

**New York State
Office of Indigent Legal Services**

***Funding Announcement &
Request for Applications***

**Quality Improvement for Family Court
Representation Funding**

**NYS Office of Indigent Legal Services
Request for Applications**

The New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services (“ILS”) and nine-member Indigent Legal Services Board (“Board”) were created in 2010 pursuant to Executive Law §§ 832 and 833. ILS’ statutory mission is “to monitor, study and make efforts to improve the quality of services provided pursuant to Article 18-B of the county law.” Under the direction of and pursuant to the policies established by the Board, ILS assists county governments in the exercise of their responsibility to provide quality representation of persons who are legally entitled to counsel but cannot afford to hire an attorney. The assistance provided by ILS includes distributing State funds and targeting grants to counties and New York City in support of innovative and cost- effective initiatives to enhance the quality of representation provided to people entitled to counsel under County Law Article 18-B.

Timeline for this Request for Applications

RFA Release Date	Wednesday, September 16, 2026
Applications Due By	Friday, October 30, 2026
Anticipated Award Announcement	Rolling, through November 2026
Tentative Funding Start Date	January 1, 2027

Intent of this Request for Applications

ILS announces the availability of funds and is soliciting applications from New York State counties for initiatives to improve the quality of representation provided in Family Court pursuant to County Law Article 18-B. This funding, approved as part of the Indigent Legal Services Board's June 2026 allocation plan, is intended to supplement other sources of ILS and county funding to initiate or expand projects to improve the quality of representation provided in Family Court matters under County Law Article 18-B, via caseload relief, enhanced access to specialized professionals, initiatives to ensure timely access to counsel, and robust training.

Funding and Contract Period

ILS plans to disburse awards ranging from \$200,000 and \$500,000 annually to counties who submit applications that comply with the requirements below **on a first-come, first-served basis**. ILS will amend the awardee counties' current Family Court representation contracts to include the additional funding, starting January 1, 2027. ILS intends to continue the funding awarded via this RFA on an ongoing basis in future Family Court representation contracts for the awardee counties, subject to the continued availability of state appropriations.

Eligibility

Only New York State counties that currently receive no more than \$250,000 a year in funding from ILS via a Family Defense or Quality Improvement for Family Court Representation grant contract are eligible to apply. The list of eligible counties are:

Allegany	Genesee	Orleans	Ulster
Broome	Greene	Oswego	Warren
Cattaraugus	Hamilton	Otsego	Washington
Cayuga	Herkimer	Putnam	Wayne
Chautauqua	Jefferson	Rensselaer	Westchester
Chemung	Lewis	Rockland	Wyoming
Chenango	Livingston	St. Lawrence	Yates
Clinton	Madison	Saratoga	
Columbia	Montgomery	Schenectady	
Cortland	Nassau	Schoharie	
Delaware	Niagara	Schuyler	
Dutchess	Oneida	Seneca	
Essex	Onondaga	Sullivan	
Franklin	Ontario	Tioga	
Fulton	Orange	Tompkins	

Applications must be submitted by an authorized county official or designated employee of the governing body of the applicant county. Eligible counties may only submit one application. There

is no funding match or any other cost to the county necessary to be awarded this grant.

Allowable Expenditures

Potential uses of the grant funding include, but are not limited to the following:

- *Caseload Relief* – Hiring attorneys and other staff to represent clients in County Law Article 18-B Family Court matters and/or initiatives to enhance retention of current staff.
- *Timely Access to Counsel* – Establish new programs or expand existing ones to deliver representation, legal advice, or both to people in Family Court matters even though a petition has not been filed in Family Court, including, for example, representation or legal advice to people being investigated by a Child Protective Services agency. Expenditures may also include community outreach initiatives to cultivate awareness of the right to assigned counsel for people who may be the subject of a child protective services investigation.
- *Interdisciplinary Representation* – Hiring the specialized, non-attorney professionals vital to an interdisciplinary, team-based approach to representation, making funding available to contract with specialized professionals, or both. Expenditures may also be used to hire student interns who can support and contribute to the interdisciplinary team-based approach.
- *Training* – Initiatives to provide access to training and Continuing Legal Education for team members providing representation in County Law Article 18-B Family Court matters.
- *Infrastructure Costs* – Infrastructure costs associated with hiring new staff and improving the quality of Family Court representation programs, including technology, office supplies, equipment, office furniture, space, legal reference materials, electronic legal research, and recruitment costs.

Expenditures must be allowable pursuant to the boilerplate New York State Contract for Grants, which can be found here: <https://www.budget.ny.gov/guide/bprm/h/h-1032-nys-contract-for-grants-2024.pdf>.

Funding for this RFA has been appropriated to improve the quality of County Law Article 18-B Family Court representation and is intended to supplement county resources for delivering such representation. Any funds awarded to a county pursuant to this RFA shall be used to supplement and not supplant any local funds, as defined in paragraph (c) of subdivision 2 of section 98-b of the State Finance Law, or state funds, including any funds distributed by the Office of Indigent Legal Services.

Application Submission

The following components must be included in the application for the submission to be complete:

- Identification of the county requesting funds.
- The authorized county official or designated employee of the applicant county's governing body to whom notification of a grant award shall be sent. Please include a name, title, phone number, mailing address, and email address.
- Written confirmation by the authorized county official or designated employee of the applicant county that if the county is awarded a grant, it will take the necessary steps to negotiate and execute the contract amendment with ILS and will work in good faith to allow the public defense provider or providers to implement the initiatives funded by this award.
- Identification of the public defense provider or providers who will receive the funding. Please include a contact person for each provider, including a name, title, phone number, mailing address, and email address.
- Total amount of funding requested by the county between \$200,000 and \$500,000 per year, in an increment of \$50,000. If the requested amount is not in an increment of \$50,000, ILS may round the award amount up or down to the nearest \$50,000 increment. If funding is intended for more than one public defense provider in the county, please include a breakdown of how much each public defense provider will receive.
- A lined-out budget for how the funding will be used, submitted in a format consistent with the attached budget template in Attachment A. The budget for the proposed project(s) must be consistent with the above-stated intent of the RFA. A fillable Excel spreadsheet version of Attachment A is available to download on the ILS website at: https://www.ils.ny.gov/funding/pending_rfps/index.php.
- A description of how the funding will be used to improve the quality of Family Court representation provided pursuant to County Law Article 18-B.

Please note: an application that does not comply with all the above requirements will be returned to the submitting county within two business days with an explanation of what must be included and re-submitted to be considered timely received.

Applications should be submitted via email to RFP@ils.ny.gov using the subject line **Quality Improvement for Family Court Representation RFA**. All required components of the application listed above must be included in the electronic submission.

Application Selection

ILS will award grants up to a total of \$3,000,000 annually based on complete applications received on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applications will be reviewed and successful applicants will be notified by ILS of funding decisions on a rolling basis. We anticipate making such notifications no later than November 2026. All commitments are subject to the continued availability of state funds.

The contract amendment process and final contracts are subject to the approval of the New York State Attorney General and the Office of State Comptroller (“OSC”). Upon such approvals, the terms of the contract become public information.

As part of the grant award process, the grantee and ILS will establish a mutually agreed upon final budget and work plan, which become the contract deliverables.

ILS reserves the right to negotiate with successful applicants, prior to issuing a contract amendment, regarding work plans, budget line levels, and other issues raised within the application to achieve maximum impact from the grant award. If unable to negotiate the contract with the selected applicants within 60 days from the funding decision notice, ILS may withdraw the award and begin contract negotiations with the next timeliest-received applicant(s).

ATTACHMENT A BUDGET FORM

County	
Budget Contact Person's Name	
Phone	
Email Address	

1. Personnel:	
Position/Title	Annual Budget
Subtotal Personnel	

2. Contracted/Consultant Services:	
Service	Annual Budget
Subtotal Contractual/Consultant	

3. OTPS:	
Item	Annual Budget
Subtotal OTPS	

Total	
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