



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

LFIR # 1172

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

Founded in 1997, the Haitian Lawyers Association (HLA) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit voluntary bar association in the State of Florida. HLA's members include judges, lawyers, law professors, and law students of Haitian and Haitian-American descent, as well as those who are not of Haitian descent but have a vested interest in issues affecting the Haitian community. The HLA Foundation was established in 2023 as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with the objective of carrying out HLA's mission of protecting and advocating for the legal rights of the Haitian and other minority communities in the State of Florida. The HLA Foundation's Pro Bono Program provides free legal services to low income and other vulnerable individuals and families in the areas of family law, landlord tenant, and contracts.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds

State Agency contacted? Yes

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	450,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	450,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	450,000	100%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025	450,000	100%

8. Has this project previously received state funding? Yes

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		
2023-24	0	250,000		No

9. Is future funding likely to be requested? Yes

a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.

b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.

Grants from local counties and cities; funds raised from HLA bar association, licensed Florida Bar attorneys and various other donors.



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10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

11. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

- Planning
 Design
 Construction
 N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

13. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits	The Executive Director (ED) is responsible for overseeing the entire program and supervising all legal services provided through the program. This includes supervising staff & volunteer attorneys and the organization and execution of community outreach to promote the program's services. Administrative functions of the ED include collaborating with community partners, marketing, basic accounting, record keeping, maintenance of files, and tracking all legal cases in our case management system.	80,000
Other Salary and Benefits	Employer Tax Liability estimated at an average of \$6,000 monthly.	72,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	We will hire a marketing company to conduct outreach in the community to inform potential clients about our organization as well as to help recruit volunteer attorneys. Additionally, we will hire a technological support company to monitor the Organization's computer system and assist with any technology issues that are encountered.	15,000
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits	We will retain current staff and also hire a full-time receptionist to support personnel and accommodate the significant influx of walk-in guests and clients, phone calls & email inquiries for services.	250,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Case management costs include postage, filing fees, and litigation costs such as court reporters, process servers and court translators. Travel costs when traveling outside of Miami-Dade County. Training costs for staff to provide support services.	33,000



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Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		450,000

14. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?

Increased access to the court system and greater understanding and appreciation of our judicial system will be achieved by providing pro bono assistance to low-income individuals and families and economically disadvantaged persons throughout the State of Florida. Our free legal services will also help decrease the workload of the county clerks offices, judicial staff, and various legal aid organizations. We are assisting individuals and families regain personal and economic stability and safety, attain civil justice, and become or maintain their status as contributing members of our State. As a result of the increased awareness of our services to the community, we have received a steadily growing influx of calls and inquiries for assistance. By adding personnel to support staff and manage the additional workload, we will fortify our ability to respond to the need. The cumulative result of our pro bono services is that we strengthen our State as a whole by empowering its citizens.

b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?

Legal services and representation in various areas of law including: Family Law, Landlord Tenant, and Contracts. Our staff and volunteer attorneys provide direct legal representation to low-income individuals and families. We conduct regular outreach across the State and train and mentor volunteer attorneys that will be assisting or representing clients pro bono. These funds will help empower the most vulnerable members of our State through free legal services so that they can regain personal and economic stability and safety, attain civil justice, and become or maintain their status as contributing members of our State.

c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?

Services will range from consultation, case review and providing legal counsel and advice, to full, direct legal representation across multiple areas of law, including assistance with filling out legal documents to help pro se clients proceed with litigation. Our bilingual attorneys and staff will provide assistance to the county clerks who cannot offer legal advice on how to prepare certain forms such as landlord tenant and divorce forms. As a result of the increased awareness of the services our program offers to the community, we have received a steadily growing influx of calls and inquiries for assistance. By adding personnel to support staff and manage the additional workload, the HLA Foundation will ensure and reinforce its ability to respond to and meet the needs of the local residents in need of such services and strengthen its collaborative partnerships with local community organizations in reaching our most vulnerable residents.

d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?

Low-income individuals and families; vulnerable individuals in our communities; the elderly; jobless; and economically disadvantaged. We expect to serve over 250 families throughout the State of Florida.

e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?

By providing pro bono assistance to those who need it most in our local communities, we can affect positive change, which will have a far-reaching impact. We intend to provide representation or assistance to an estimated 250 cases with filling out various forms such as divorce forms and other small claim matters. We will monitor our case representation and pro bono legal assistance using our case management system. In the past, we have provided clear deliverables in the number of cases and consultations that we can provide with funding available. We have also partnered with the Office of the Attorney General and various legal aid organizations such as Dade Legal Aid and Broward Legal Aid to provide similar services in the past.

f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?



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Since its inception, the Haitian Lawyers Association has upheld its mission of protecting and advocating for the legal rights of the Haitian and other minority communities in the State of Florida. We will continue to deliver quality, low-cost legal services and representation of vulnerable residents through the work of the HLA Foundation. Continued funding for this program will assist low-income individuals and families who otherwise would be unable to afford legal services. We are confident that we will meet the stated outcomes. If deliverables are not met, money will be deducted from the total amount due to the agency as detailed in the contract.

15. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name **Last Name**

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number **Ext.**

16. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization

b. Municipality and County

c. Organization Type

For Profit Entity

Non Profit 501(c)(3)

Non Profit 501(c)(4)

Local Entity

University or College

Other (please specify)

d. First Name **Last Name**

e. E-mail Address

f. Phone Number

17. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number