



AGENCY/PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

NAME OF AGENCY			
North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic			
CONTACT PERSON AND TITLE			
Susan Shulman, Executive Director			
ADDRESS			
3500 Western Ave., 2A			
CITY		STATE	ZIP
Highland Park		IL	60035
PHONE		FAX	
847-737-4042		847-737-4381	
E-MAIL			
info@nslegalaid.org			
WEB			
Nslegalaid.org			
NO. OF YEARS IN EXISTENCE		TOTAL AGENCY FUNDING REQUEST FOR PROPOSED YEAR	
6		\$ 12,000	
PROGRAMS REQUESTING FUNDING	AMOUNT RECEIVED LAST YEAR	\$ AMOUNT FOR PROPOSED YEAR	FUNDED BY TOWNSHIP SINCE? (Estimate of Year OK)
1. General Operating (covers direct services for DV, Housing, and Immigration)	\$12,000	\$ 12,000	2019
2. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____
3. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____
4. _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____



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Eligibility Criteria For Funding

New Trier Township General Statement of Policy:

- **Each agency/program requesting funding from the Township will be referred to either the Agency Oversight Committee, the Mental Health Committee, or the Money Follows the Person Committee of the Township. Those committees will make funding and agency/program recommendations to the New Trier Township Board of Trustees. You will be notified of their final decisions sometime in the spring.**
- Agencies considered for funding should have been in existence for one year after receiving their not-for profit status from the State of Illinois and have been providing services to the community during that time.
- No agency with the ability to tax or conduct referendums will receive Township funding.

In order to be eligible for funding an agency must meet the following minimum requirements:

- **Area Served** - While an agency may serve areas other than New Trier Township, its programs must serve residents of New Trier Township.
- **Proportion of Township Residents Served**- For agencies serving more than New Trier Township, the amount of funding requested shall take into consideration the proportion of the agency's service rendered to residents of New Trier Township.
- **Non-Profit** - Funded agencies must be 501 (c) (3) not-for-profits.
- **Needs**- The need for the service must be demonstrated.
- **Standards** - An agency requesting funding must have at least one full-time paid staff person, or its equivalent; the credentials of the applicant's staff shall meet professional standards, commensurate with the responsibilities involved.
- **Employment Practices** - The agency must be an equal opportunity employer.
- **Articles of Incorporation** - Submit a copy, as amended, if changed in the last 12 months.
- **Bylaws** - Submit a copy, as amended, if changed in the last 12 months.
- **Use of Funds** - Funds must be used as specified in the grant application and as approved by the Township. Changes must be cleared with the Township.
- **Accessibility** - *All services must be available to clients with disabilities and the agency must be able to deliver services from a site that is ADA accessible. If not, please explain.*



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- **Accountability** - The agency shall maintain communication with the assigned advisory committee liaison, who must be allowed to attend board meetings upon request. The agency may dismiss the person from a board meeting if they convene into Executive Session. The agency shall provide meeting minutes to the liaison upon request
- **Financial** - *All agencies with budgets of greater than \$300,000 must have an annual audit performed by an independent CPA. Those agencies with a budget of \$300,000 or less must submit to the Township a copy of form AG990 that is sent to the Attorney General's Office. The Township reserves the right to request an audit be performed for agencies with budgets of \$300,000 or less.*
- **Absence of Conflicts of Interest** – The agency certifies, to the best of its knowledge, information, and belief, that it has no current relationship or involvement with any New Trier Township Trustee, Employee, or Committee Member which the Agency reasonably believes could either favorably or unfavorably influence the Township's possible grant of the Agency's funding request.
YES X
NO _____ - **If no, please explain.**

Other Certification Issues

Please mark yes, no, or other as appropriate next to each statement. If no, or other, please explain. Supporting documents may be requested at a future date and must be supplied upon request.

YES NO OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)

Agency maintains a personnel policy manual

Agency has a non-discrimination policy

Agency has a sexual harassment policy

Agency has a grievance procedure

Agency has a Strategic Plan
Covers years 2020-2022



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- Agency produces an Annual Report
Most recent report covers period 2020
- Agency has an effective fiscal management system in place and has disclosed any and all Conflicts of Interest as described in the Eligibility Criteria for Funding.
- Audit or AG990 completed and copy provided to the Township for most recent fiscal year
- Agency maintains general liability insurance coverage and names New Trier Township as additional insurer
Amount of coverage 1,000,000
Name of insurer Lloyd's
Effective dates of coverage 5/1/2021-5/1/2022
- Agency pays all state and federal payroll taxes
- Agency has a conflict of interest policy.

YES NO OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)

- Agency has by-laws in place
Date last amended/accepted May 11, 2021
- Agency is accredited by recognized accreditation organization (where appropriate)
Date of most recent accreditation 1/18/2017
Accreditation Organization Board of Immigration Appeals
- Agency's board serves without compensation
Number of board members 17
Number of Board vacancies 1
List board sub-committees Executive, Budget and Finance, Fundraising, Programming, Strategic Planning (ad hoc), Real Estate (ad hoc), Nominating (ad hoc)
Schedule of board meetings Quarterly, Committees meet monthly, ad doc committees meet as needed



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- Agency has Auxiliary or other Advisory/Governing Board. If so, please explain:
The Clinic has a Community Advisory Committee, Attorney Advisory Committee, and an Advisory Committee
- Agency provides staff with opportunities for training and personal development
- Agency has filed its annual report with the Illinois Attorney General
#01069320
- Agency has filed its annual report with the Illinois Secretary of State
N 6985-880-5
Federal Tax ID #47-2859426

We certify that we meet all the eligibility criteria for funding and that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of our knowledge and agree to comply with all requirements of the program and funder if we are awarded and accept funding. Furthermore, our Board has been advised of the Eligibility Criteria and approved our signing of this document.

Agency Director Name: Susan Shulman

Signature

Date:

Board President Name: Nancy Rotering

Signature

Date:

Organizational Profile

(A) The Organizational Profile is part of the New Trier Township Application For Funding; and (B) It is the Agency's responsibility to keep the Organizational Profile information current each year and provide New Trier Township with further information on an ongoing basis if there are any significant changes, such as to the mission, organization, board requirements, and/or other changes.

(1) Briefly summarize the agency's mission, history, services, and organizational structure. Have these changed significantly over the lifespan of the organization? (Please attach a current organizational chart, if available.)



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In 2013, the Highland Park's Human Services Task Force identified in a Needs Assessment the lack of access to affordable legal services. In response, the North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic, formerly the Highland Park-Highwood Legal Aid Clinic, was founded in 2015 to provide legal assistance in the areas of immigration, housing, and domestic violence. The mission of the North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic is to provide quality pro-bono legal services in the areas of immigration, domestic violence, and housing to give those in need of access to justice the opportunity to live productive and secure lives.

In 2018, the Clinic Board agreed to pursue expansion more broadly into southern Lake County and northern Cook County, based on a review of demographics and domestic violence statistics in neighboring towns. The Clinic currently serves clients throughout north suburban Cook County and Lake County. To be eligible for services, clients must be at or below 250% of the federal poverty guidelines, approximately \$66,250 for a family of four. There are no income requirements for victims of domestic violence. Since opening our doors in 2015, the Clinic has served over 4,000 clients.

- (2) Briefly summarize the role of the board and the requirements for serving on it. What role does the board play in the administration and operation of your organization and what is the desired size of a full and active board?

The Clinic has a 17-member Board of Directors that meet on a quarterly basis to determine long-term strategy and goals for the organization. There is currently 1 vacancy on the board. There are four committees that meet on a monthly basis: Programming, Fundraising, Budget & Finance, and Executive. There are three ad hoc committees that meet as needed: Strategic Planning, Real Estate, and Nominating. Board members are required to serve on at least one committee, raise at least \$1,000, and attend most Board meetings. All Board members are residents of the communities we serve and therefore have a deep understanding of the need for our services. Board members program oversight, counsel and advice for our Executive Director, approach the Clinic's budget, and guide the organization to fulfill its mission.

Agency/Program Funding Request Information

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- (1) Describe the services provided by this program, eligibility requirements, and the target population.

The North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic is requesting general operating funding to support direct services in all our three practice areas: Domestic Violence, Immigration, and Housing. To be eligible for services, clients must be at or below 250% of the federal poverty guidelines, approximately \$66,250 for a family of four.



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Our Domestic Violence practice focuses on cases that involve the personal safety for victims of domestic violence and their children, including Emergency and Plenary Orders of Protection, child support, custody, visitation, and other family law matters. There are no income requirements for victims of domestic violence.

Our Immigration practice is accredited through the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) and provides immigration legal services to eligible immigrations seeking help with U-Visas, citizenship applications, certain waivers of inadmissibility, family-based permanent resident status, asylum and more.

Our Housing practice assists with problems arising from landlord and tenant relations, including evictions, return of security deposits, lease disputes, lockouts and wrongful retaliation. The Clinic is one of few legal service providers in our proximate area that proves housing legal services to all clients, regardless of immigration status.

Additionally, the Clinic hosts Power of Attorney clinics for local seniors. Healthcare Power of Attorneys are critical for when clients are unable to make medical decisions for themselves.

- (2) How does this program fit in with one or more of the priorities identified by New Trier Township in its strategic plan? Please explain.

All Clinic's practices align with the Township's mission to serve low-income families. To be eligible for services, clients must have a household income at or below 250% of the federal poverty guidelines, approximately \$66,250 for a family of four. Although there are no income requirements for domestic violence clients, we have found that our domestic violence clients come to the Clinic because they cannot afford the costs associated with hiring an attorney. The Clinic's clients are often families with children.

Please check each priority you feel the program addresses. (Most programs will address only one or two priorities.)

See our website at www.newtriertownship.com for more information.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging in Place | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low Income Families |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

NEED

- (3) Describe the need and demand for this program in the community and justify that it deserves investment of Township funding. You may include both data and examples of individual clients.

Domestic Violence:

Having access to legal resources is critical for victims and their families to receive effective relief. In 2020, the Clinic served 262 domestic violence clients, including 8 New Trier



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Township residents. Year to date in 2021, this practice has served 4 township residents. At the Skokie Courthouse, victims can obtain an Emergency Order of Protection (EOP) without representation by working with trained advocates from YWCA North Shore/Evanston who staff an assistance desk. We frequently receive referrals from these advocates as they are non-attorneys and cannot provide legal advice. An EOP is enforceable for only three weeks, after which victims must return to court to seek a Plenary Order of Protection. Plenary proceeds are often contested and difficult. Without legal representation, cases are often hopelessly mired in confusion about legal issues, subject to abusive tactics by the abuser and the abuser's attorney, or worse, they are abandoned because the victim is intimidated by the proceedings. Studies show that victims who have legal representation increased their chance of successfully obtaining a Plenary Order of Protection by over 50%, from 32% to 83%.¹ The Clinic also provides related family law assistance with issues such as divorce, child support, and child custody. This is a critical need as a vast majority of victims seeking Orders of Protection are mothers of young children.² The northern suburbs of Chicago do not have the wealth of resources, including legal service providers, that the City of Chicago does, and the service network is patchier. Additionally, there can be a different set of circumstances for suburban clients, such as dynamics of isolation and perceptions of wealth. Victims in our communities tend to live physically further apart, eliminating potential opportunities for identifying abuse and receiving support. Victims in affluent communities and families may fear being disbelieved, damaging their social or corporate power, or that revealing abuse could have heightened consequences. Legal services provide victims with practical, long-term alternatives to their relationships and has been shown to significantly lower future domestic violence.³

Immigration:

From 1990-2009, the foreign-born population in suburban Cook County grew by 95% and there are now far more immigrants in the suburbs surrounding Chicago than in the city itself. Nationally, the suburbs are also home to the fastest growing low-income population. Even with this growth, services have remained largely urban. The Clinic's Immigration practice is recognized by the Department of Justice and provides a full range of immigration legal services to eligible immigrants including U-Visas, VAWA Self-Petitions, adjustment of status, DACA, asylum and removal proceedings. Our Immigration practice has experienced immense growth, demonstrating a growing need for these services. In 2020, the Clinic's Immigration practice served 482 clients, including 6 township residents. Year to date in 2021, this practice has served 3 township residents. The Clinic fills a unique gap in services as we are one of few legal resources in Cook County that provides comprehensive pro bono legal services to the immigrant community. Many organizations receive funding from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). LSC is the single largest funder of legal services in the United States but prohibits their programs from working with the undocumented population. Since opening our doors in 2015, the Clinic has not sought funding from LSC so that it can continue to work

¹ Jane C. Murphy, *Engaging With The State: The Growing Reliance on Lawyers and Judges to Protect Battered Women* (Washington, American University Journal of Gender Social Policy and Law, 2003).

² Balos, *Domestic Violence Matters, 2006*.

³ Jennifer S. Rosenberg and Denise A. Grab, *The Economic Benefits of Providing Civil Legal Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence* (New York, Institute for Policy Integrity, 2015), 5.



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with this vulnerable population. We anticipate that there will be a greatly increased need for immigration services with incoming Afghan refugees and if there is to be federal immigration reform.

Housing:

The Clinic's Housing practice assists with problems arising from landlord and tenant relations, including evictions, return of security deposits, lease disputes, lockouts and wrongful retaliation. Studies have shown that having representation will decrease a tenant's odds of getting an eviction order by approximately 25%.⁴ The Clinic's Housing practice mandates that landlords follow the legal requirements for lawful evictions and ensures that tenants' rights are honored. In 2020, the Clinic served 176 housing clients, including 2 township residents. COVID-19 has only exacerbated existing housing issues. Eviction bans enforced by the state are a stopgap measure and allow for widespread evictions as soon as they are lifted. This year to date, this practice has already served 6 township residents, even with the eviction moratorium in place. We anticipate a dramatic increase in demand for housing services once this happens. There is also tremendous fear and misinformation surrounding the eviction moratorium and the surge of evictions that are to come once it is lifted. The Clinic's Housing practice includes a Community Navigator who coordinates outreach initiatives including Know Your Rights presentations.

The Clinic's impact has been felt all around the community as it is one the few resources in the area for pro bono legal assistance. Our off-site clinic with the township allows us to increase the visibility of our services and directly impacts the number of township residents we serve. Most providers in Cook County are in downtown Chicago, which can be burdensome for clients from a time and cost perspective. To date in 2021, the Clinic has served 13 New Trier Township clients, compared to 17 in all of 2020. Additionally, in 2020 and 2021, the Clinic hosted virtual Power of Attorney presentations for high school seniors in partnership with the township. This year, there were over 20 students and families in attendance. In the future, we intend to continue this event in person, impacting the number of township residents served. We also have a Power of Attorney Clinic planned at the North Shore Senior Center in late September.

Below are two examples of the Clinic's work with township residents:

Client called the Clinic with a conditions issue in his rental unit. A new landlord had come in recently and was refusing to repair an appliance claiming that it was not their responsibility. Client had the appliance repaired and wanted to know if he can be reimbursed. Clinic staff went over the lease with client, informed him of his rights, and suggested how to approach conversation with landlord. Client wanted to maintain a good relationship with the new landlord and wanted to resolve amicably. Staff advised that if the situation escalates that we could contact landlord on his behalf.

Client is a college student who had recently filed for an Emergency Order of Protection (EOP) from an ex-boyfriend. Client came to the Clinic after the EOP was denied and wanted to know

⁴ Lawyers Committee for Better Housing, *Opening the Door on Chicago Evictions* (Chicago, Lawyers Committee for Better Housing, 2019).



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what her other options were as her ex was continuing to harass her. Staff was able to file another emergency motion with new evidence and the EOP was granted. Staff subsequently represented her in the Plenary Order of Protection hearing, which was granted.

- (4) Are you able to meet the full demand for this service or is there a waiting list? What new or unmet needs do you see in the community or for the clients served in this program?

The Clinic's practices are often at capacity. Cases that the Clinic does not have the capacity for are referred to other agencies or pro bono attorneys in our volunteer network as most services are time sensitive. The Clinic has in the past had a waiting list for family law cases as they are often the most time and resource consuming. Our increased capacity in this practice has allowed us to meet the demand currently but will use a waiting list if needed as the domestic violence caseload continues to increase. We anticipate an increased immigration needs for Afghan refugees and housing needs following the end of the eviction moratorium.

CAPACITY

- (5) Demonstrate that the program has the vision, personnel, and skills to successfully carry out the program and achieve its goals, objectives and performance measures. Summarize any major changes in staff or personnel.

The mission of the Clinic is to provide accessible, quality, pro bono legal services in the areas of immigration, domestic violence, and housing to give those in need of access to justice the opportunity to live productive and secure lives. When the Clinic first opened its doors in 2015, we accomplished our mission through volunteer attorneys, a part-time executive director, and a part-time bilingual client liaison. The need soon outpaced that model, and today the Clinic accomplishes its mission with a 17-member Board of Directors, 19 staff, countless residents, law firms, businesses, as well as nearly 80 volunteer attorneys and professionals in the community. The Clinic's Community Advisory Board provides the Clinic with guidance on the unique needs of suburban clients and the Attorney Advisory Board provides guidance on changes with legal best practices. The Clinic's Directors all bring their extensive experience in their specific practices to ensure the provision of high-quality services.

Below is a summary of staffing changes:

Fall 2020: Hired Intake Specialist.

Winter 2020: Hired Housing Staff Attorney.

Spring 2021: Hired DV Staff Attorney after position vacancy, Housing Community Navigator, Housing Staff Attorney.

Summer 2021: Hired DV Practice Assistant, DV Staff Attorney, Intake Specialist after a vacancy, Immigration Staff Attorney after a vacancy, and part-time Immigration Practice Assistant goes FT.

Fall 2021: Hired Pro Bono Coordinator, Development Associate.



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SERVICE STATISTICS/DEMOGRAPHICS

(6) Who is being served by this program? Please provide a statistical breakdown of the number of clients served, the total units of service delivered, and costs per unit of service by filling in the chart below. Please state and define your unit of service for this program and why you chose it. To calculate cost per unit of service, divide the total number of units of service into the total budget for the program. (Suggestions for the appropriate unit of service are included in the proposal in the directions. For some programs you may wish to calculate cost per unit of service in more than one manner.)

(6a) Unit of service definition – new, unique opened case

(6b) SERVICE STATISTICS – Please indicate fiscal year dates for each column

PLEASE INDICATE FISCAL YEAR/DATES IN EACH COLUMN	Prior Year 1/1/2020- 12/31/2020	Present Year 1/1/2021- 12/31/2021	Proposed Year 1/1/2022- 12/31/2022
Number of persons served (unduplicated count)	873	747 For Jan-July 21	1,500
Number of units of service	944	779 For Jan-July 21	1,600
Cost per unit of service	981	990	1,119

(7) What are the demographics of New Trier clients served in the prior year? (breakdown by community).

Glencoe: 2
Wilmette: 8
Winnetka: 7

(8) Total from New Trier Township (unduplicated).

17

(9) New Trier Township clients are what % of total?

1.7%



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(10) Units of Service to New Trier clients.

17

(11) Units of Service to NTT clients are what % of total

1.7%

(12) New Trier clients age breakdown

18-24: 2

25-34: 3

35-44: 5

45-54: 4

55-64: 2

65+: 1

OUTCOMES/EVALUATION

(13) What outcomes did you achieve for your clients in the prior year? Results should be client-outcome based, specify a target level of achievement, the measurement tool that was used, the rationale for setting the target at a certain level, and a timeframe for accomplishment. Detail any changes made in the program as a result of these outcome results.

2020 Outcomes:

Counsel and advice: 10

Referred: 1

Open: 3

Closed, Negotiated settlement without litigation: 1

Closed, OP Granted: 1

Closed, Other: 1

Many of the Clinic's cases are Counsel and advice, which includes a full legal intake and consultation. This is because many clients with legal options are not immediately ready to move forward. Counsel and advice can include safety planning for survivors not yet ready to move forward with a protective order, advice on how to handle a landlord/tenant conflict, and advice on immigration remedies and ways to remain safe. Accepted and open cases often have long-term outcomes that creates challenges with tracking. For example, the U-Visa process which provides immigration relief for victims of crime have over a 3-year waiting period after filing and divorces can take an extensive period of time before there is an outcome.



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- (14) What results are you committed to achieving in the present year? (If outcomes are the same as above, simply state that we hope to improve upon the past year's results)

In 2021, the Clinic has already served 14 township residents, and expect to exceed our numbers from 2020. We began hosting a monthly off-site clinic with the township in July 2021, which is virtual until further notice. The Clinic will also be hosting a Power of Attorney Clinic in partnership with the township on September 24, 2021. Power of Attorney clinics directly impact our case load, and we have not been able to do them throughout the pandemic. The Clinic has also engaged in a number of outreach efforts with the township in an effort to increase the reach of our services and will continue to do so.

- (15) Are there any other program effectiveness/evaluation measures you think are important, such as customer/client satisfaction surveys, quality of service measures, or other indicators? Please describe.

Clinic staff records all case information in Legal Server, the Clinic's case management system. Accordingly, we can determine if we are on track to meet monthly case load goals, and if not, we can discuss what needs to be done to ensure that goals are met. We monitor quality of service delivery by sending all clients a survey upon the completion of their case. The survey asks about the effectiveness of the representation and if there are any areas where the Clinic can improve. The Clinic is currently working to update/digitize our client satisfaction survey and increase participation. We also seek feedback from all of our partners with whom we do off-site clinics and/or receive referrals.

CHANGES/CHALLENGES

- (16) What changes or challenges (legal, socio-economic, demographic, financial, political or other) did the agency, program, and clients face in the prior year? How did you respond? What challenges or changes do you anticipate in the present year? (If changes/challenges were the same for all programs, do not repeat).

COVID-19 has been a challenge for both our organization and the communities we serve. As stated above, clients from all three practice areas are experiencing increased fear and economic hardship. The Clinic continues to provide our full-range of services virtually, with the exception of Power of Attorneys.

Holding all appointments virtually has required more case management and technical assistance work leading cases to generally take longer. Clients require technical support, particularly with DocuSign and Adobe Scan. Staff has created instruction documents for clients on how to utilize both of these services. Being remote has also created challenges with building rapport and trust with clients, which is critical to reach our target population. Outreach has helped with this challenge and we continue to reiterate that we are a resource for the community. Both of these challenges require additional attention from our staff. However, virtual appointments have also had several benefits by removing barriers such as travel or childcare. For example, clients who are unable to find time off of the work are able to schedule an appointment during their lunch break or domestic violence clients can take virtual appointments on their phone while on a walk. Hosting outreach events and



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presentations virtually has allowed for increased visibility as they can be recorded and shared. Continuing to develop innovative ways of reaching clients virtually has been critical. The Clinic's Domestic Violence practice has begun hosting Zoom cooking demos. The cooking demos allow potential clients to sign on anonymously and ask questions privately to an attorney while appearing to be on a cooking call to those around them. Due to the success and reception of several of these virtual adaptations, we intend to continue them when we return back to in-person services.

For the present year, we anticipate an urgent need for immigration needs with incoming Afghan refugees. Additionally, possible immigration reform on the federal level would lead to a massive increase in demand for immigration legal services. The Clinic anticipates a sudden increase in housing legal services following the end of the eviction moratorium.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE

- (17) How did you respond to the recommendations made by New Trier Township, if any? Please describe in detail. (These are contained in the funding letter you received in June).

The township also recommended that securing an ADA compliant office space be a high agency priority. The Clinic moved into an ADA compliant space in July 2021.

RESOURCES/BUDGET

- (18) What non-financial resources are required to deliver this service? Specify staffing/volunteer requirements, budgetary needs and other resources, inputs, and/or community partners that are needed for this program. If the Township is unable to fund this program at the desired level, what will the impact be on services? Describe how your program will or will not continue without investment by the Township. Complete the attached budget forms. Were any cost reduction measures implemented in the prior year? If there is a sliding fee scale for this program, please attach it and indicate how many clients paid each fee level.

Township funding is critical for the Clinic to continue to serve residents of New Trier Township. Lack of funding would greatly impact our capacity to conduct outreach, serve clients, and continue our off-site clinic.

- (19) If your program or agency budget request represents an increase from last year, please explain the reason for the change and what the increase will be used for.