

# Equal Justice Authority

## FY 2025-2026 Grant Application Guide

### **Important Dates for FY 2025-2026 Equal Justice Authority Grant**

- **April 15, 2025:** Application released
- **May 15, 2025:** Application must be submitted by 11:59 p.m.
- **June 15, 2025:** Applicants notified of award decisions
- **June 25, 2025:** Signed Grant Agreement must be submitted by 11:59 p.m.
- **July 1, 2025:** Funding disbursed and fiscal year funding cycle begins
- **November 14, 2025:** Mid-year reporting form released
- **December 1, 2025:** Mid-year reporting due
- **June 30, 2026:** Fiscal year funding cycle ends and year-end reporting form released
- **July 15, 2026:** Year-end reporting due

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**I. Overview**

The Equal Justice Authority (EJA) is a Special Authority created under [HB24-1286](#) and is composed of seven board members that are responsible for distributing the equal justice fee for the purpose of providing equal access to legal aid services and to increase the efficiency of the court system for all court users.

The Equal Justice fee was implemented on January 1, 2025 and is collected by the courts on behalf of the Equal Justice Authority in the same way it collects other fees.

**II. Qualified Applicants**

Applicants may apply for funding if they are a qualified civil legal aid provider. Per [HB24-1286](#),<sup>1</sup> an applying organization is a qualified civil legal aid provider if they:

- Are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; and,
- Provide legal representation and advice to people in Colorado who are at or below 250% of the [federal poverty guideline](#)<sup>2</sup> to support their access to basic needs such as housing, employment, health services, education, and assistance with family matters and immigration status issues.

Organizations with a 501(c)(3) fiscal agent or sponsorship will be considered for funding.

250% of the [federal poverty guideline](#) for Colorado is as follows:

Household/Family Size	Income
1	\$39,125
2	\$52,875
3	\$66,625
4	\$80,375
5	\$94,125
6	\$107,875
7	\$121,625
8	\$135,375
9	\$149,125
10	\$162,875
11	\$176,625
12	\$190,375

<sup>1</sup> <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1286>

<sup>2</sup> <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

### III. Available Funding

Applicants will not request a specific amount for funding. Per statutory requirement, Granting amounts will be based on your answers in the application.

Per C.R.S. 13-5.7-206, eligible funding will be divided based on a weighted formula to qualifying applicants. The Equal Justice Authority shall annually distribute all money deposited into the Authority's account, less the Authority's direct and indirect expenses in administering the funds. The Authority shall distribute 67% of the remaining revenue to the Colorado recipient of a federal legal services corporation field grant (Colorado Legal Services) and 33% to qualified civil legal aid providers.

### IV. Use of Grant Funds

These funds are for general operating purposes. Funding received from this grant must be used in support of providing access to legal representation for individuals in Colorado and increasing the efficiency of Colorado Courts by reducing slowdowns caused by self-representation.

The Equal Justice Authority reserves the right to modify grant conditions or terminate grant funding should there be a misuse of funds or misrepresented information submitted in the grant application.

### V. Application Overview

The 2025-2026 Equal Justice Authority grant application is an online form. The application link can be found [www.coloradoaccesstojustice.org/eja](http://www.coloradoaccesstojustice.org/eja). This digital form consists of three sections:

#### Section A: Organization Summary

- Section A includes contact information for the organization and its Executive Director or CEO, the organization's mission statement, and questions to determine if the organization is a qualified applicant (criteria defining Qualified Applicants is listed above).

#### Section B: Organization Information

- Section B includes seven questions that are used to determine funding:
  1. Please enter the number of attorney hours your organization spent serving [people in Colorado in poverty](#) from January 1, 2024-December 31, 2024.

*The answer to this question should be a number and will have an optional text box for any additional information the applicant would like to include (100 words or less).*

2. Please enter your organization's total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) attorneys as of the application date.

FTE includes full-time attorneys, plus part-time attorneys counted as a fraction, e.g. 2 half-time attorneys = 1 FTE.

*The answer should be a number. Partial numbers are acceptable. Applicants will have an optional text box for any additional information the applicant would like to include (100 words or less).*

3. Please enter the number of individuals living in poverty in Colorado who received educational legal services from your organization in the calendar year January 1, 2024-December 31, 2024.

*This answer should be a number. Educational legal services refers to providing general education on a topic that is not case specific - e.g. know your rights clinics or educational materials.*

4. Please enter the number of individuals living in poverty in Colorado who received brief legal services from your organization in the calendar year January 1, 2024-December 31, 2024.

*This answer should be a number. Brief legal services (Unbundled or Limited Scope Representation) refers to case specific advice or limited assistance on a case - e.g. helping an individual complete paperwork.*

5. Please enter the number of individuals living in poverty in Colorado who received full representation legal services from your organization in the calendar year January 1, 2024-December 31, 2024.

*This answer should be a number. Full representation refers to representing an individual on a specific case.*

6. In 500 words or less, please describe your geographic reach of services and how your organization does or does not work in rural Colorado and/or legal deserts.

Per the [State of Colorado's Department of Local Affairs](#)<sup>3</sup>, the following counties are considered rural: Alamosa, Archuleta, Baca, Bent, Chaffee, Cheyenne, Clear Creek, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Custer, Delta, Dolores, Eagle, Elbert, Fremont, Garfield, Grand, Gilpin, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Huerfano, Jackson, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lake, La Plata, Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Mineral, Moffat, Montezuma, Montrose, Morgan, Otero, Ouray, Park, Phillips, Pitkin, Prowers, Rio Blanco, Rio Grande, Routt, Saguache, San Juan, San Miguel, Sedgwick, Summit, Washington, Yuma.

Per the [American Bar Association](#)<sup>4</sup>, the definition of a legal desert is any county with less than one attorney per 1000 residents.

Counties considered legal deserts in Colorado are:  
Archuleta, Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Clear Creek, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Custer, Delores, Gilpin, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Huerfano, Jackson, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Moffat, Ouray, Park, Phillips, Rio Blanco, Saguache, San Juan, Sedgwick, Washington, Yuma.

*The answer to this question must be a narrative of 500 words or less.*

7. In 500 words or less, please describe your organization's ability and experience serving populations that have barriers to legal assistance, including but not limited to individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency.
- a. If applicable, please include specific examples of incorporating clients' cultural considerations, partnering with complementary service providers, and/or how you have implemented solutions-oriented approaches to serving

<sup>3</sup> <https://cdola.colorado.gov/colorado-community-classification>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2020/07/potlp2020.pdf>

- populations with barriers to legal assistance.
- b. If you do not have examples, please describe your plan to serve populations with barriers to legal assistance.

*The answer to this question must be a narrative of 500 words or less.*

### **Section C: Attachments**

Applicants must submit three attachments:

- Proof of IRS federal tax-exempt status, dated within the last five years
- A copy of your organization's operating budget for the current fiscal year
- A copy of your current year end income and expense statement

Completed applications and all attachments must be submitted via an online form by **11:59pm on May 15, 2025**. If needed, email attachments to [ejaboard@coloradoaccesstojustice.org](mailto:ejaboard@coloradoaccesstojustice.org).

The application must be digitally signed and dated by an individual from the applying organization.

### **VI. Selection Criteria**

Per statute, funding will be awarded based on a formula that is calculated as a result of the answers submitted in the application.

### **VII. Award Notification & Grant Agreement**

Successful applicants will be notified by **June 15, 2025** via the email provided on the application. Award notification will include both an Award Letter and a Grant Agreement that details terms and conditions.

To accept your award, the successful applicant's Executive Director or CEO must sign and return the Grant Agreement to [ejaboard@coloradoaccesstojustice.org](mailto:ejaboard@coloradoaccesstojustice.org) by **11:59 p.m. on June 25, 2025**.

Awards will be disbursed on **July 1, 2025**.

### **VIII. Reporting Requirements**

Successful applicants will have required reporting due **December 1, 2025** and **July 15, 2026**.

Reporting requirements include 1) how much money remained unused, 2) the types of legal services provided to individuals, and 3) a certification that the funds were used to

advance the purpose of the Equal Justice Authority to provide legal assistance to low-income people in Colorado and, by doing so, to promote court efficiency.

**IX. Inquiries**

If you have any questions or need special accommodation to complete this application, please contact us at [ejaboard@coloradoaccesstojustice.org](mailto:ejaboard@coloradoaccesstojustice.org).

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) can be found on the website at [www.coloradoaccesstojustice.org/eja](http://www.coloradoaccesstojustice.org/eja).