

## Grants and Evaluation Program

### Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation

The purpose of the Grants and Evaluation Program of the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation is to make high quality grants to agencies that provide civil legal services to low income clients or programs for the administration of justice. The Grants and Evaluation Committees are linked together in an ongoing chain of quality grant making and organizational improvement.

The chair of each committee serves as an ex-officio member of the other committee. The Foundation prides itself on having a high degree of trustee involvement in both awarding of grants and in program evaluation.

#### Grants Program Overview

The purpose of the Grants program is to provide funding to organizations that provide high quality civil legal and administration of justice services to Wisconsin's low-income residents through:

- I. Management of a fair and thorough grant process. Recognizing and rewarding excellence in new and current grant applicants
  - II. Encouraging the development of innovative systems for the delivery of legal services.
  - III. Providing volunteer and attorney Board members the opportunity to make sound grants decisions in funding legal services to the poor.
  - IV. Establishing systems that help the Foundation and its grantees succeed in all levels of grant project implementation
- 
- I. The Grants process
    - A. Will be fairly promoted and presented to (1) Wisconsin non profit organizations that believe they can deliver high quality legal services to low-income clients or (2) for the administration of justice.
    - B. Will be free from outside lobbying, and conflicts of interest
    - C. Has, as its cornerstone, a thorough grant application and review process conducted by the Grants Committee
    - D. Enforcement of consistent and equitable policies applicable to all grantees
    - E. Establishment of criteria for (1) Direct Civil Legal Services to the Poor- Category I; or (2) Innovative programs related to the Administration of Justice- Category II.
  - II. Recognition and rewarding excellence
    - A. Funding organizations that exhibit high standards of quality legal services for low income clients
    - B. Recognition of excellence in the Foundation's Annual Report

- III. Encouraging the development of innovative methods in the delivery of civil legal services
  - A. The Foundation will utilize the grant process to reward those organizations that prove, through their service delivery, a high standard of excellence.
  - B. The Grants Committee will work to research and identify innovative delivery programs
- IV. The Foundation utilizes a variety of methods to assure program success
  - A. Communication to improve understanding of terms, conditions, and goals of each grant.
  - B. Annual agency presentations or Issues Roundtable discussions to provide a forum for program presentation and discussion.
  - C. The Grants Committee includes the Evaluation Committee's report, the agency Annual Report, and its understanding of the final grant application in its grant making decisions.
- V. The Foundation strives to provide volunteer leaders and lawyers the opportunity to make sound grants decisions in funding legal services for the poor.
  - A. Volunteers are rotated to different applications each year to provide for "new eyes" reviewing each applicant.
  - B. The Foundation keeps volunteers informed of new, innovative service delivery systems.
  - C. The Foundation follows a deliberate process each year to ensure that deadlines are met, grants are complete, and that the decision making is thoughtful and itself deliberate.

#### Evaluation Program Overview

The purpose of the Foundation's evaluation program is to monitor achievement of the Foundation's grant program expectations by:

- I. Maintaining a system to review program goals, objectives and outcomes for each recipient of WisTAF funds.
- II. Conducting an ongoing process of formal and informal Site Visits involving Foundation volunteers and staff meeting with grantee volunteers and staff. The Site Visit will be conducted annually to discuss organization's programs, clients, and challenges.
- III. Communicating the IOLTA program's accomplishments and benefits to those having the power to affect its resources- including the judiciary, the bar, law schools, legislature, and other funding entities.
- IV. Providing resources for improving grantee's effectiveness by determining areas in which relatively small investments would increase program capacity.
- V. Meeting the Foundation's fiduciary responsibility to ensure that grant funds are being used for the purpose intended.

VI. Determining the needs and challenges faced by grantees in their communities of need and interest.

Methods for program evaluation

- I. Annual Reports of services provided may include staffing information, services statistics, Outcome evaluation, finances, client demographics, accompanied by the grantee's description of major accomplishments and impediments to the delivery of legal services.
  - A. Site visits to grantee program offices permit the Foundation to evaluate firsthand the quality of the services provided, and the issues identified through previous evaluation activities. Conducted in March and April annually.
  - B. Ongoing communication with grantees by WisTAF staff helps keep the Foundation involved with each grantee year long and allows for intervention should there be program related problems.
  - C. Annual Reports -Due at the end of February every year. Information from the Annual report will be used by the Site Visit team, the Grants Committee, and in the Foundation's Annual Report.
    - Provide statistics and narrative descriptions of the program's legal services
    - Illustrate how programs and services effect clients
    - Describe major accomplishments and challenges
    - Detail the program's financial and staffing data.
    - Review the impact of the IOLTA grant on programs and services and how that differs or is similar to the grantee's larger program.
    - Provides a detailed outcome evaluation and report on client demographics
  - D. Grantee Site Visits
    - Provide the Foundation with a very personal idea of the services, benefits, and challenges of each grantee.
    - Are opportunities for communications between grantees and the Foundation about common goals and concerns.
    - Are a time for grantee staff and volunteers to frankly discuss problems and solutions.
  - E. Informal Foundation staff contacts
    - Keep the staff and volunteers informed of grant issues throughout the year.
    - Provide an opportunity for staff to discuss evolving needs and challenges with experts in the field.
    - Establish invaluable communications networks with those in the field grappling with service delivery issues every day.

## GRANTS-EVALUATION SUMMARY

The Grants program of the Foundation is the engine that drives the organization. The Grants process has been developed over time to be concise, encourage the delivery of legal services to the poor, and be thorough in its request for documentation. The Foundation takes its grant making responsibilities very seriously.

The Grants Program is volunteer driven and must therefore be a process with which volunteers can identify. Applications are reviewed for content of legal services, realistic goals, identified needs, quality of service delivery, and organization management. The program is reviewed annually to determine whether or not it is meeting its objectives.

The Evaluation Program is designed to be a positive force for promoting success in grantee programs and ensuring the Foundation that it is providing review over the projects it funds. Evaluation is not intended to punish organizations that do not meet their stated goals.

The Evaluation simply reflects the fact that WisTAF, in its fiduciary role, assures itself and the community that its funds are well spent. This can only occur in an environment of trust and shared mission. Evaluation will be used to help grantees improve and to provide an overlay of perspective for the grants process.

The Foundation will, in all its grant and evaluation activities, strive to be reasonable and supportive of the organizations we fund. Grant and evaluation activities will be reviewed and modified regularly to meet the changing needs of the Foundation and the community.

**WISCONSIN TRUST ACCOUNT FOUNDATION, INC.**  
**GRANT EVALUATION STANDARDS**

1. ***Direct representation of clients and client groups:*** The Board will give priority to applicants who request WisTAF funds for the direct representation of clients and or client groups.
2. ***Pro bono development:*** The Board encourages the use of WisTAF funds for activities to strengthen and develop pro bono programs that generate substantial voluntary services.
3. ***Cooperative efforts:*** The Board encourages use of WisTAF funds to develop cooperative efforts among multiple providers in a given service area when this is possible and practicable. The Board endeavors under Category I to maximize the use of WisTAF funds to provide the best legal services to the citizens of Wisconsin and to foster cooperative efforts of providers of legal services in local communities. Similarly, cooperative efforts are encouraged with Category II grants.
4. ***Multiple funding sources:*** The Board recommends that all grant applicants have sources of income in addition to the WisTAF funds requested. Absent special circumstances, priority will be given to requests from applicants who have multiple funding sources.
5. ***Priority:*** The Board will give priority to applicants that have demonstrated fiscal responsibility, program stability, and an ability to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of quality services or programs.
6. ***Attorney independence:*** For Category I, the ability of the applicant to preserve the professional independence of attorneys is important. WisTAF specifically directs that attorneys providing legal assistance must have full freedom to protect the basic interests of their clients in keeping with the Code of Professional Responsibility and the high standards of the legal profession.
7. ***Demographic support:*** For Category I, WisTAF will give priority to applicants who can best support their grant application with adequate information establishing that the client population they serve meets the client eligibility standards set by the WisTAF board.



## 2004 GRANT CONDITIONS AGREEMENT

In consideration of receiving a year 2004 grant from the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc., otherwise known as the Foundation (Grantor), «Company» (Grantee) agrees that the funds shall be used for the purpose(s) as stated in its 2004 grant application,

And further agrees:

1. To use the funds only for the designated purpose(s) and not for any purpose prohibited by law.
2. To submit semiannually a brief summary of operations along with related financial reports and to submit a final, annual report as soon as possible after the completion of the purpose for which funds were granted. This annual report will state what was accomplished under the grant and will detail the expenditure of monies.
3. To repay to the Grantor any portion of the grant which is not used for the designated purpose.
4. If funds from additional sources other than the Foundation were used for the project, to report on the sources and allocations of such funds.
5. To provide Grantor or its agent upon reasonable notice and request with access to the Grantee's files and records for the purpose of making financial audits, verifications and investigations as it deems necessary concerning the grant. (Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing in this agreement shall be deemed to require or permit a request that shall jeopardize client confidentiality).
6. That grant payments may be discontinued, modified or withheld at anytime, when in the judgment of the Foundation such action is necessary to comply with the requirements of law, the criteria contained in the grant application or the 2004 grant conditions agreement.
7. If any fees or reimbursements are received as a result of representation initiated as a part of this grant, they will be used by the Grantee to further the program goals as outlined in their application.

The Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation distributes grant funds in equal, quarterly installments, beginning January 2004.

**Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc.**

By \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc. «Company»

Dated \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

**Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc.**

**Grantee Mid-Year Report Guidelines**

**The Foundation mid-year report is due Friday, August 6, 2004.**

In one to two pages, please answer the following:

1. Please give a summary of the significant events affecting the program/project in the current grant year.
2. Please attach a six-month (through June 30, 2004) budget report for the program/project, detailing revenue and expenses.

**Please submit 3 copies of your report to:**

Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc.  
825 Williamson Street, Suite A  
Madison, WI 53703  
Fax: (608) 257-2684

Thank you!

# Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc.

## GRANTEE ANNUAL REPORT FORMAT

*Please submit three (3) copies to the Foundation offices no later than  
Friday, February 20, 2004 by 4:30 p.m.*

Reporting Period: January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003

### **Narrative Report (Please limit to five (5) pages):**

1. Describe any changes made to your program/project in 2003.
2. What management changes did you make in 2003, if any?
3. List and describe your program's/project's accomplishments in 2003.
4. Outline the outcome goals that you established for the program/project and discuss any differences in the actual outcomes. How well do you think this program/project is meeting its mission?
5. How effectively were you able to use program/project funds? Please discuss significant changes (\$5,000 or more) from your proposed budget.
6. Do you use WisTAF funds to leverage funding from other sources? If yes, please list 2003 leveraged funds received (do not include Wisconsin Family Law Project funding in your report).
7. Include any general comments that you would like to make.
8. **IMPORTANT:** Give a one-paragraph example of your program's/project's impact on one client's situation/life (we would like to use these examples to communicate the need for civil legal services and how your services impact the lives of low-income people in Wisconsin).
9. 2003 client demographic information, including race/ethnicity, marital status, income, age, and geographic information (if available).

### **Please attach a copy of the following to each report:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ January through December 2003 budget vs. actual report, including 2003 funding sources (please use attached format)
- \_\_\_\_\_ January through December 2003 same caseload report (please see attached for format if you don't currently produce this report)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of 2004 budget, including 2004 funding sources
- \_\_\_\_\_ Please include as a top sheet a separate one-page report summary outlining the grant project, clients served by the grant, total clients served by the agency, and a statement of unmet needs or clients not served.