

# Supreme Court of Kansas

## Access to Justice Grant Funds

### FY 2026 Grant Application Packet

#### I. GRANT PHILOSOPHY

For more than 20 years, the legislature has provided funding for the Kansas Supreme Court to award access to justice grants. These grants fund the operating expenses of programs that improve access to the Kansas civil justice system for persons who would otherwise be unable to effectively participate. Subject to available funding, FY 2026 access to justice grants will be made available for certain operating expenses of programs, including dispute resolution programs, that improve access to the Kansas civil justice system. The anticipated amount of available funding for FY 2026 is \$900,000. In recent years, these grants have been used to provide direct legal representation and mediation services for low-income persons, brief advice to self-represented litigants, and support for guardians *ad litem*. Grant funded services should help lessen the challenges that *pro se* litigation may impose on the district courts. The grants assist Kansans who cannot afford traditional legal services, while also helping to meet the needs of self-represented litigants within the court system. The recipients of the services must meet the financial qualifications specified below. The grant awards are to be based, in part, on the geographic reach of services and the number of persons to be served.

**Grant proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on May 30, 2025. All grant proposals should be submitted by email to [ATJ@kscourts.gov](mailto:ATJ@kscourts.gov) or in paper form to the address below:**

Access to Justice Grant  
Attn: Jeff Peter  
Office of Judicial Administration  
301 SW 10th Avenue, Room 337  
Topeka, KS 66612-1507

All required documents must be submitted together.

## II. ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

The Supreme Court has set certain criteria for those organizations wishing to apply for access to justice grants and, in the exercise of its discretion, will make the awards. The following eligibility standards will be applied in deciding which applicants will receive access to justice grants.

- A. The applicant must certify the applicant:
  - 1. is an income tax exempt, non-governmental organization;
  - 2. provides free, brief legal advice or information to *pro se* litigants, pro bono legal counsel for civil and domestic matters, or other pro bono legal or dispute resolution services; and
  - 3. will use grant funds to provide services to individuals and families who meet the following income qualifications:
    - a. for programs or projects that provide brief legal advice or information to *pro se* litigants, individuals and families at any income level. Programs or projects that fall under this income eligibility framework must not exceed 25% of the applicant's proposal;
    - b. for all other programs or projects, or for brief advice services that exceed 25% of an applicant's proposal, individuals and families at or below 150% of the federally established poverty level.
- B. The applicant must agree to an audit or a review of its expenses.
- C. The applicant may be responsible for quarterly and year-end reports detailing how the access to justice grant funds were used and who benefitted from them.
- D. The applicant will be required to show fiscal responsibility, program stability, and an ability to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of quality services.
- E. Each proposal must include a procedure for determining priorities among the civil legal services needed by the population of low-income people in its service area, which procedure shall involve obtaining regular input from those people and Kansas Judicial Branch employees as to the priorities.
- F. Any statewide or regional proposal should show how it will be able to serve the population of low-income people throughout the geographic area.
- G. Priority will be given to applicants requesting funds for:
  - 1. full or limited scope pro bono legal services for litigants involved in Kansas district court proceedings;
  - 2. scalable projects that utilize innovative strategies for providing legal information and brief legal advice to large numbers of district court patrons, particularly in quick-moving limited civil actions cases;

3. services that enhance the availability of onsite legal information, brief legal advice, and pro bono legal services at district court self-help centers in the following locations:
  - a. Butler County
  - b. Douglas County
  - c. Ellis County
  - d. Franklin County
  - e. Geary County
  - f. Harvey County
  - g. Johnson County
  - h. McPherson County
  - i. Sedgwick County
  - j. Sumner County
  - k. Wyandotte County.
4. services that provide a centralized, remote solution for legal information, brief legal advice, and pro bono legal services at district court self-help centers in other counties throughout the state, including Bourbon County, Dickinson County, Lyon County, Miami County, and Thomas County;
5. projects that focus on addressing unmet legal needs and do not duplicate existing services or services for which other funds are available;
6. projects that propose innovative alternative dispute resolution strategies to aid in early resolution of Kansas district court cases.

### **III. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

#### **A. Project proposal form:**

Applicants must submit a project proposal form for each project. The proposal form is appended to this application packet. All questions must be answered. Projects that provide legal information, brief legal advice, full representation, or alternative dispute resolution services should be presented separately, to the greatest extent practicable.

#### **B. Grant agreement:**

Successful grant applications must enter a grant agreement with the Kansas Office of Judicial Administration that will address certain grant requirements, including scope of grant-funded services, confidentiality and record retention rules, non-discrimination requirements, any relevant service schedules, and related information.

The Supreme Court reserves the right to withhold grant payments if a program is found not to comply with its grant agreement.

#### **C. Evaluation:**

1. The Supreme Court reserves the right to require quarterly reports from access to justice grant recipients. Recipients of smaller grants may be requested to make only a midyear and a final report. Single event projects will be exempt from quarterly

reporting. The report will be due at the end of the event.

The information contained in the report shall not identify or enable the identification of any person served by the service provider, or in any way breach client confidentiality.

Quarterly reports must include, at a minimum:

- a. a description of the use of access to justice grant funds to date;
  - b. a breakdown of the amount of funds expended;
  - c. statistics regarding the number and types of people served reflecting the actual services provided (representation, brief advice, legal information, mediation, etc.) under the grant by judicial district;
  - d. a breakdown of the cost per person served;
  - e. copies of any publications, including brochures, video tapes; and
  - f. any comments or suggestions.
2. A grantee may expect to be visited to ensure they follow the grant agreement. These visits may be conducted by Kansas Judicial Branch staff, consultants, and/or personnel of similar projects. Evaluation visits may consist of interviews with grantee staff and/or board members and a review of how funds are being used. A method of determining client satisfaction is also encouraged.

#### **D. Application attachments:**

In addition to submitting a completed project proposal form for each project, the applicant should include the following with the application:

1. Evidence of tax-exempt status;
2. A list of board of directors, indicating officers and any affiliations;
3. A copy of the organization's by-laws;
4. Applicant's current fiscal year budget;
5. Any support letters. We respectfully request that applicants do not seek support letters directly from Kansas Judicial Branch staff or judges;
6. Evidence of professional liability insurance policies; and
7. A copy of the applicant's most recent audit report, or a statement that none exists.

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| <b>Kansas Judicial Branch Access to Justice Grant Project Proposal Form</b> |
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1. Project Title:
2. Project Narrative:
3. Funding amount requested:
4. If your proposed project aligns with one or more of the grant priority areas referenced in section II(g) above, please list which area(s) and explain how your project fits that area:
5. What types of cases will this project address (e.g., domestic, eviction, debt collection)?
6. Is this project new? If not, how long has this project been in existence?
7. If you have operated a project of this type in the past, please list statistical or other data that identifies the project's track record of success.
8. What eligibility criteria will you apply to determine who will receive services through your project?
9. How many people do you expect to serve through this project during the grant period?
10. If there is a greater demand for project services than you can meet, what criteria will you use to prioritize who receives services?
11. If you are proposing to offer services at a self-help center, please list the district court self-help center location(s) and number of hours you would provide at the center on a monthly basis.
12. If you are willing to provide remote legal services at district self-help centers throughout the state, please list the number of hours you would provide on a monthly basis.
13. How will the project's results be evaluated?
14. Have you ever received access to justice grant funds for this project in the past? If so, identify the year(s) in which funds were received, the number of persons served through the project in the relevant year.
15. What is the total estimated cost for this project during the grant period from all funding sources?
16. If this project will not be fully funded by ATJ grant funds, what are your other sources of

funding for the project?

17. Project budget breakdown – in the chart below, list project totals for each category, using whole dollar amounts.

| Item                       | ATJ | Other | Total |
|----------------------------|-----|-------|-------|
| <b>Personnel Costs</b>     |     |       |       |
| Professional salaries      |     |       |       |
| Support salaries           |     |       |       |
| Employee benefits          |     |       |       |
| Total personnel costs      |     |       |       |
| <b>Non-personnel costs</b> |     |       |       |
| Capital expenditures       |     |       |       |
| Non-capital expenditures   |     |       |       |
| Supplies                   |     |       |       |
| Travel                     |     |       |       |
| Insurance                  |     |       |       |
| Audit                      |     |       |       |
| Telephone/communications   |     |       |       |
| Other                      |     |       |       |
| Total non-personnel costs  |     |       |       |
| <b>Total</b>               |     |       |       |

18. Budget narrative – explain how you will use the requested funds for each of the categories shown below. If a category does not apply, write “N/A.” If you will use funds to pay salaries, include the names and titles of employees or contractors who will be funded through the grant (if known).

- a. Personnel costs
  - i. Professional salaries
  - ii. Support salaries
  - iii. Employee benefits
  - iv. Other
- b. Non-personnel costs
  - i. Capital expenditures
  - ii. Non-capital expenditures
  - iii. Supplies
  - iv. Travel
  - v. Insurance
  - vi. Audit
  - vii. Telephone/communications
  - viii. Other