

NEW HAMPSHIRE BAR ASSOCIATION

Equal Justice Under Law • Celebrating 150 Years



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July 12, 2023

Mystyna Yackel Shappy
Associate Executive Director
New Hampshire Bar Foundation
2 Pillsbury St. Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Mysty,

Enclosed please find the IOLTA Grant final report of the New Hampshire Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service Modest Means Program for the June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023 grant year. We are grateful to the Bar Foundation for your funding which assists us in helping to bridge the justice gap in New Hampshire.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding our program. I am happy to provide additional information or documentation.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Best regards,

Misty Griffith, Esq.
Member Services Supervisor
New Hampshire Bar Association



IOLTA Grant Final Report June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023

Submitted by:

Misty Griffith
Member Services Supervisor
New Hampshire Bar Association
Two Pillsbury St., Suite 300, Concord, NH 03301
Ph: (603)715-3227 email: mgriffith@nhbar.org
www.nhbar.org

Amount of Grant: \$10,000

Purpose of Modest Means Program and Work Supported

The New Hampshire Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service's Modest Means program (LRS-MM) helps bridge the legal services gap by connecting people who do not qualify for free legal services, but who cannot afford standard ("full fee") attorney fees, with qualified New Hampshire attorneys who agree to consider their case at a greatly reduced rate aligning with LRS-MM's sliding fee schedule. The \$80-125 per hour sliding fee scale is based on household size and income measured against the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This fee range is far below the average fees charged by most attorneys in NH. The modest fee allows some attorneys to take cases knowing they may make enough to recoup their overhead costs. (Moreover, many attorneys charge even less than our sliding fee.)

In accordance with our grant application, our \$10,000 IOLTA grant was applied to help defray the operating expenses for the LRS-MM program.

LRS-MM serves individuals and families statewide with incomes up to a maximum of 325% of the federal poverty level. Other NH legal services organizations refer people to LRS-MM when the individual's income exceeds their program's guidelines, but the person's inability to pay standard legal fees is clear. LRS-MM program promotes access to justice for individuals of low to modest means whose inability to afford an attorney might otherwise force them to represent themselves.

LRS-MM serves individuals and families statewide. However, there is a disproportionate need for LRS-MM attorneys in Coos, Northern Grafton, and Belknap counties. Family law is by far the biggest area of demand for modest means attorneys (61% of LRS-MM cases) followed by housing (11% of LRS-MM cases). Other case types comprise a wide variety of practice areas including DV, bankruptcy, consumer protection, employment, probate, criminal misdemeanors, immigration, and many others.

Our intake and referral specialists field hundreds of calls a month. Callers who are within the program guidelines of 125-325% of the Federal Poverty Level are prequalified for LRS-MM and referred to one of our attorney panel members. Callers who are over income are offered a referral to a Full fee attorney, and callers who are under income are referred other sources of legal aid.

LRS-MM also oversees the Free Legal Answers-NH program (FLA-NH) and LawLine which provide additional alternatives for people who cannot afford the reduced rate, but who are unable to obtain free services due to a lack of available resources at other legal aid organizations.

Evaluation of the Program

For the 12-month period ending May 31, 2023, LRS-MM staff processed 1,210 requests for assistance and opened 554 new modest means cases (991 referrals were made because some prospective clients require 2 or 3 referrals before an attorney is found for their case.) In addition to the 554 primary clients, 774 family members benefited from LRS-MM legal services, and 656 people were referred to other sources of legal help. A total of 1,984 people were helped by LRS-MM during the 12-month period.

From June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023, our 115 volunteer attorneys for FLA-NH answered 566 legal questions. 32% of the questions were family law topics, 30 % were housing related legal questions, 10% were consumer protection questions and the remaining questions were on a variety of other legal topics. During this time period, our monthly LawLine volunteers assisted 632 callers.

We receive very positive feedback from attorneys who provide assistance through LRS-MM. One Modest Means attorneys shared, “I have met some great clients through the modest means program. I had a collaborative attorney-client relationship with a woman who needed a divorce from an abusive partner. She was responsive and ready to help with discovery and other paperwork for her case. The divorce process went smoothly and she still to this day sends me a card each Christmas.”

Likewise, our FLA volunteers find this to be a meaningful experience. An attorney who volunteers for FLA-NH says, “The people who post questions are extremely appreciative of the answers they receive. A lot of times, they are already within arms-length of the solution to their problem. By providing them with a personalized roadmap to navigate the process, volunteers really get to help make the judicial system more accessible.”

We send out client satisfaction surveys twice a month. The majority of feedback is extremely positive. In praising our intake and referral specialists, on caller wrote, “They obviously have a wealth of knowledge as to the attorneys they recommend and are able to quickly match people up with practices/lawyers depending on the situation the client needs to deal with. Offering three potential matches is more than generous, and unique.” When we receive negative feedback on a satisfaction survey, we follow up with both the caller and, if appropriate, the attorney to whom they were referred.

Case Examples

Helping clients through the Modest Means Program allows us to give back to our community and have an impact on the growing access to justice problem. There are a significant amount of people who fall into the gap between earning too much to qualify for Pro Bono and not earning enough to afford a full

fee attorney. I appreciate that these cases are vetted through LRS and come to us organized with relevant information right from the start. We have had some of the most thankful clients in taking Modest Means cases. Recently I was able to assist a single mother in obtaining a restraining order and parenting order to protect her children from an abusive father. She made sure she thanked my entire team for our assistance, and we could all see the relief she felt from having this protection. This is especially important work where one parent can afford an attorney and the other cannot. – K. M. Modest Means Attorney

I want to thank you for your courtesy and quick response to my request for a referral. Your advance notice to that law firm made my first call to them very easy! Other requests that I made for information or guidance (from the NH DOJ, NH Registry of Motor Vehicles, and the NH Consumer Protection Bureau) fell on deaf ears and my requests were ignored. Your response and referral to an excellent law firm near me has restored my confidence in the NH judicial system! It's refreshing to see that some businesses still care enough to do a great job! Thank you again. – J.H. Freemont, NH Caller

The Lawyer Referral Service Modest Means Program is rewarding because it truly is bridging the gap in access to justice by allowing those who may not otherwise be able to afford an Attorney, the opportunity to have representation in a court system that can be intimidating. As a family lawyer, I have seen many times Clients come to me after trying to navigate their issues on their own through the justice system but becoming frustrated and intimidated by going it alone. In particular, I worked with one Client who was alleged to have a child support arrearage and was at risk of losing his license. Because of the Modest Means Program, they were able to work with me and were able to prove, through documents that they had saved, that he was not receiving proper credit for all of the child support payments that he had made and avoid losing his license, clear up arrearages which may have affected his future tax refunds and resolve a matter of contention with the co-parent. – R.C. Modest Means Attorney

Organizations Collaborated with to Deliver Services

Internally, LRS-MM refers prospective clients to Free Legal answers – NH and Lawline (or LRS full fee if the prospective client is over the LRS-MM income cap of 325% FPL). Externally, prospective clients falling below LRS-MM's minimum income are referred to 603 Legal Aid and other legal aid organizations, as appropriate.

We are especially grateful to the 70 attorneys who accept modest means clients, the 115 attorneys who volunteer for FLA-NH and the 24 law firms that volunteered for LawLine.

LRS was an NHPR underwriter this fiscal year which increased both callers and attorney panelists.

Completed Statistical Survey -See Attachment A

Itemized Financial Statement for IOLTA – only Grant Revenue -See Attachment B

Most Recent Current Financial Statement for LRS - MM - See Attachment C

Copies of Print Materials, Web Pages, and Other Materials Funded in Part by IOLTA Revenue - See Attachment D

Attachment A

Statistical Summary

NHBA Lawyer Referral Service – Modest Means Program Statistical Summary

New Cases by Case Type June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023

	Consumer	Family	Health	Housing	Employment/ Income	Individual Rights	Other	Total Cases per County
Belknap		21					5	26
Carroll		12		2	1			15
Cheshire		10					4	14
Coos		10		4				14
Grafton		14		3			1	18
Hillsborough	2	112	1	11			28	154
Merrimack	1	67		24	3		14	109
Rockingham	1	39		2			18	60
Strafford	2	32		5	2		4	45
Sullivan		13					1	14
OOS		54		1	5		25	85
Total Cases	6	384	1	52	11	0	100	554

Total People Helped by County June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023

County	Cases	Additional Household Members	Total People Helped per County
Belknap	26	36	62
Carroll	15	23	38
Cheshire	14	26	40
Coos	14	20	34
Grafton	18	25	43
Hillsborough	154	208	362
Merrimack	109	141	250
Rockingham	60	110	170
Strafford	45	84	129
Sullivan	14	15	29
Out of State	85	86	171
Total	554	774	1328

Total People Helped by Program June 1, 2022-May 31, 2023

Program	People Helped
Modest Means	1328
Free Legal Answers - NH	566
LawLine	632
Referrals to other programs	656
Tota	3182

Attachment B

Itemized Financial Statement for IOLTA – only Grant Revenue

IOLTA-ONLY GRANT REVENUE EXPENDITURES - NHBA LRS MODEST MEANS PROGRAM					
June 1, 2022 - May 31 2023					
Applied to offset salaries which exceed \$10,000	\$10,000				
Remaining Balance	\$0				

Attachment C

Most Recent Current Financial Statement for LRS - MM

NEW HAMPSHIRE BAR ASSOCIATION
LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE - REDUCED FEE
For the Eleven Months Ending Sunday, April 30, 2023

	FY 2023 APPROVED BUDGET	ACTUAL	YEAR-TO-DATE ACTIVITY (June Through April) BUDGET	VARIANCE
REVENUES				
Client Fees	\$12,675	\$4,925	\$21,780	(\$16,855)
Advertising - Website & E-Bulletin	0	0	0	\$0
Grant Revenue	10,000	10,000	9,163	\$837
Percentage Fees from LRS FF Program	64,876	71,176	81,263	(\$10,087)
TOTAL REVENUE	87,551	86,101	112,206	(26,105)
EXPENDITURES				
PERSONNEL				
Salaries	74,886	55,895	68,640	12,745
Benefits	12,824	7,469	11,165	3,696
Payroll Taxes	6,132	4,370	5,621	1,251
Total Personnel Costs	93,842	67,734	85,426	17,692
PROGRAM EXPENSES				
Program Support	425	46	385	339
Program Development	2,333	624	2,297	1,673
Professional Dues & Subscriptions	125	0	110	110
Postage - Programs	201	246	187	(59)
Printing & Materials	810	298	748	450
Publicity & Advertising	8,355	2,535	7,656	5,121
Litigation Expense Reimbursement	150	110	132	22
Total Program Expenses	12,399	3,859	11,515	7,656
OVERHEAD EXPENSES				
Occupancy Allocation - Office Space	6,601	7,240	6,050	(1,190)
Office Supplies	167	376	154	(222)
Copier Maintenance & Supplies	787	271	726	455
Data Processing	5,196	3,526	4,763	1,237
Equipment & Maintenance	590	366	539	173
Telephone	465	817	429	(388)
Insurance	1,218	1,881	1,218	(663)
Miscellaneous Overhead Expenses	1,510	31	1,386	1,355
Total Overhead Expenses	16,534	14,508	15,265	757
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	122,775	86,101	112,206	26,105
REVENUE OVER / (UNDER) EXPENSES	(35,224)	0	0	0

Attachment D

**Copies of Print Materials, Web Pages, and Other Materials
Funded in Part by IOLTA Revenue**



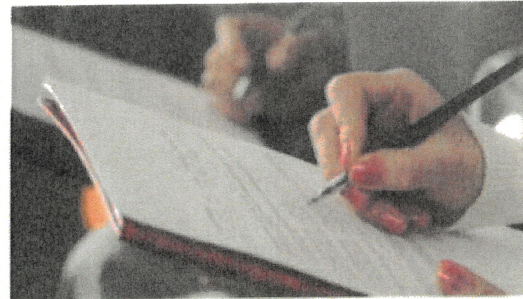
LRS Modest Means Program

The NHBA Lawyer Referral Services (LRS) Modest Means Program connects people in need of legal assistance with professionals who may be able to help. Our trained Intake and Referral Specialists* match those who prequalify with a licensed NH attorney who charges reduced fees to income-eligible applicants. If you do not qualify or are looking for services other than those provided by an attorney, we may be able to point you towards other organizations, agencies, and resources.**

Because some types of matters are time sensitive, it's important to seek out help as soon as you know you have a problem.

* Our Intake and Referral Specialists are not attorneys and do not offer legal advice.

** Even if our Intake and Referral Specialists pre-qualify you, the attorney and/or outside organization to whom you are referred may request documentation of your income and reserves the right to turn down your case for any reason.



How the LRS Modest Means Program Works

When you contact us, the information you provide will be used to determine eligibility. If you pre-qualify, LRS will attempt to match you with a nearby attorney who is experienced in the type of situation you have. You are not obliged to hire the attorney and the attorney is not obliged to take your case.

What do I need to apply?

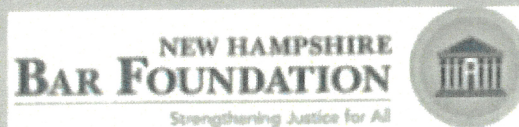
You will need to provide the following information:

- Gross household income (income from *ALL* adults, regardless of involvement in your case).
- Balance of checking and/or savings accounts
- Child support and/or alimony payments received or paid
- Value of stocks, bonds, CDs, retirement accounts

Contact Us
Call **603-715-3290**

[Apply Online](#)

The NHBA LRS Modest Means Program is funded in part by



NHBA LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE
MODEST MEANS PROGRAM

Lower-Cost Legal Services



Looking for help with a
legal problem, but don't
think you can afford it?

If you have regular income, we may be able
to connect you with the assistance you need!

603-715-3290

or submit a referral request
online at nhbar.org



It's quick and easy
to find out
if you qualify for
lower-cost legal help

The NHBA Lawyer Referral Service Modest Means Program connects people in need of legal assistance with professionals who may be able to help. Our trained Intake and Referral Specialists* match those who pre-qualify with a licensed New Hampshire attorney who charges reduced fees to income-eligible applicants. If you do not qualify or are looking for services other than those provided by an attorney, we may be able to point you toward other organizations, agencies, and resources.**

Because some types of matters are time-sensitive, it's important to seek out help as soon as you know you have a problem.

NOTES

Date: _____

Spoke With: _____

They Said: _____

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*The NHBA Lawyer Referral Service Modest Means Program
is appreciative for additional financial support from the*



NHBA LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE MODEST MEANS PROGRAM

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