



Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative

REQUEST FOR LETTER OF INTEREST

MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING CONSULTANT

Location: remote with ability to travel to Houston for team meetings, as needed. Travel expenses will be reimbursed.

Date of posting: February 5, 2024

Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative (HILSC) seeks a long-term partnership with experienced evaluation professionals to collaborate on developing the measurement, evaluation, and learning (MEL) portfolio of HILSC through several projects that HILSC implements. We solicit interest from evaluators, with five to seven years of experience, in solo practice or small firms for this engagement either on a project basis or on a retainer basis.

Overview of HILSC

The Houston metropolitan area has [one of the highest concentrations and fastest-growing populations of immigrants and refugees in the country](#). More than 1.6 million immigrants and 70,000 refugees call Greater Houston home and 63% of them are non-citizens; more than 500,000 Greater Houston residents are [undocumented](#). Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative grew out of a 2013 conversation among Greater Houston immigrant-serving organizations and funders seeking to grow immigration legal services capacity in this region. Launched to expand legal resources to help DREAMers apply for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), HILSC convened working groups to identify gaps in service and incubated new programs such as the Immigrant Rights Hotline, Deportation Defense Houston, Forensic Evaluations, disaster justice, Connect for Healthcare, Holistic Immigrant Services, and Give Citizenship A Boost to meet community needs. HILSC works at the intersection of immigrant rights and racial equity to promote immigrant inclusion, equity, and justice by collaborating with allies through value-based collaboration.

HILSC strives to create a collaborative, respectful, humble, transparent, equitable work environment so that each person can bring their best self to the job. HILSC is committed to a collaborative culture. Our work is challenging, it requires great emotional intelligence and resilience. Having a sense of humor and optimism is highly valued. For more information about HILSC, visit our website <https://www.houstonimmigration.org/>.

Vision for Strategic Learning at HILSC:

HILSC is committed to understanding our effects, influences, impact, learning from our partners' successes and challenges, and sharing insights to promote dialogue and inform action, both internally and externally. We believe that strategic learning is integral to adapting and improving our strategies, so that we may strengthen our collective efforts to advance equity and improve the well-being of the people we serve. We understand strategic learning as *“the use of data and insights from a variety of information-gathering approaches – including evaluation – to inform decision making about strategy. Strategic learning occurs when organizations or groups integrate data and evaluative thinking into their work and then adapt their strategies in response to what they learn. Strategic learning makes intelligence gathering*

and evaluation a part of a strategy's development and implementation – embedding it so that it influences the process.” Coffman, J. and Beer, T., Center for Evaluation Innovation (2014).

Project Overview:

The goal of the strategic learning program at HILSC is to cultivate an enduring culture of evaluation whereby partner organizations within the HILSC network engage in robust data collection and analysis, and to derive learning to inform program decisions. During the past eighteen months, HILSC engaged in strategic learning by incorporating an evaluation framework and benchmarks by which to measure our progress in reaching our strategic goals and to pivot where necessary. HILSC also began inculcating evaluation practice within our network through individual projects such as Give Citizenship A Boost, where HILSC provided grants to citizenship service providers to help low-to-moderate-income applicants for citizenship to defray the application fees. We developed a pre-service client survey to provide data to validate (or refute) our hypothesis of barriers and motivation to applying for citizenship. We also developed a post-service survey to evaluate the impact of financial assistance in motivating individuals to apply for citizenship as well as collect information on services that help individuals through the process to inform program design to maximize its effectiveness. The Give Citizenship A Boost is one of several projects that HILSC is seeking the service of experienced evaluator to help design, develop, and apply tools to collect, analyze, evaluate the efficacy of the projects in achieving their stated goals and communicate evidence of the impact of the projects.

Scope of Activities & Budget

1. Give Citizenship A Boost – HILSC completed the pilot MEL phase of this project. The evaluator will continue to monitor data, analyze data, summarize, and present findings to the broader citizenship cohort comprising the providers funded by HILSC, the community navigators funded by National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), the service providers funded by Harris County, the funders, and potentially Harris County Commissioners.
 - a. The projected time required: average 15 hours/month for 12 months
 - b. Projected budget: \$29,000
2. Immigrant Resource Hotline – HILSC launched the Immigrant Resource Hotline (Hotline) in early 2017 to provide a centralized entry point for immigrants in Greater Houston seeking updated information on immigration policies, resources to safeguard family unity, as well as legal and social services referrals. The Hotline has gone through different iterations with various data collection platforms and is now entering a new phase with a uniform screening tool. The evaluator will assist HILSC with developing an evaluation framework and data collection instruments, conduct data analysis and summarize and present findings to HILSC partners, funders and potentially the Harris County Commissioners.
 - a. The projected time required: average 5-7 hours/week for 12 months
 - b. Projected budget: \$55,000
3. Forensic evaluations – HILSC launched the forensic evaluations program in 2019 to address the critical need to buttress the credibility of immigrants who experienced trauma in their application for immigration relief. In light of the lack of affordable and quality mental health clinicians trained to engage in the needed mental health evaluations and to provide necessary report to supplement the immigrant's legal case, HILSC created the forensic evaluation program to train and mentor mental health clinicians interested in this work, develop a network of vetted clinicians, pair clinicians with non-profit immigration attorneys to provide the mental health

evaluation for the clients, and provide a low bono stipend to compensate the clinicians for their service and make the service available to legal services that lack the budget for this expert service. The evaluator will work with HILSC staff to implement the evaluation, refine the instrument and evaluation mechanisms, analyze data, and summarize and prepare presentation to the HILSC network, the clinician network, and funders.

- a. The projected time required: average 5-7 hours/week for 12 months
 - b. Projected budget: \$55,000
4. Retainer – HILSC completed a strategic plan to lay out the strategic goals and direction of its work for the next three to five years. The evaluator will work with HILSC on a retainer basis to design and revise the MEL framework to measure the progress in achieving the strategic goals and prepare presentation to the HILSC Board of Directors and the HILSC network.
- a. The projected time required: average 2-3 hours/week for 12 months on an on-call basis
 - b. Projected budget: up to \$25,000 on an hourly drawn-down basis

Duration

The projected duration of the evaluation partnership is 12 months.

Qualifications

- Minimum five to seven years of experience conducting measurement, evaluation, and learning for grant-funded projects required
- Experience evaluating community-based programs, networks, collaboratives, multiple-organization partnerships required.
- Familiarity with immigrant experience highly valuable.
- Strong oral and written communications skills required.
- Experience facilitating learning sessions with staff, HILSC partner organizations, and community members on evaluation findings required.
- Creative thinker with ability to advise HILSC staff and HILSC partner organizations to apply evaluation findings to improve programmatic design highly desirable.

How to Apply

This is an extraordinary opportunity for an individual to have a meaningful impact through their professional contributions. Interested candidates should email a cover letter (no more than three pages) explaining how your skills and background fit this position and a resume to HILSC's Executive Director at zenobia@houstonimmigration.org with subject line: MEL consultant, detailing your experience and qualifications, education on measurement, evaluation, and learning, interest in long-term partnerships, and your capacity to carry out the proposed scope of work. We also want to know why this project is of interest to you. Letters of Interest are accepted through February 23, 2024.

HILSC is an equal opportunity employer; people of color and individuals from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply. HILSC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, veteran status, immigration status, and other legally protected characteristics.