be found at www.massbarfoundation.org/iolta-grants-program.

3. Eligibility

The MBF awards IOLTA grants only to Massachusetts organizations. No funding is available for individuals. Priority is given to 501(c)(3) organizations, although other nonprofit organizations with charitable programs that fit the MBF's guidelines may also receive funding.

Typically, grants are awarded to legal service and law-related agencies, as well as to various nonprofit organizations across the state. In rare cases, public agencies, established by governmental entities

under statutory authorization, may receive funding for pilot programs that will ultimately receive public funding. No other type of entity is eligible for funding.

Please be advised that by Supreme Judicial Court rule, the MBF cannot support any social service components of an applicant’s proposed program. In addition, please note that the MBF’s Trustees are sensitive to the unlicensed practice of law or the appearance thereof. Funding requests for non-attorney positions must include detailed information regarding direct attorney supervision of those positions.

MBF funds may not be used for fundraising activities related to political, endowment, scholarship, and capital campaigns.

4. Funding Cycle

Grants are awarded for one year only from September 1 through August 31. The reporting and payment schedule for these grants will be:

Applications Due	March 22, 2024
Decision Notification	June 30, 2024
First Half of Funds Distributed	October 15, 2024
Mid-year Report Due	March 14, 2025
Second Half of Funds Distributed	April 15, 2025
Final Report Due	September 19, 2025

5. Application Process

All applications must be submitted via our online application portal which can be found at: www.MassBarFoundation.org/iolta-grants-program. Carefully review the information on the webpage. When finished, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the blue “Apply” button. If you are a new applicant, please follow the instructions to create your unique log-on credentials. Please save these credentials as they will be your only means of access to the MBF’s grant application and reporting portal.

Further application instructions are available upon registration. Applications must be submitted **by 5:00 p.m., on March 22, 2024**. Late applications will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with Foundation staff.

6. Review Process

Submitted applications will be reviewed by Grant Advisory Committees, comprised of MBF Trustees and Fellows. The MBF Board of Trustees will make final funding decisions in June of 2024. Please be advised that there is no appeal process for funding decisions. The MBF encourages applicants to seek alternate sources of funding while awaiting a decision by the Trustees.

Prior to the release of any grant funds, successful applicants must sign a contractual grant agreement, which may include individual funding conditions. Throughout the grant period, MBF grantees are required to adhere to the terms and conditions of this agreement.

7. Question & Resources

MBF staff are available to answer questions and assist organizations with the application process. Please contact the MBF Grants Office by phone at 617-338-0534 or via email at foundation@massbar.org.

Applicants should not contact members of the MBF Board of Trustees or Fellows serving on Grant Advisory Committees regarding their applications, unless specifically requested to do so by the MBF.

PLEASE NOTE: New applicants MUST contact the MBF to discuss their proposal prior to submission.