

# LEGAL EMPOWERMENT FUND

by

**CHANGELAWYERS<sup>®</sup>**

Harnessing the power of lawyers for good

# A NEW FUND TO HARNESS THE POWER OF LAWYERS FOR GOOD

The Legal Empowerment Fund is a new grant opportunity created by California ChangeLawyers. The Fund adopts a broad-based approach to harnessing the power of lawyers for good. Specifically, we seek to: foster movement lawyering; build the capacity of smaller and newer legal organizations; and support new, diverse leaders in the legal profession.

The Legal Empowerment Fund was created as a response to the deepening public consciousness about the importance of law on social justice issues and the need for lawyers of all backgrounds to rise to the challenges posed by the ongoing racial reckoning and the lack of equal justice under the law.

2021 is the first year of the Fund and is a pilot program for ChangeLawyers. Our intention is to learn from this new grantmaking process as well as from our applicants and eventual grantees. Our hope is that the program will have deep impacts for the community and, if successful, that we will grow the program through increased partnerships in 2022.

The anticipated total amount of funding available this cycle is \$470,000.

## ABOUT CHANGELAWYERS

California ChangeLawyers is a statewide foundation whose mission is to build a better justice system for all Californians. We seek to empower the next generation of lawyers, judges, and activists to create a more diverse legal profession, a fair justice system, and a better California. We believe that a state as diverse as California should have a justice system led by advocates of all ethnicities & races.



### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

501(c)(3) organizations, or fiscally sponsored projects serving Californians.

### WHO DO WE WANT TO IMPACT?

Through the Legal Empowerment Fund's flexibility, we expect to address a range of substantive issues that fall within our identified priority areas. We envision these grants supporting organizations working on diversity, equity, inclusion, leadership development, eviction prevention, deportations, wage theft, environmental justice, and much more. Moreover, we envision the Fund supporting a wide range of modalities from community education to litigation to direct services to policy advocacy. The through line is that all grantees will harness the power for lawyers for good and contribute to movements for social change.

### WHICH PLACES ARE WE TARGETING?

Geographically, we will support organizations working across the entire state of California. Organizations located outside California but working to support Californians will be considered only for the Movement Lawyering or Leadership Pathway priorities. These organizations will need to indicate strong ties to California and the community they intend to serve. If selected, all funding must be used on work supporting Californians.

### WHAT TYPE OF WORK ARE WE FUNDING?

For this inaugural Legal Empowerment Fund cycle, we will collectively support strategies that strengthen work at the intersection of law and organizing; increase the capacity of organizations to serve the communities from which they hail; and build strong leaders in our legal community. Organizations can apply to only one of the listed priorities.

More specifics on our goals and outcomes are listed on the following pages. Note that applicants are not expected to achieve each listed outcome within a priority. Rather, these are outcomes that ChangeLawyers seeks to achieve as a result of our collective funding in each of these areas. We value each of the priorities equally.





# Movement Lawyering

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Movement Lawyering: Under this priority, we seek to support organizations that are working at the intersection of law and community organizing. Strong applicants will have existing ties with community organizing groups, a base of community members, grassroots campaigns, etc. The result of ChangeLawyers funding in this area will be a stronger eco-system for movement attorneys who advocate for and win more equitable laws, policies, and outcomes for their communities and clients. Organizations can apply for a maximum amount of \$50,000 for one year.



# Capacity Building

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Capacity Building: Under this priority area, we seek to support California-based organizations that have less than a \$1 million dollar budget, have at least one lawyer on staff, and are now ready to take the next step in growing their organization's legal work to further support the community. Organizations can apply for a maximum amount of \$50,000 for one year.



# Leadership Pathways

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Leadership Pathways: Under this priority area, we seek to support organizations that will catapult the next generation into positions of influence and power so that they can bring about the transformational change we seek from our legal system. Specifically, for this priority area, there are two tracks for which organizations can apply. The first is a General Leadership track wherein organizations can apply for a maximum amount of \$50,000 for one year. The second is a Legal Fellowship track wherein organizations can apply for funding towards the hiring of a year-long fellow (\$80,000.) This legal fellowship track is a continuation of the existing legal fellowship program that has been running at ChangeLawyers for the past five years.





Priority Areas	Goals	ChangeLawyers Desired Outcomes
<div>  <p>Movement Lawyering (est. \$100K available)</p> </div>	<p>Strengthen the model of social change that is premised on the integration of law and community organizing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More fair and equitable laws or policies either created or implemented</li> <li>More community members served, and more favorable case outcomes achieved due to the increased access to diverse lawyers</li> <li>Strengthened eco-system for the next generation of movement lawyers</li> </ul>
<div>  <p>Capacity Building (est. \$100K available)</p> </div>	<p>Increase likelihood for smaller, diverse legal orgs to thrive (under \$1M budget, must have at least one staff attorney, and based in CA).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater stability and longevity of and/or innovation in diverse legal organizations</li> <li>Incubation of newer organizations led by diverse lawyer(s) and/or with diverse lawyer(s) on staff</li> </ul>
<div>  <p>Leadership Pathways (est. \$260K available)</p> </div>	<p>Build onramps into law and tracks into positions of power.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[General Leadership track] Increased number of attorneys of color in positions of power including judgeships, district attorneys, etc. (est \$100K available)</li> <li>[Legal Fellowship track] More diverse law students and lawyers obtain careers in public interest (est \$160K available)</li> </ul>



## WHAT ELSE DO WE CONSIDER WHEN MAKING FUNDING DECISIONS?

- Contributes to movements for social change
- Focus on systemic and policy change as well as measurable impact
- Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Executive leadership, board, and staff are representative of communities the organization serves

## WHAT'S THE TIMELINE?

- October 28, 2021: Application opens
- November 4, 2021: Webinar
- November 17, 2021: Application closes
- Applications due at 5:00 p.m. PST (there will be no technical assistance after 5:00 p.m. PST)
- December 20, 2021: Grant announcements made
- December 23, 2021: Grants awarded

## HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

- Total amount of funding available: An estimated \$470,000 is available across all strategies
- Grant duration: One year (with possibility of at least one year of renewal)
- Grant amounts:
  - Leadership Pathways (Legal Fellowship): Two grants of \$80,000 each will be provided to support legal fellows.
  - All other priorities: \$50,000 maximum per organization (organizations may propose grant amounts of any size up to this max)


## HOW DO I APPLY?

Click [HERE](#) to apply

## WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

- Read our FAQ section on the next page
- [Join our webinar on November 4, 2021 from 1:30-2:30 PM PST >](#)
- Contact our Director of Programs, Jasjit Singh at [LEF@changelawyers.org](mailto:LEF@changelawyers.org) if you have questions that haven't been addressed in the webinar or FAQ page.





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## ELIGIBILITY

**Will the historical ChangeLawyers Diversity Pipeline Grants program and Legal Fellowship Grants program still exist?**

With the creation of the Legal Empowerment Fund, both the Diversity Pipeline grants program, and the Legal Fellowships grant program will no longer exist in the previous capacities. Instead, existing grantees in those portfolios would still be able to apply for funding under one of the three new priority areas. Our Legal Fellowships program will remain nearly identical to previous years, but is now subsumed underneath the Leaderships Pathways priority.

**Are organizations with current or active grants with California ChangeLawyers eligible to apply?**

Yes. Current grantees, including current Diversity Pipeline Grantees and Legal Fellowship Grantees, are welcome to apply.

**Can organizations based outside of California apply if they're engaged in a project within the state?**

Yes. Organizations based outside of California can apply under the Movement Lawyering priority or Leadership Pathways priority. Non-California based organizations must show significant ties to the state, and use the grants funds to support work solely in the state of California.

**Are 501(c)(4) organizations eligible to apply?**

No, 501(c)(4)s are not eligible to apply.

**If an organization doesn't have a previous funding relationship with ChangeLawyers, will their application be considered only after all current and past grantees are considered?**

No, priority will not be given to current or past grantees. Organizations new to the foundation are highly encouraged to apply. Current and past grantees are equally encouraged to apply as well.







## ELIGIBILITY

**Are public and government agencies eligible to apply to the Legal Empowerment Fund?**

No, only 501(c)(3) organizations or fiscally sponsored organizations are eligible.

**Can collaboratives/coalitions of organizations apply together?**

Yes, collaboratives are welcome to apply. It is requested that one organization take the lead on behalf of the collaborative/coalition, and describe the work of the collaborative/coalition in the application. This organization must have independent 501(c)(3) status.

**Can organizations applying on behalf of collaboratives submit a second application for their individual organization?**

No.

**Is there a typical grant amount?**

No. Organizations may propose a budget of any size but no larger than \$50,000 in all priorities except for the Legal Fellowship grants, which are \$80,000.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**If an organization has different projects, can the organization apply requesting funding for each project?**

No, organizations are allowed to submit only one application per organization.





## APPLICATION PROCESS (cont.)

Would you consider multi-year funding?

No.

Will the grants primarily be to support general operations or to support specific projects?

All funding will be general operating support grants that must be used to support the approved project/work listed in the grant application.

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What is the grant period?

The grant period will start on December 23, 2021. The end date will depend on the recommended duration.

Would you fund an organization that is seeking to expand its services?

Yes, organizations seeking to expand their work can apply for the Capacity Building grants. Please note that Capacity Building Grants are limited to California based organizations with budgets under \$1 Million and with at least one attorney on staff. Other examples of capacity building include strategic planning, development projects, board development, etc.







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