

The City Bridge Trust

Investing In Londoners: Application for a grant



About your organisation

Name of your organisation: Tower Hamlets Law Centre	
If your organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name?	
In which London Borough is your organisation based? Tower Hamlets	
Contact person: Mr Martin South	Position: Chief Executive
Website: http://www.thlc.co.uk	
Legal status of organisation: First Contact	Charity, Charitable Incorporated Company or company number: 287282
When was your organisation established? 04/04/1984	

Grant Request

Under which of City Bridge Trust's programmes are you applying? Reducing Poverty
Which of the programme outcome(s) does your application aim to achieve? More people accessing debt and legal services
Please describe the purpose of your funding request in one sentence. Core funding for free legal services to disadvantaged people, allowing time for the development of sustainable alternative funding following substantial cuts to legal aid.
When will the funding be required? 02/04/2018
How much funding are you requesting? Year 1: £75,000 Year 2: £50,000 Year 3: £25,000 Total: £150,000

Aims of your organisation:

The relief of poverty amongst persons resident or working in Greater London, an in particular in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, by providing such persons with legal services which they could not otherwise obtain or which it would not be reasonably practicable or appropriate to obtain elsewhere.

The advancement of education amongst persons resident or working in the benefit area.

The advancement of such other charitable purposes as are beneficial to the community for persons resident or working in the benefit area.

Main activities of your organisation:

We provide high quality legal advice and representation, mainly for free (and, where this is not possible, at a low cost), mainly to people who live or work in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Our clients are from a wide variety of ethnic minority community groups. We focus on housing, welfare benefits, immigration and employment law.

We currently have legal aid contracts in housing and immigration. We also provide advice on welfare benefits, housing and immigration under a contract with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, and employment advice through regular pro bono evening advice sessions.

Our professional services take on matters from initial enquiry to representation in the Higher Courts, as necessary to resolve our clients' problems. Our caseworkers rely on support staff and dedicated volunteers, collaborating to deliver effective, high quality legal services at low cost.

Number of staff

Full-time:	Part-time:	Management committee members:	Active volunteers:
5	10	12	60

Property occupied by your organisation

Is the main property owned, leased or rented by your organisation?	If leased/rented, how long is the outstanding agreement?
Rented	Expiring on 25/12/2019.

Summary of grant request

We seek a three-year grant of £150,000 to enable us to continue providing services while we develop sustainable sources of funding for the future.

Our services cover specialist legal advice and representation in courts and tribunals on welfare benefits, housing and immigration law. Services are free to clients. The law centre is the only organisation of its kind in Tower Hamlets (and further East: there is no law centre in Newham, or Barking and Dagenham, for example, and we often see clients from those areas).

We work in one of London's most deprived boroughs, with half of older people and a quarter of children living in income-deprived households (the latter is the highest proportion in England). Our clients include women fleeing domestic violence, people in housing crisis, those with complex benefit challenges, and disabled people. Years of austerity policies and changes to social security benefits have profoundly damaged lives here, and we see no prospect of improvement in the foreseeable future.

Many of our clients have nowhere else to go for help in asserting their basic rights. We often turn people away because we lack the capacity to take on more cases, and it is difficult (sometimes impossible) to refer them elsewhere.

Alongside the increase in need for our services, our capacity to deliver them has suffered a huge blow: cuts to legal aid in 2013 meant that the law centre lost 70% of its income, necessitating staff redundancies, pay cuts, and relocation to smaller shared premises. Nationally, the number of people helped with social welfare law cases (including housing and welfare benefits) has dropped by 79% since the legal aid cuts.

The law centre has had to take strong medicine to survive, but its survival and the crucial services it offers remain in jeopardy unless sustainable long-term sources of income can be developed.

The grant will:

*enable us to continue to deliver legal casework on behalf of clients. We will do this in the same way as at present - meeting clients to discuss their problems and conducting legal work on their behalf in our offices and at courts and tribunals.

*buy us time to develop sustainable sources of funding. That work will be done chiefly by our trustees and senior staff. It will take time for the work to produce results, and some of the things we will need to do in order to generate income will themselves require expenditure.

The outcome of this work will be to enable more people to access crucial legal services by ensuring that the law centre can continue to operate in the future; and by increasing the number of people that we are able to help year on year.

We have a formal diversity policy, and it is an ingrained part of our culture that we monitor performance against it continuously and use the findings to inform what we do. Members of the Tower Hamlets community make up most of our staff, our Board of Trustees and our volunteers. Like our clients, they are a very diverse group with a wide range of backgrounds, and we prize the collective strength this gives us. We regularly collect feedback from our clients and use it to improve our services.

Continues overleaf

Continued from previous

Volunteers are extremely important to our work, and we work hard to maintain excellent, reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships with them. We are currently applying for accreditation to the Investing in Volunteers quality standard.

We have taken some steps to reduce our carbon footprint, printing less and recycling paper waste, but we want to do more ? particularly around an office energy policy.

If you need any planning or other statutory consents for the project to proceed, what stage have the applications reached?

Do you have a Vulnerable Adults policy? **Yes**

What Quality Marks does your organisation currently hold?

We are accredited to the Law Society's Lexcel standard

Outputs and outcomes

What are the main activities or outputs you want to deliver? Please include no more than 5. By activities or outputs we mean the services, products or facilities you plan to deliver. If you plan to deliver work over more than one year you should include activities over the full grant period requested. Try to be specific.

Free legal advice and representation on housing and welfare benefits cases to people in and near Tower Hamlets. We will at least maintain the number of cases we work on in year one (992) and expect to increase this by at least 5% in each of years two and three.

Improve our management systems (and ability to generate income from the few cases that qualify for legal aid) by: improving our IT infrastructure and acquiring new case management software; defining KPIs and improving performance management; reducing office energy consumption and environmental impact; and recruiting dedicated casework administration staff.

Launch an individual giving programme, starting with the creation of an alumni network which will reach out to the hundreds of lawyers who have contributed to our work over our 40 year history.

Define and implement a corporate sponsorship strategy, including identification of key targets, researching the most effective ways of approaching them, creation of pitch materials and management of events to attract sponsors.

Raise our profile by implementing a marketing and advertising strategy (including branding and badging of the premises; production of digital advertising material for funders, clients, alumni, volunteers and partners; social media strategy and enhanced web presence; editorial coverage in local and national media).

What main differences or outcomes do you hope the activities you have described above will achieve? Please include no more than 5. By differences or outcomes we mean the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that result from the work your project would deliver. These might be for individuals, families, communities or the environment.

Individual clients and their families better off as the result of having had specialist legal advice and representation, including people securing social security benefits, homeless people gaining homes, tenants able to remain in their homes and to require their landlords to repair them.

Reduced inequality and poverty in our community, especially in light of the current economic and political situation; access to justice for the community overall as well as the individuals within it; a better functioning society.

Increasing our capacity to take more cases and maximising our income from them when legal aid remains available; allowing the law centre to give a better account of its activities to all stakeholders; empowering staff and volunteers, and reducing the environmental footprint of the law centre's activities.

Generating sustainable unrestricted income that will enable us to continue operating into the future with a secure funding base; and to expand our work.

Rebuilding the law centre's profile and expanding our network; underpinning Activities 2-4; fuelling membership numbers and making it easier to recruit more volunteers. All of this would have a significant impact in terms of continued and sustainable revenue generation in the medium to long term.

Do you plan to continue the activity beyond the period for which you are requesting funding? If so, how do you intend to sustain it? If not, what is your exit strategy?

Our Strategic Plan 2016-2019 is aimed at securing new sources of income to ensure long term sustainability. We will launch an individual giving strategy starting with a new alumni network; develop relationships with new corporate sponsors; and dramatically improve our online presence to support both these. We will also improve our management systems so we make more from legal aid.

Who will benefit?

About your beneficiaries

How many people will benefit directly from the grant per year?

1,300

In which Greater London borough(s) or areas of London will your beneficiaries live?

Tower Hamlets (80%)

London-wide (20%)

What age group(s) will benefit?

All ages

What gender will beneficiaries be?

All

What will the ethnic grouping(s) of the beneficiaries be?

A range of ethnic groups

Asian/ Asian British (including Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Chinese; Any other Asian background)

If Other ethnic group, please give details:

What proportion of the beneficiaries will be disabled people?

11-20%

Funding required for the project

What is the total cost of the proposed activity/project?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Activity 1 - Free Advice and Representation	405,000	420,000	440,000	1,265,000
Activity 2 - Improved Management Systems	20,000	20,000	20,000	80,000
Activity 3 - Individual Giving Programme	5,000	6,000	6,000	17,000
Activity 4 - Corporate Sponsorship	4,000	4,000	4,000	12,000
Activity 5 - PR and Marketing	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	440,000	456,000	476,000	1,392,00
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What income has already been raised?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Legal Aid (current / expected)	114,000	114,000	114,000	342,000
L.B. Tower Hamlets (current / expected)	150,000	150,000	150,000	450,000
Corporate Donations (current / expected)	65,000	65,000	65,000	195,000
Grants from Trusts (current / expected)	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000

TOTAL:	339,000	339,000	339,000	1,017,00
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What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Trust for London (for specific aspects of our immigration work)	45,000	45,000	45,000	135,000

TOTAL:	45,000	45,000	45,000	135,000
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How much is requested from the Trust?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Activity 1 - Free Advice and Representation	40,000	25,000	15,000	80,000
Activity 2 - Improved Management Systems	20,000	15,000	5,000	40,000
Activity 3 - Individual Giving Programme	5,000	2,000	0	7,000
Activity 4 - Corporate Sponsorship	4,000	3,000	1,000	8,000
Activity 5 - PR and Marketing	6,000	5,000	4,000	15,000
	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	75,000	50,000	25,000	150,000
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Finance details

Please complete using your most recent audited or independently examined accounts.

Financial year ended:	Month: March	Year: 2016
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Income received from:	£
Voluntary income	65,424
Activities for generating funds	0
Investment income	14
Income from charitable activities	356,061
Other sources	0
Total Income:	421,499

Expenditure:	£
Charitable activities	466,184
Governance costs	0
Cost of generating funds	0
Other	0
Total Expenditure:	466,184
Net (deficit)/surplus:	-44,685
Other Recognised Gains/(Losses):	0
Net Movement In Funds:	44,685

Asset position at year end	£
Fixed assets	0
Investments	0
Net current assets	90,067
Long-term liabilities	36,224
*Total Assets (A):	53,843

Reserves at year end	£
Restricted funds	37,188
Endowment Funds	0
Unrestricted funds	16,655
*Total Reserves (B):	53,843

*** Please note that total Assets (A) and Total Reserves (B) should be the same.**

Statutory funding

For your most recent financial year, what % of your income was from statutory sources? 51-60%
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Organisational changes

Describe any significant changes to your structure, financial position or core activities since the date of your most recent accounts:
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revision of Memorandum and Articles of Association. - Recruitment of six new trustees (overall total of 12). - Termination of lease of premises previously used for storing the law centre's files. |
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Previous funding received

Please list the funding received by your organisation from the following statutory sources during the last THREE years.

	Year 3 £	Year 2 £	Most recent £
City of London (except City Bridge Trust)	0	0	0
London Local Authorities	197,788	170,890	165,704
London Councils	0	0	0
Health Authorities	0	0	0
Central Government departments	179,557	67,708	125,772
Other statutory bodies	0	0	0

Previous grants received

Please list the grants received by your organisation from charitable trusts and foundations (other than City Bridge Trust) during the last THREE years. List source, years and annual amounts. Please include the 5 largest only.

Name of Funder	Year 3 £	Year 2 £	Most recent £
Tudor Trust	29,000	29,000	0
Trust for London	9,250	37,000	36,750
Big Lottery ASTF	24,944	12,467	0
London Legal Support Trust	0	5,000	0
	0	0	0

Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, all the information I have provided in this application form is correct. I fully understand that City Bridge Trust has zero tolerance towards fraud and will seek to prosecute and recover funds in every instance.

Please confirm: Yes Full Name: **Martin Christopher South**

Role within **Chief Executive**
Organisation: