



CFMC Grant Application

COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION FOR FUNDING REQUESTS FOR THE Community Foundation of Middlesex County Competitive Cycle.

Instructions: Complete the application on the website. You may "Save and Continue Later" - the site will email you a link which is active for 30 days. Review instructions document for full details before completing. Complete all questions.

Section V requires certain documents to be uploaded to the form - see the Application Instructions Document for a list of the required items. All items must be uploaded as PDF Files. The CFMC Budget Summary form is available on the website in Word. This document must be submitted as PDF file as well.

I. Application Information

Legal Name of Organization

Pro Bono Partnership

Division or Department Name (if applicable)

n/a

Other Tax Exempt Entity?

n/a

Are you a 501(c)3 Organization

Yes

EIN #

06-1264823

If your organization is not a 501(c) 3 tax exempt entity or division/department of a 170(c)1 government agency or religious organization, please contact Thayer Talbott, 860.347.0025, for further information before completing the application.

Total Cost associated with request \$

\$65,789

Dollar Amount Requested \$

\$5,000

Summary Statement

Pro Bono Partnership recruits attorneys to volunteer on business and transactional legal matters for nonprofits enhancing the quality of life throughout Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. This grant will fund the Partnership's Hartford program, which provides legal services throughout Connecticut (excepting Fairfield County), including in Middlesex County.

II. Funding Request Information

1. Proposal / Purpose

Nonprofits, like other business entities, must comply with ever-changing laws and regulations and address everyday legal needs, such as contracts, employment matters, leases, and protection of intellectual property. However, legal services are expensive. The Partnership makes legal counsel affordable and accessible to all qualifying nonprofits, saving its clients thousands of dollars that are needed for their programs while enabling them to avoid mistakes, ensure legal compliance, and reduce risk and potential liability.

Nonprofits play a critical role in supporting the stability and well-being of Connecticut residents, particularly the most vulnerable. Although the rates of poverty in Connecticut are lower than in many other parts of the country, the state's high cost of living means that official poverty rates do not accurately capture the numbers of families struggling to meet basic needs. The United Way uses the term "ALICE" (asset limited, income constrained, employed) to describe these families, explaining that "ALICE households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than they need to afford a basic survival budget." (See the United Way ALICE Connecticut Report at <https://alice.ctunitedway.org/aliceupdate/> or the ALICE dashboard at <https://unitedforalice.org/maps-and-data.>)

As of 2020, 33% of Middlesex County households are living below the national poverty line or at ALICE levels, meaning they are struggling to make ends meet and are one emergency away from financial ruin. In Middlesex, 10% of the population is unemployed and looking for work, 11% do not have health insurance, 30% are without high speed internet, and 73% of renter households who are below the ALICE threshold are spending more than 30% of their income on rent. For these Connecticut households, the services and supports provided by community nonprofits are essential.

The Partnership supports Middlesex nonprofits in a variety of areas, from job creation (The Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs) and healthcare (Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut), to access to information (Libraries Online) and housing assistance (Nehemiah Housing Corporation), just to name a few.

The Partnership is the only organization in Middlesex County providing free legal assistance to qualifying nonprofits, and unique among legal services providers statewide because of the volume and diversity of legal matters it handles for its clients.

The Partnership prioritizes serving nonprofits that work with economically disadvantaged populations, as well as other populations facing other challenges, such as those differently abled, LGBTQ+, or fighting certain diseases. More than half of client respondents to the Partnership's most recent client survey stated that 50% or more of the population they serve is economically disadvantaged. 98% serve economically disadvantaged individuals in some capacity. The Partnership's program has three primary components that improve nonprofits' organizational efficiency and impact:

- **Direct Legal Services:** Nonprofits that serve the disadvantaged and/or provide essential services, have 501(c)(3) status or are seeking 501(c)(3) status, and are unable to pay for legal fees without substantially impacting program resources, can apply to become clients of the Partnership. If the nonprofit's application is accepted, a staff attorney is assigned to the matter, often working with a volunteer attorney with relevant expertise from a law firm or corporation. On matters that are assigned to volunteers, a staff attorney provides support and tracks each matter to ensure a timely and appropriate conclusion.
- **Legal Resource Helpline:** The Helpline is a unique resource, enabling anyone - nonprofit managers, Executive Directors, Board members, nonprofit consultants, and others - to speak with a Partnership staff attorney and obtain general information on questions and issues affecting nonprofits. Calls or inquiries via our website may be referred to any of the staff lawyers, depending on the expertise needed, or to volunteer experts as required.
- **Educational Initiatives:** The Partnership's staff and volunteer attorneys annually provide numerous educational workshops and webinars for nonprofits to help staff and board members identify pertinent legal issues, adopt best practices, and avoid potential crises. Resources are updated on our website and shared with nonprofits via email and social media. The Partnership also sends out Legal Alerts via email.

When the Foundation awarded a grant to the Partnership in 2016, we assisted 10 Middlesex County nonprofits with 14 legal matters. In 2023, the Partnership assisted 22 Middlesex County nonprofits with 33 legal matters, for a total value of over \$344,000. This growth in matters represents a 121% increase in services to the Foundation's service area.

In 2024, the Partnership conservatively estimates that it will provide Middlesex County with the following:

1. Handle at least 30 matters for 20 Middlesex County nonprofits,
2. Respond to 10 Legal Resource Helpline calls from Middlesex County nonprofits,
3. Offer 30 webinars and workshops of interest to Middlesex County nonprofits,
4. Continue to receive high ratings (over 80%) from clients on the annual satisfaction survey.

The Partnership serves a variety of nonprofits based in Middlesex County including grantees of the Foundation such as The Buttonwood Tree Performing Arts Center, Valley Shore YMCA, the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, and the National Conference for Community and Justice of CT and WMA. The Partnership also helped Caritas Immigration Legal Services with incorporation and gaining tax exempt status.

The legal services provided by the Partnership to these nonprofits makes it possible for them to serve the Middlesex community. For example, the Partnership helped the Nehemiah Housing Corporation negotiate its tax obligations, enabled the American Association of University Women's Lower CT Valley Branch to apply for 501c3 status, drafted a gender identity inclusion policy for the Connecticut and Rhode Island Alliance of YMCAs, and helped Unashamed create a template contract for use with facilitators hired for workshops.

The Partnership also received 10 Legal Resource phone calls from Middlesex County in 2023, with some coming from Middlesex nonprofits who were not yet working with the Partnership such as Sumner Brook Farm, and an individual who was seeking help starting a nonprofit in Middlesex County.

Webinars and workshops are another important component of the Partnership's services. In 2023, representatives from at least six Middlesex nonprofits attended our education programs. These organizations included East Haddam Youth & Family Services, and the Clinton-based nonprofit Study Hall.

The Partnership is working to expand its reach so we can provide legal services to small grassroots nonprofits that may not have heard of us or may not yet realize the importance of legal compliance in the nonprofit sector. We continue conducting outreach to new organizations, and are grateful when community foundations are able to make introductions.

Like so many employers, in the last few years the Partnership has found it challenging to retain and recruit qualified staff. In recognition of the need to retain staff, we promoted internally when possible and provided higher starting salaries, larger raises and bonuses in 2023 than we did in previous years.

2. Sustainability and Assessing Impact

The Partnership has successfully funded this program since 2008. Apart from the Gala, the Partnership's budget is funded with corporate and foundation grants, individual giving, law firms, two government grants (IOLA and NJ Office of Faith Based Initiatives), and with a small but growing amount of earned income. The Partnership applies to several regional foundations annually for support for its programs, including those interested in funding the entire Connecticut program as well as parts of it. Each regional program also receives a portion of its funding through the Partnership's GOS funds. Annually, about 60 percent of the Partnership's funding is raised by the Annual Gala, mostly from law firms and corporations.

The Partnership's evaluation process consists of an analysis of program statistics and its Annual Impact Survey. Program statistics provide quantitative analysis, which is essential to determining the needs of the nonprofit and legal sectors and the necessary allocation of the Partnership's resources to best address the presented needs. The Partnership tracks the number of legal matters worked on; number of clients served; total number of Legal Resource Helpline queries answered; and the number of workshops and webinars presented and with respective attendance numbers. This data can be broken down by region to determine the number of clients served in each town, county, or state, etc. Due to improvements in our data capturing processes implemented in 2020, we can count the number of nonprofit organizations served by type (i.e. education, health, environmental) activities conducted, and populations served (i.e. general, racial minorities, veterans, etc.)

The Annual Impact Survey provides more qualitative analysis. The Partnership considers all of its clients and volunteers' comments to identify how staff can improve our services and to work towards the development of new educational offerings that target various aspects of organizational structure and functionality that our clients identified as weaker. The Partnership also asks volunteers to rate their satisfaction with its services and with their experience overall.

While a matter is ongoing, program staff checks in regularly with the client and the volunteer to make sure both are satisfied with the progress of the matter. At the conclusion of each matter, we send a short survey to both the client and the volunteer to make sure the client is satisfied with how the matter was handled and to capture the number of hours each volunteer worked on a matter. This data is used to help estimate the value of each matter and our work in the community.

Our most recent annual survey was conducted in February 2023 of 2022 clients. Of 131 of our client respondents, 98% rated our services in 2022 as "good" or "excellent."

Respondents reported that the Partnership had a moderate or substantial impact on various aspects of organization at the following percentages:

Better understand and comply with the law: 92.4%

Become stronger or more effective: 88%

Incorporate better governance or management practices: 90%

Avoid mistakes: 90%

Better understand when it might be helpful to consult an attorney: 92%

Respondents also indicated that the Partnership had helped their organization avoid or reduce the risk of the following negative outcomes:

Noncompliance with laws or regulations: 87.4%

Disadvantageous contracts or agreements: 49%

Potential lawsuits: 37%

III. Grant Program / Project Information

Organization Area of Impact (choose ONE)

Public / Social Benefit (Civic Improvement/ Social Service)

Grant Type (choose ONE)

Program Development/Implementation

Target Demographics (Select all that apply):

- Other

Other Demographic:

The Partnership serves nonprofits that serve individuals.

Geographic Area(s) Served By This Application:

- Chester
- Clinton
- Cromwell
- East Haddam
- East Hampton
- Middletown
- Old Saybrook
- Westbrook

Total Number of People in Middlesex County Personally Impacted

15,000

IV. Organization Information

Board of Directors / Trustees Information

Percent (%) of Directors/Trustees who contribute annually to Operations

Total Number of Directors/Trustees:

21

100%

Average number attending in person:

15

Total Number of Board meetings held last year:

4

Year of Return:

2022

Date most recent IRS Form 990 was filed:

7/5/2023

Organization's Total Operating Budget

3051320

Organization's Fiscal Year

Jan 1 - Dec 31

Division Operating Budget Information

National Organization Chapter Information

Did you RECEIVE a competitive process grant in the:

Brief Background Statement of the Organization:

The Partnership recruits volunteer lawyers to provide free business and transactional legal help to nonprofits in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. Since our founding in 1997, we have assisted nearly 4,000 nonprofits on approximately 23,000 legal matters, enabling them to more effectively feed the hungry, house the homeless, promote the arts, and provide essential programs to children, immigrants, and the unemployed.

Support from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County will help provide free direct legal assistance to organizations in Connecticut, answer nonprofit legal questions via a Legal Resource Helpline, host webinars related to legal issues in Connecticut, and keep organizations informed about relevant issues.

V. Additional Information To Be Included with the Application

Please Note: Additional information requested below MUST be uploaded in PDF files. Other document formats will not be accepted by the application form. Attempts to upload other file formats could result in a loss of all application data entered.

A. Current Organization Operations Budget (Required)

- Organizational-Budget-2024-for-Pro-Bono-Partnership.pdf

B. Board of Directors and Officers List (Required)

- PBP-Board-List.pdf

C. IRS Tax Exempt Determination Letter

- IRS-501c3-Exemption-Letter.pdf

D. For Program/Project Requests only - CFMC Budget Summary Form:

- PBP-Summary-Budget-for-CFMC.pdf

E. Organizations serving a region greater than Middlesex County - county-based budget summary:

• BP-Summary-Budget-for-CFMC1.pdf

F. America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

No

ARPA Funding detail

Additional financial documentation, including the organization's most recent audit, annual report, and IRS Form 990 may also be required. Only provide this information if requested.

For programs or projects which are collaborations among two or more organizations or where an organization provides in-school or after-school programming for schools, the Community Foundation requires a list of organizations or schools partnering with your organization as well as Letters of Support.

For the purposes of this application, collaborations are defined as partnerships where two or more agencies are committed through staffing, funding, and resource allocation to the goals and objectives of the program described. Because the nature of the collaboration requires two or more entities to work together, for the purposes of funding, only one organization may complete the application, and in doing so, accepts responsibility for all evaluative and fiduciary reporting.

For all collaborations, the Community Foundation requires letters of support from the non-applicant organization(s) and/or from the school(s) and school district(s) at which the applicant organization is the program.

Is this application in collaboration with a School(s) or School District(s)?

No

Is this application a collaboration of two or more nonprofit organizations (NOT schools)?

No

If this is an On-Going Collaboration, how long has the collaboration existed?

If Yes, is this a New or On-Going Collaboration?

List of Collaborators

Letters of Support (if a collaboration with schools or other nonprofits))

VI. Organization Contact Information

Are you a new nonprofit applicant to the Community Foundation?

No

Title

Executive Director

Executive Officer's Name

Nancy Eberhardt

Executive Officer Email

neberhardt@probonopartner.org

Phone

(973) 240-6955

Title

Director of Development

Contact Person

Heidi Siesfeld

Application Contact Email

hsiesfeld@probonopartner.org

Phone

(914) 328-0674

Mailing Address

280 Trumbull Street
28th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
United States

Street Address

New York
United States

Website

probonopartner.org

Social Media Channels

The Partnership is on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Threads at @PBPartnership.

VII. Non-Funding Needs

We appreciate the Foundation's efforts to inform its other grantees about our services and education programs. With the Foundation's support, the Partnership would be happy to hold a presentation for the Foundation's other grantees, explaining how our free services help nonprofits through a variety of legal challenges.

VIII. Marketing and Public Relations

Organizations receiving grants from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County must promote their funding awards according to the marketing and public relations guidelines established by the Community Foundation. By signing the application below, the CEO/Executive Director understands the Community Foundation's marketing and public relations requirements if awarded a grant. The Community Foundation will host a seminar on marketing guidelines and tips for grantees annually. The Community Foundation's Grantee Communications Kit may be downloaded on our website in the Nonprofit Resources section, middlesexcountycf.org/nonprofits/resources/forms-pr-guidelines/.

IX. Tax Exempt Standing and Use of Grant Funding Certification

By signing this application, the CEO/Executive Director/Board President is certifying that your organization is a qualified 501c3 organization or other charitable organization recognized and currently in good standing with the IRS, or 170(c)(1) governmental agencies. Should a grant be approved by the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, these funds may only be used for the purpose outlined in your original application; you must notify us if you are unable to do so. If grant funding is provided, you may only use these funds for charitable purpose as described in Section 170(c)2 of the IRS code, and funds may not be used for any political or lobbying activity. In addition, no tangible benefits, goods or services may be received by our donors or by staff members of the Community Foundation of Middlesex County in exchange for grant funding.

Signature Certification

I certify that my printed name as stated and assigned below constitutes my signature and may be accepted as such.

Title

Director of Development

Printed Name

Heidi Siesfeld

Date

03/06/2024