

Frequently Asked Questions

Grant Program Purpose and Project Eligibility Information

What is the purpose of the ABE Opportunity Grant Program?

The ABE Opportunity Grant Program provides project-restricted funding (i.e., not general operating support) for new and innovative projects and programs of importance to the public and the legal profession.

ABE Opportunity Grants focus on the following three objectives:

- Enhancing access to justice, especially for vulnerable and underserved populations using innovations to legal services delivery, capacity-building, or pro bona service.
- Improvement of the justice system, including ensuring equal justice and elimination of bias; and
- Increasing public understanding of legal rights and responsibilities so people can recognize legal problems and know how to address them.

The ABE favors projects that:

- serve those who are traditionally underserved or marginalized;
- address immediate and urgent law-related needs in innovative ways;
- are not replicated by other organizations in the proposed service area;
- take advantage of existing and emerging technologies; or
- might not be able to obtain timely funding from other sources.

The ABE will consider projects that, for example:

- build organizational capacity to serve clients better;
- develop tools, technology, or approaches that the broader legal community could use;
- launch a new law-related program; or
- document/prove a best practice.

ABE Opportunity Grants cannot be used to support or oppose pending legislation or for prohibited campaign intervention activity.

Can an ABE Opportunity Grant support an organization's current work?

ABE Opportunity grants can support projects that are already in process as long as the project will be expanded, improved, or revamped as a result of receiving an ABE Opportunity Grant.

The grant year for ABE Opportunity grants begins on April 1 and ends March 31 of the following year. Expenses for which the ABE Opportunity Grant funds will be used must be incurred in that timeframe.

General Organizational Eligibility Information

What types of organizations are eligible to apply?

Only an organization that has been determined by the Internal Revenue Service to be an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the "Code") that is also a public charity described in either Section 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2) is eligible to apply.

Can an organization apply for an ABE Opportunity Grant to support providing direct legal services?

The ABE will not consider projects that seek funding to support the direct provision of legal services without a new or innovative component.

What if the project will be a multi-year effort?

An ABE Opportunity Grant is generally a one-time award with a grant period of one year or less. The ABE will consider seed funding for a long-term program if the organization can demonstrate a plan to secure continued funding. Organizations applying for seed funding will need to provide information about their specific plans to ensure continued funding for the project.

Can an organization apply for more than one grant in a cycle?

Yes. An organization can apply for more than one grant if each application is for a separate and distinct project that meets all the eligibility criteria. The ABE will consider each application; however, it is unlikely that more than one project from a single organization would receive funding in any given grant year.

Can an organization that has received funding in the past apply again?

Yes. Organizations that the ABE has previously funded may apply for a new project.

The ABE Opportunity Grant Program cannot be used to pay the following costs.

- personnel costs (salaries and benefits) of regular existing or new staff (ABE grant funds can be used to pay for consultants; interns; and short-term, project-specific contractual workers) including salaries for individuals who are supervising direct project staff;
- legal case fees;
- impact litigation and other litigation costs;
- direct payments to clients; or payments for items such as rent, utilities, travel for clients;
- capital expenditures unless they are one-time costs directly related to the implementation of the project;
- indirect expenses and administrative overhead (including fees to a fiscal agent);
- fundraising expenses including sponsorships of fundraising or awards events;
- costs associated with influencing legislation or electing candidates;

Grant Amount and Expenses

What is the typical grant size?

Grant awards of \$25,000 or less are typical, but award amounts may differ among recipients in the discretion of the ABE.

Timelines and Deadlines

Who should be contacted with questions about the Opportunity Grant Program?

Questions can be directed to grants@abenet.org.

What is the deadline for applications?

Applications are due by October 31. The specific program deadlines can be found on our website when each new cycle opens on September 1.

When will the ABE notify funded organizations? When will funds be received? Grant decisions are announced in March with grants paid on or before April 1, subject to the prior execution of a grant agreement between the parties.