

The Legal Clinic Fund

2020 Program Guidelines

About the Fund

The Legal Clinic Fund is a collaborative fund to support the growth and sustainability of legal clinics based at universities across the United States that seek to advance and defend first amendment rights, media freedom, and transparency in their communities and nationally. The Fund will provide grants to support the clinics' growth, capacity building, and experimentation. This Fund will be a catalyst for the growth and sustainability of existing clinics and centers and will provide newsrooms and journalists with increased legal resources and representation for those who are least likely to receive it from traditional sources. Ultimately, the Fund seeks to ensure that any newsroom or journalists who needs legal support can access it.

The Fund is generously supported by [The Abrams Foundation](#), [Democracy Fund](#), [Heising-Simons Foundation](#), and [The Klarman Family Foundation](#). [The Miami Foundation](#) serves as fiscal sponsor for the Fund. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Fund.

Focus Areas

The Fund will provide financial support to First Amendment and media serving legal clinics affiliated with accredited law schools. The Fund will administer grants in the following areas: capacity building and infrastructure, and experimentation.

- **Capacity building and infrastructure:** The Fund seeks to invest in capacity building efforts including, but not limited to, the funding of fellows, litigation costs, administrative support, programmatic support and/or expansion, etc. that will enable legal clinics to serve more journalists and expand their impact.
- **Experimentation:** The fund wants to support forward looking, exploratory and experimental projects that could have profound impact on the field, or establish important new ideas.

Values

1. **Independence** – It is of paramount importance that any legal clinic receiving funding from the fund remain independent. As such, the fund will not seek to influence decisions regarding the cases these clinics take on.
2. **Community** – The fund will prioritize organizations that are working in service of local communities and publishers, and helping address local, regional and state issues. We expect that many clinics will also work on national level cases, but want to encourage accessibility to the issues local journalists encounter. We also recognize that local cases can set important precedents that are critical to national debates later.
3. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** – The fund will give special consideration to how legal clinics can help support a new generation of diverse First Amendment scholars and practitioners. If we are to defend the First Amendment as a right embraced by all, we must work to ensure the field of First Amendment lawyers is inclusive as well.
4. **Sustainability** – The Fund values clinics seeking to build a long-term resource, not a short term infusion of capital for a temporary spike in activity.

Eligibility

Legal clinics affiliated with accredited law schools are eligible to apply. The fund will not provide seed funding for new clinics or grants to unfunded proposed clinics. The fund will consider proposals from clinics

already planning to launch in the 2019 academic year with other funding. Preference will be given to clinics able to demonstrate a commitment to service of, or partnership with, newsrooms and journalists.

Grant Size + Duration

Grant amounts will vary, depending on proposed activities and the organization's capacity. Grant awards for small organizations will likely range from \$50,000 - \$150,000 annually. Grant awards for large organizations will likely range from \$75,000 - \$200,000 annually.

Grant durations will also vary but we expect many grants will support multi-year projects. As part of the application process applicants will be able to express interest in being considered for multi-year funding.

Please note there is a 10% limit on university overhead that may be charged to grant awards.

Application Process + Timeline

Eligible applicants must submit a proposal online via Submittable –

<https://themiamifoundation.submittable.com>. Each organization may submit one proposal. A representative from the fund will reach out to select applicants to organize a phone interview with clinic leadership and law school administration. **Note, the application deadline has been extended 5 weeks as a result of coronavirus.**

RFP released: March 3, 2020

Proposals due: May 8, 2020 (note new date)

Interviews: June 1 - 12, 2020

Estimated notification of grant awards: Week of June 22, 2020

Estimated year 1 grant period: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Information Session + Office Hours

Interested applicants are invited to attend an Information Session to learn more about the Legal Clinic Fund. If an applicant has specific questions related to their application or eligibility, please register for Office Hours:

[Information Session](#) (Webinar): March 17, 2020 at 12:00 pm est

[Office Hours](#) (Phone): Weeks of March 9 and 16

Questions

Please contact the Fund Administrator, Lindsey Linzer, Senior Director of Programs and Grants Administration, The Miami Foundation at LLinzer@miamifoundation.org.

ABRAMS
FOUNDATION

The
Miami
Foundation
For A Greater Miami

democracy
fund

HEISING-SIMONS
FOUNDATION

THE
KLARMAN
FAMILY
FOUNDATION

The Legal Clinic Fund Grant Application

Applications can be submitted here: <https://themiamifoundation.submittable.com>
Learn more about the Fund here: <https://localnewslab.org/legal-clinic-fund/>

Contact Information

1. Legal Clinic Name
2. Legal Clinic Address
3. University Name
4. University Address
5. Primary Contact Name
6. Primary Contact Title
7. Primary Contact Email
8. Primary Contact Phone
9. Legal Clinic Website
10. Legal Clinic 2020 Budget

Proposal

1. Clinic Purpose

Describe the mission of the clinic, what kind of work you do and why. Summarize the overall goals of your work and key projects that help you meet those goals.

2. Cases

How many cases and other active matters did the clinic take on in 2018-2019?

3. Audience

Who does your organization serve on campus and in your community and what is the unmet need you plan to address? In what ways do you each that audience, or plan to reach? What steps have you taken to listen to your community and assess their legal and support needs?

4. Activities

What programs and/or capacities will this grant support? How will those activities help you meet your mission, expand freedom of information in your region, and/or strengthen access to legal support for journalists and newsrooms in your region?

5. Capacity

Where is the most important area of growth that could help you expand and strengthen the services you provide and the work you do? (Examples might include additional staff, communications support, fundraising capacity, and others)

6. Impact

What changes will you see in your work, your stakeholders, and your organization as a result of this grant? What will be the outcomes of the work this grant enables and how will you track and measure your progress?

7. Measurement

How do you currently track the impact of your work, and how would track and measure your progress toward your desired goals for work funded through this grant?

8. Amount Requested and Duration

How much funding are you requesting over what duration? Grants will have two or three year durations. Please explain.

9. Students

What is your student recruitment process? How many students do you accept each semester? If you're a year-long clinic, how many students do you accept annually? How many students have you had go on to work in media law, transparency, or first amendment issues?

10. Staff

Please list the name, position, and 1-2 sentence background for each individual, including any fellows.

11. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- a. What forms of diversity (e.g., gender, racial, ideological, cultural, religious, immigrant/refugee background, linguistic, generational, etc.) do you think are important for strengthening the quality of the work proposed and why? How do you propose to draw upon diverse perspectives in the community or field that the proposed work will serve?
- b. Does the staff of your project, organization and board/governing body reflect this diversity? Is this diversity present in leadership positions as well as in more junior ones?
- c. What challenges does your organization face in building the diversity described above, what strategies has your organization used and what progress has been made in increasing its diversity in the last two or three years? What strategies will your organization use to achieve diversity in the future?

12. University Relationship

In what ways does the university support your work? Describe what kinds of support you currently receive from your university (salaries, space and equipment, alumni outreach, etc).

13. Funding

Describe the current sources of funding for the work you are proposing.

14. Network Membership

Is your clinic a member of the National Access Free Expression and Accountability Network?

Required Attachments

1. Project Budget (budget for requested dollars). Note, there is a 10% limit on university overhead.
2. Current and Previous Year Clinic Budget with Revenues and Expenses
3. Board of Directors List (for the clinic)
4. Active Matters (docket and/or brief description of active matters for 2018-2019 and current matters)

Additional Optional Questions

We recognize that the COVID-19 crisis has had some significant changes on how we work and possibly the type of work we do. We had added a few additional optional questions to the application to better understand how these changes may have impacted your clinic.

- 1.** What have been the operational impacts of the crisis on your clinic? If this crisis continues into the fall semester, are the operational impacts the same?
- 2.** Have the types of cases your clinic is taking on (or plans to take on) changed in the wake of this crisis?
- 3.** Is there anything else you would like us to know about the impact this crisis has had on your clinic and your work?

The Legal Clinic Fund 2020 Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. The guidelines note that “legal clinics affiliated with accredited law schools” can apply. What does that mean?**

The Fund intends to fund legal clinics that are housed within a University Law School, professionally led by the Law School, and staffed with students. This does not include stand-alone nonprofit legal clinics that are loosely tied to a University.

- 2. Our clinic applied to the Legal Clinic Fund in 2019 but were not funded. Can we apply again?**

Yes, and we hope you will! 2019 was the first year of the Fund and only four legal clinics were funded. Click [here](#) to learn more.

- 3. Our clinic received a grant in 2019 from the Legal Clinic Fund. Can we apply again?**

No, current grantees are not eligible to apply again in 2020.

- 4. How much funding can our clinic request?**

Clinics can request up to \$450,000 over three years. Your grant requests should be appropriately sized for your clinic and the proposed project.

- 5. How many years of funding will the Fund provide?**

Applicants can request up to three years of funding in their application.

- 6. When will funding be awarded and what is the grant term?**

The goal is to award funding in Summer 2020 with an expected grant term for the first year of 7/1/20 – 6/30/21. This is subject to change on a case-by-case basis.

- 7. Our clinic is just starting up. Can we apply?**

The fund will not provide seed funding for new clinics or grants to unfunded proposed clinics. The fund will consider proposals from clinics already planning to launch in the 2020 academic year with other funding.

- 8. What level of detail would you like us to provide about our Active Matters?**

We would like to be able to ascertain from the brief overview provided for each Active Matter the general nature of the work your Clinic handles. We are particularly interested in Active Matters related to local news organizations and the information needs of local communities. A few bullets or sentences for each is sufficient.

- 9. I have question about the Fund and/or the Guidelines. Who should I contact?**

Please contact the Fund Administrator, Lindsey Linzer at LLinzer@miamifoundation.org. You can sign up for an Information Session [here](#) on March 17, 2020 at 12:00 pm est or Office Hours [here](#).