



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) is a statewide Legal Incubator and Accelerator Program focused on addressing the lack of legal services available to those unable to obtain free legal aid due to income requirements, but cannot afford market rate legal services. To address this issue, the LIFT Program supports new attorneys, passionate about serving the unmet legal needs of low and moderate income clients, develop viable and sustainable, law practices over an 18-month period. The LIFT participants receive free resources, mentoring, legal technology tools, practice management and substantive law training, networking and referral opportunities. Specifically, the goals of LIFT are to:

- Assist new attorneys develop successful solo and small law firms;
- Encourage public-interest and social justice¹oriented practice
- Provide affordable professional legal services for modest means clients
- Help to bridge the gap for those who would not otherwise qualify for free legal aid

PROGRAM MODEL

The program is divided into three six-month phases designed to assist young attorneys build sustainable solo and small law firms. During each phase, mentoring, CLEs and other law practice management training will be provided. The phases will be broken down as follows:

- **Phase 1: Start Up (0-6 months)**: Participants meet monthly and receive basic training in ethics and professionalism, entity-choice formation, and law practice management with a focus on technology solutions for the virtual office. During this phase, participants will be required to dedicate some of their time to pro bono work¹.
- **Phase 2: Business Development (6-12 months)**: Attorneys will be assisted in developing a market plan for their practice while receiving training in procedural and substantive law.
- **Phase 3: Strategic Planning and Practice Management (12-18 months)**: The second year of the program will begin by helping the attorney develop long-term goals and a five-year business plan. Attorneys will also be assisted with implementing innovative delivery models and strategically structuring their law firms to meet the changing legal needs of the market. The participants will also be asked to provide mentorship to incoming LIFT applicants.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Louisiana licensed attorneys with 0-5 years practice experience who plan to develop or have begun to develop a solo or small law practice focused on serving unmet legal needs are invited to apply. The application process opens in the beginning of the year. Decisions are made in April.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

Participants will receive a number of benefits aimed at helping them build a sustainable law practice, and be required to meet various goals aimed at serving the client population as described below:

Legal Training & Practice Management

Participants will receive specialized training on innovative practice areas, law practice management skills training, and the opportunity to attend free CLEs provided by the LSBA.

Collaboration & Mentoring

The attorneys will be connected with mentors, each with experience in different areas of practice. Through regular group meetings and networking events, fellows are encouraged to collaborate with peers and develop innovative practice solutions.

Justice Practice Groups

Through regular meetings and programs, fellows work closely with partner organizations and LSBA committees to share experience, build partnerships, develop strategies, and support collaborations that improve access to justice for all.

Special Events and Networking

LIFT participants are invited to attend regular monthly meetings led by experts on a variety of topics. In addition to this series of training sessions, participants can attend special events in which they will receive the opportunity to network with leaders in the legal community.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Each participant makes an 18-month commitment to the program, and after the first 12 months, participants will be expected to help guide first-year participants;
- Participants agree to take pro bono cases referred by partner organizations to meet the pro bono requirement of the program;
- Participants agree to dedicate at least 6 hours a month to volunteering at a Domestic Court Help Desk, if located within a 20 mile radius of the participant's practice
- Participants acquire and maintain appropriate malpractice insurance;
- Participants must stay in good standing with the Bar;
- Participants attend regular meetings and complete required reporting.



1 One good working definition of 'social justice' is the commitment to act with and on behalf of those who are suffering because of social neglect, social decisions or social structures and institutions." William P. Quigley, Letter to a Law Student Interested in Social Justice 1 DEPAUL J. SOC. JUST. 7, 13- 14 (2007).

2 Pro bono work includes taking cases from one of our partner organizations and/or volunteering at one of LCJC's Domestic Court Help Desks.

3 Subject to change depending upon project location.



Louisiana State Bar Association

LIFT Statewide Legal Incubator & Accelerator Program

APPLICATION

The Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) Incubator Program supports solo and small practices that improve access to justice by offering legal services to persons of modest means falling into the “justice gap.” While providing clients with low cost and limited scope representation, participating attorneys will receive training in law practice management, technology, substantive law, as well as ethics and professionalism. The attorneys will also receive mentoring, networking, and case referral opportunities. Participants will also be asked to dedicate a certain number of hours of pro bono representation.

Applications are open to Louisiana licensed attorneys, with approximately 0-5 years of legal experience, who plan to develop a law practice in Louisiana that serves modest means clients with unmet legal needs.

Applicant Information

Name: _____

Home Street Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Law School: _____ Date of Graduation: _____

Date of Admission to the Louisiana Bar: _____ Bar No.: _____

Other bar admissions and dates (if any): _____

Years of Practice Experience (if any): _____

Date you are available to begin your practice: _____

List any history of improper conduct or reported incidents to the bar: _____

The following documents must be included:

1. A statement of no more than 1000 words indicating why you want to be a solo or small-firm practitioner, why you should be selected to participate in the LIFT Program, and how you expect to serve underrepresented low and moderate-income persons. Also, include an instance or instances when you have demonstrated entrepreneurial initiative or other experience showing ability to be a successful entrepreneur.
2. A current Resume
3. Business Plan no more than 3 letter-sized pages that includes¹:
 - a. Area(s) of your proposed practice focus (e.g., family law, consumer law, criminal defense, small business organizations, etc.), your preparation for the area(s) of practice, and how you will handle potential competition in the practice area(s).
 - b. Business Summary including mission, objectives and strategy for building a solo or small law practice.
 - c. Operations Summary describing operating procedures, staffing and other resources required to carry out your practice.
 - d. Marketing Initiatives you will employ during the first 12 months including plans for client development and any existing relationships with client community.
 - e. Financial Analysis including sources of capital to pay for practice expenses and estimated budget with first year income and expense projections (1 page max.).

Please initial each statement below indicating your agreement:

_____ I understand that eligibility to enter or continue in the LIFT Program requires that I continue to be a member of the Louisiana Bar in good standing. I agree to notify the Program Director immediately of any change in my status or of any action by the Louisiana State Bar Office of Disciplinary taken against me.

_____ I agree to carry at all times while I am part of the LIFT Program malpractice insurance and to pay for any tail if the policy is a claims-reported policy.

_____ I have read the requirements of the program and, if selected as a participant in the LIFT Program, I agree to abide by and remain compliant with all the rules governing the program.

_____ I understand that if chosen to participate in LIFT, I will receive training from third parties who may make suggestions and recommendations regarding application and software usage in my practice and that these recommendations may or may not be endorsed by the Louisiana State Bar Association. I am to use my own discretion when deciding to incorporate these items into my practice.

_____ All statements in this application and accompanying attachments are true to the best of my knowledge and reflect realistic projections based on information reasonably available to me. I understand that any material misstatements herein may be the subject of termination of my participation in the LIFT Program should I be selected.

Applicant Signature

Date

¹ For more information and a general guide to business plan writing see SBA.gov, "Create Your Business Plan available at <http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/how-write-business-plan>