



IOLTA Grant Final Report for June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

Submitted by:

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New Hampshire Bar Association

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Amount of Grant: \$33,000

Purpose of Modest Means Program and Work Supported

The goal of the New Hampshire Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service's Modest Means program (LRS-MM) is to 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.

The LRS-MM's sliding fee scale of \$80-125 per hour 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 earn enough to recoup their overhead costs.

LRS-MM serves individuals and families statewide whose income falls between 125 - 325% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The LRS-MM eligibility floor of 125% FPL is the ceiling for most other legal aid services. 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. The 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.

The number of referrals made by the LRS-MM program has been steadily climbing. In October 2023, an additional intake and referral assistant was hired to help keep up with the greatly increased call volume. The IOLTA grant is essential to underwriting the cost of this increase in staffing. As a result of the increase in staff, LRS-MM was able to refer 1,140 cases to our attorney panelists between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025, a 12% increase over the 1,009 modest means cases referred during FY 2023-2024, and more than double the 554 modest means referrals made during the previous fiscal year. This significant increase in access to justice was made possible by the generous \$33,000 IOLTA grant which helped defray the operating expenses for the LRS-MM program.

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 to other sources of legal aid.

The scope of LRS-MM is statewide, serving clients in all ten New Hampshire counties. The geographic areas which currently have a disproportionate need for LRS-MM attorneys are Coos, Carroll, Sullivan, and Cheshire counties, and to a lesser extent Belknap and Strafford counties.

Family Law is the most common practice area, accounting for 66% of all LRS-MM referrals and 9% of referrals are for housing related matters. However, LRS-MM attorneys assist individuals in a wide variety of matters including consumer protection issues, estate planning and probate matters, immigration, and criminal misdemeanor charges.

LRS-MM also oversees the NH Free Legal Answers program (NHFLA) and LawLine which provide options 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, 2025, LRS-MM staff processed 1,718 requests for assistance and opened 1,140 new modest means cases. In addition to the 1,140 primary clients, 1,470 additional household members benefited from LRS-MM legal services, and 657 people were referred to other sources of legal help. A total of 4170 people were helped by LRS-MM during the 12-month period.

From June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025, our 123 volunteer attorneys for FLA-NH answered 325 legal questions. Questions were evenly distributed between family law and housing categories which together accounted for 62% of all questions, 7% were consumer protection questions, and the remaining questions were on a variety of other legal topics. During this time frame, our monthly LawLine volunteers assisted 657 callers.

We receive very positive feedback from attorneys who provide legal assistance through LRS-MM. One Modest Means attorney 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.” Another attorney shared, “I especially enjoy representing people who have limited means and need help. They come to our practice with major problems that have grown while the clients were unrepresented. The cases are over a board spectrum which makes my work so much more interesting.”

We send out client satisfaction surveys twice a month. Most feedback is extremely positive. One individual wrote, “I was in a really difficult situation, and the Modest Means program was a complete lifesaver at a time when I could barely afford legal expenses. Thank you so much for having this program available.” Another client shared, “This is an invaluable resource to the community, especially when you are in need of sound counsel.” When we receive negative feedback on a satisfaction survey, we follow up to determine the cause of the problem and rectify the problem if possible.

Case Examples

“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

“[My attorney] contacted me right away. He explained how he would like to proceed with my case. He is very polite and friendly. He put me at ease, so I don't feel so worried about my situation.” –

D.S, Grafton County, MM Bankruptcy Client

“[My attorney] was personable, kind, patient, respectful, such an amazing lawyer that he almost felt like family. So very pleased with his professionalism, expertise, and successful representation. He was a strong voice for my mom, and we cannot be more thankful. Would love to rate him at a whopping 10 Stars, if available! Would highly recommend the Referral Service and (my attorney) to anyone we know of in need of legal services.” – **D.W. Merrimack County, MM Debt Collections Client**

Organizations Collaborated with to Deliver Services

Internally, LRS-MM refers prospective clients to NH Free Legal Answers 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 63 attorneys who accept modest means clients, the 123 attorneys who volunteer for FLA-NH and the 24 law firms that volunteered for LawLine.

Completed Statistical Survey – See Attachment A

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

Most 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 – NHBA Lawyer Referral Service Statistical Summary
New Cases by Case Type June 1, 2024- May 31, 2025

	Consumer	Family	Health	Housing	Employment/ Income	Individual Rights	Other	Total Cases per County
Belknap	2	33		5	1		3	44
Carroll	1	26	1	4			12	44
Cheshire	5	24	1	3			4	37
Coos	2	24					4	30
Grafton	4	49		8			13	74
Hillsborough	19	230		41	4	1	72	367
Merrimack	7	103	2	16		1	23	152
Rockingham	10	105		9			37	161
Strafford	3	74		9			21	107
Sullivan	2	29		5			7	43
Out of State	1	43			1		21	66
Unspecified		13					2	15
Total Cases	56	753	4	100	6	2	219	1140

Total People Helped by County June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

County	Cases	Additional Household Members	Total People Helped per County
Belknap	44	75	119
Carroll	44	56	100
Cheshire	37	64	101
Coos	30	16	46
Grafton	74	93	167
Hillsborough	367	467	834
Merrimack	152	210	362
Rockingham	161	201	362
Strafford	107	145	252
Sullivan	43	65	108
Out of State	66	78	144
Unspecified	15	No data	15
Total	1140	1470	2610

Total People Helped by Program June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

Program	People Helped
Modest Means	2610
Free Legal Answers - NH	325
LawLine	657
Referrals to other programs	578
Total	4170

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

IOLTA-ONLY GRANT REVENUE EXPENDITURES - NHBA LRS MODEST MEANS PROGRAM						
Program Date	June 1, 2024-May 31,2025					
Grant Award	\$33,000					
Expenditures						
Applied to offset salaries of staff. LRS has 3 fulltime intake staff.	\$33,000					
Remaining Balance	\$0					

Attachment C – Most Current Financial Statement for LRS-MM

**NEW HAMPSHIRE BAR ASSOCIATION
LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE - MODEST MEANS
For the Twelve Months Ending Saturday, May 31, 2025**

	FY 2024 Prior Year to Date ACTUAL	FY 2025 APPROVED BUDGET	YEAR-TO-DATE ACTIVITY (June Through May)		
			ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
REVENUES					
Client Fees	\$10,200	\$8,125	\$8,300	\$8,125	\$175
Grant Revenue	25,000	25,000	33,000	25,000	8,000
TOTAL REVENUE	35,200	33,125	41,300	33,125	8,175
EXPENDITURES					
PERSONNEL					
Salaries	60,711	84,985	76,664	84,985	8,321
Benefits	11,247	15,619	17,290	15,619	(1,671)
Payroll Taxes	4,528	6,622	5,830	6,622	792
Total Personnel Costs	76,486	107,226	99,784	107,226	7,442
PROGRAM EXPENSES					
Program Support	36	375	75	375	300
Program Development	0	1,513	1,090	1,513	423
Professional Dues & Subscriptions	0	125	125	125	0
Postage - Programs	317	238	420	238	(182)
Printing & Materials	0	750	341	750	409
Publicity & Advertising	608	2,225	0	2,225	2,225
Hiring Expenses	3,009	0	0	0	0
Litigation Expense Reimbursement	0	150	0	150	150
Total Program Expenses	3,970	5,376	2,051	5,376	3,325
OVERHEAD EXPENSES					
Occupancy Allocation - Office Space	7,970	7,115	7,767	7,115	(652)
Office Supplies	248	91	316	91	(225)
Copier Maintenance & Supplies	254	774	533	774	241
Data Processing	4,610	5,569	6,315	5,569	(746)
Equipment & Maintenance	996	1,569	232	1,569	1,337
Telephone	733	1,229	664	1,229	565
Insurance	1,612	1,612	0	1,612	1,612
Miscellaneous Overhead Expenses	329	1,510	770	1,510	740
Total Overhead Expenses	16,752	19,469	16,597	19,469	2,872
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	97,208	132,071	118,432	132,071	13,639
REVENUE OVER / (UNDER) EXPENSES	(62,008)	(98,946)	(77,132)	(98,946)	21,814

Attachment D

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



Screenshot of website

Means Program a part

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nhbar.org/lawyer-referral-service/modest-means-legal-program/

Home | KGA, Inc. Welcome | New Ha... Log In Employee Navigato... Paychex Flex Login... Sign In | Zoom



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



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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
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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Help Bridge the Justice Gap



Join the LRS Modest Means Panel

If you are looking to give back while earning a small fee, consider joining the Modest Means Program. Modest Means panelists provide much-needed legal assistance to moderate-to lower income individuals while still earning a reduced fee. Participants choose the type of cases they are willing to consider and the county(-ies) where they practice. It is free to join and there is no obligation to accept any referral. Taking even one or two cases per year can make a big difference to individuals who would otherwise have to represent themselves.

More than 1,000 modest means clients were assisted in 2024.

[Join Now](#)

The Modest Means Program is funded in part by a generous grant from the New Hampshire Bar Foundation's IOLTA grant program.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
BAR FOUNDATION**
Strengthening Justice for All

