



## GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT: AOA PAST ANNOUNCEMENT

### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) Administration on Aging Fiscal Year 1998 Program Announcement (AoA-98-3) and Application Kit

**SUMMARY:** The Administration on Aging (AoA) announced in the *Federal Register* of March 3, 1998 that it will hold a competition for grant awards to support **Statewide Senior Legal Hotlines**, as authorized by Title IV, Section 424 of the Older Americans Act, as amended (P.L. 89-73). The accompanying set of materials comprises the **application kit** for preparing and submitting grant proposals to compete for these project awards.

This program announcement consists of two parts. *Part I* provides background information and describes the priority area, **Statewide Senior Legal Hotlines**, under which the AoA is inviting applications to be considered for funding. *Part II* describes, in detail, the process governing the consideration of project applications for funding and provides guidance on how to prepare and submit an application.

All of the forms (Standard Form 424), Assurances, and Certifications necessary to complete the application are included following Part II. Grant awards to be made under this priority area are subject to the availability of funds.

**DATE:** The *deadline date* for the submission of applications is **May 11, 1998**.

**ADDRESS:** Application receipt point: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Office of Administration and Management, 330 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 4643, Washington, DC 20201, Attn: AoA98-3.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Office of Program Development, 330 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 4274, Washington, DC 20201, telephone: (202) 619-2987 or (202) 619-1269.

#### **Part I. Background Information and Priority Area Description**

##### A. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for awards made under this program announcement area is contained in Title IV of the Older Americans Act, (42 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.), as amended by the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1992, Pub.L.102-375, September 30, 1992.

##### B. Eligible Applicants

Public and/or nonprofit agencies, organizations, and institutions are eligible to apply under this program announcement. To be considered for funding, however, the applicant must be experienced in providing legal assistance to older persons.

Any nonprofit organization applying under this program competition that is not now a DHHS grantee should include, with its application, Internal Revenue Service or other legally recognized documentation of its nonprofit status. A nonprofit applicant cannot be funded without proof of its status.

### C. Priority Area Description

#### **Statewide Legal Hotlines for Older Americans**

##### *1) Background*

Consistent with Section 424(a)(2) of the Older Americans Act, which provides for the support of "demonstration projects to expand or improve the delivery of legal assistance to older individuals with social or economic needs," the AoA is inviting applications from public and/or non-profit organizations, currently engaged in the provision of legal services to the elderly, to establish, or to expand and improve, Statewide Senior Legal Hotlines for older Americans, with an emphasis on program innovation and the advancement of the state of knowledge regarding effective provision of legal assistance to older Americans.

More specifically, this program announcement responds to provisions in the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriation Act, 1998 (P.L. 105-78) which, by incorporating Senate Report 105-58, directs the AoA "to use \$2,000,000 to fund a national program of statewide senior legal services hotlines and related elder rights projects..." Under this priority area, it is anticipated that four (4) to five (5) awards will be made to support innovative Statewide Senior Legal Hotline approaches to serving older persons.

##### *2) History*

In 1985, after a prototype statewide senior legal hotline in Pennsylvania showed considerable promise, the Administration on Aging (AoA) funded the American Association of Retired Persons/Legal Counsel for the Elderly (AARP/LCE) to further develop and test this innovative method of delivering a high volume of quality legal assistance to older people. Model legal hotlines, utilizing paid, specially-trained, and experienced lawyers, were developed to provide unlimited free legal advice to all state residents age 60 and older, regardless of their level of income or resources. The hotlines also provided legal briefs and related assistance such as document reviews and calls/letters to third parties, but only when there was a likelihood that this would resolve the problem. Services were provided statewide by means of toll-free telephone lines. The legal hotlines were fully computerized, therefore minimizing, if not eliminating, the need for paper, files, and administrative staff.

The senior legal hotline concept took hold in the ensuing years. Statewide senior legal hotlines were established in Arizona, northern California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico and Texas. An evaluation of their operations, conducted during the early 1990s (which does not include the current grantees funded in FY 95 and

FY 97), showed that senior legal hotlines and corresponding referral services resolved 81% of callers' legal questions and 50% of their legal problems. The development of new Hotlines as well as strengthening of existing Hotlines would greatly enhance the availability of legal assistance and the quality of many more older people lives. In that regard, senior legal hotlines are a valuable resource for implementation of the vulnerable elder rights protection programs set forth in Title VII of the Older Americans Act.

### *3) Project Objectives and Activities*

Applicants submitted under this program announcement to establish, or to expand and strengthen, Statewide Senior Legal Hotlines should be especially mindful of the program's track record and experience since the mid-1980's, and familiar with the models that have been established across the country. Before pointing your proposed project in ground-breaking directions for delivering legal assistance to the elderly, you should make it clear that you have a thorough understanding of what has been tried, what may work and what may not, and that you are building on the best practices of the past dozen years.

All applicants must indicate what crucial and pressing concerns facing the at-risk elderly are within the scope of the proposed project and the reasons for focusing the Hotline's energies on these concerns, whether they be income, health care, long-term care, nutrition, housing, utilities, protective services, abuse and neglect, guardianship, age discrimination, pension and health benefits, insurance, consumer protection, surrogate decision making, public benefits, dispute resolution, etc. A related choice to be made by the applicant is who among the older population will have priority in receiving the attention of the Hotline. In past competitions for Hotline awards, the AoA strongly encouraged project applications that had an emphasis on providing services (1) to ethnic and/or racial minority older persons; (2) to those elderly in greatest economic and social need; and (3) to older persons in rural areas. That same consideration will have priority in this competition as well.

Other factors which will weigh favorably in the consideration of applications for funding are:

A. Applications which demonstrate that Title III/VII and Legal Services Corporation funded legal services programs within the state are willing to coordinate their services with the proposed legal hotline;

B. Applications that offer the largest grantee cost sharing, and thus request the fewest AoA dollars. (The minimum grantee share of project costs is 25%);

C. Applications which offer a feasible plan for funding the legal hotline once the AoA grant ends.

D. Applications which include the endorsement of the State Agency on Aging and the State Bar Association (the voluntary and/or mandatory Bar, whichever is appropriate). Special justification must be provided by the applicant if these endorsements are not included in the application.

All applications should specify some of the more important operational features of the proposed Hotline, including:

- the number of households/persons to be served in comparison to the number of older persons in the State and the number of low income older persons in the State;
- the number of cases to be handled; the number of calls to be handled;
- the average number of 1) calls and 2) cases that a Hotline attorney is expected to handle in an hour;
- the average expected cost per call; the average number of calls per case;
- if applicable, any evaluative data on your Hotline's past performance, the source of which is the elderly clients and/or an independent third party.

To better gauge the proposed project's potential for expansion and innovation, the application should set forth, in convincing fashion, your expectations for the future course of the Hotline which cover, with some particularity, the following:

- the innovativeness of the program; a justification for the claim that the project is innovative;
- how the model would significantly contribute to the current state of knowledge and practice regarding legal assistance to the elderly;
- the feasibility of the model (i.e., is it logical, practical, realistic, and on solid fiscal footing?).

AoA expects to make 4-5 awards for Statewide Senior Legal Hotlines under this program announcement. The Federal share of project costs is expected to range from \$80,000 to \$110,000 (the amount roughly proportionate to the size of the State's senior population) per year for an expected project period of 3 years. Applicants should recognize, however, that continuation awards for the second and third year of the project are contingent upon the availability of Title IV funds and the record of project performance. NOTE: Statewide legal hotline projects recently funded under AoA's FY 97 discretionary announcement, and now being established in Georgia, Iowa and Washington, are ineligible to apply under this announcement for funding.