

Grants Officer Candidate Brief

About us

The Legal Education Foundation is an independent grantmaking foundation distributing around £6million a year through our own grants and programmes, alongside participating in funding partnerships.

Our vision is of a just and fair society. Our mission is to support people and organisations to use the law to improve their lives and the lives of others. Our focus is on ‘the law of everyday life’ – including people’s rights in housing, employment, community care, immigration and welfare benefits.

In addition to making grants and commissioning work, we use our expertise to influence others – for example, on the government’s use of personal data; the impact of unresolved legal problems on mental and physical health; and strengthening the evidence about effective access to justice.

The principal source of funds for the Foundation are the returns on an endowment which currently stands at around £270million. In addition, the Foundation receives and distributes restricted grants from other organisations and has a charitable subsidiary whose principal source of funds is restricted grants from other charitable foundations and organisations.

The context for our work

The UK justice system is undergoing a period of challenge and rapid change which has far-reaching consequences for people’s ability to understand and use the law. There has been chronic under-resourcing of legal organisations at the same time as legal needs have risen. Sustainable employment, career development and access to the profession have all come under pressure.

Meanwhile, legal and constitutional changes brought about by the UK’s exit from the EU are producing fundamental changes to UK institutions and the exercise of public power which risk undermining scrutiny and accountability. This matters particularly for the significant numbers of people who cannot obtain justice in relation to their fundamental rights. We know that these unmet

needs exacerbate clusters of problems that have significant impacts on individuals, communities and wider society.

Organisations tackling these challenges have experienced significant constraints that have affected their ability to deliver services at the scale needed, to invest in their infrastructure, to develop related fields of policy, research and communications and to attract and retain skilled staff. This has intensified because of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis. The Foundation's resources put us in a position to support organisations to address these challenges.

We support work in all four nations of the UK, recognising the need to reflect local needs and differences, including the different legal jurisdictions and devolved powers. The focus of our work is in the UK, but we also look to learn from and to inform international practice and experience.

Strategic objectives

Our work to 2025 is divided into three programmes:

1. **Stronger Sector:** flexible funding for organisations using the law to promote social justice. It aims to strengthen the capacity of individuals and organisations to deliver their important work effectively and sustainably.
2. **Fairer Systems:** supporting work to influence how laws are made and implemented. This programme aims to promote transparency, accountability and the protection of fundamental rights.
3. **Smarter Justice:** strengthening the commitment to collecting and using robust evidence in the design and operation of the UK justice system.

The Foundation operates a combination of open and proactive grant programmes. We have also developed and now run ourselves a set of initiatives tackling particular strategic challenges in the sector:

Justice First Fellowship – a scheme to support the next generation of social justice lawyers. We have funded over 140 Fellowships so far. Over 90% of graduating Fellows have secured jobs as lawyers working for the public benefit, and our work with them continues as we help them forge their careers as social justice lawyers.

Justice Lab – an initiative to bring about a cultural shift in the way in which research and evidence regarding the operation of the justice system is produced and used by policymakers, legal professionals and organisations working the field.

Justice Collaborations – our subsidiary charity formed to host the **Justice Together Initiative**, a 10-year collaboration involving over 20 funders focused on transforming access to justice in the UK immigration system. Grants have been awarded across the four nations, supporting frontline immigration advice partnerships and national and local influencing work.

As well as awarding grants, we support the organisations we fund in a variety of other ways including providing access to training, consultancy and networking to promote exchange, learning and collaboration.

More information about the Foundation and its current strategy is available [here](#).

How we work

- We see the Foundation as part of a mutual endeavour, establishing engaged and supportive relationships with those who share our vision, and bringing people together to build alliances and to share expertise.
- We seek to listen and learn, recognising the commitment and expertise that exists in the organisations we work with. We underpin our work with good information and analysis, continually building our knowledge and seeking to reflect this in our work.
- We aim to be a trusted voice, using our knowledge, networks and independence to influence those who can effect change.
- We have a responsibility to use the Foundation's resources to be bold, to support work that others cannot, or do not, and to take a long-term view.
- We seek to support and promote diversity and reflect lived experience in our work.
- We aim to be clear about the way we operate and the choices that we make.
- We marshal and deploy our resources thoughtfully and, as an organisation, seek to maintain the highest standards of operational and administrative efficiency.

Context for the appointment

The Grants Officer is an important role, part of a small collaborative grants team delivering the Foundation's 5-year strategy to 2025 and looking towards the development of our new strategy. Our priorities are to widen our reach to organisations using the law in creative ways, especially those that are lived experience-led, and to develop stronger relationships with our grantees to better support them and to learn more from what we fund. There are opportunities to help shape the job by leading on areas of particular interest within the grants portfolio.

The Grants Officer role is one of three at the Foundation, and will join us at an exciting time as we strengthen the team and develop our processes to ensure we can meet the Foundation's commitments to be an open, inclusive and transparent funder.

The Grants Officer will report to the Head of Grants, and will work closely with colleagues across the Foundation including in administration and policy.

People with lived experience of social welfare legal issues are underrepresented in our organisation, so we are actively recruiting and prioritising candidates who bring this understanding alongside other skills and expertise. (We do not expect people to describe their personal experience at any stage during this recruitment process or during their work at the Foundation.)

The Legal Education Foundation is a Disability Confident employer.

Job Description

This document is available in large text. If you require this or an alternative format, please contact Belinda Berry belinda.berry@thelef.org

Title:	Grants Officer
Salary:	£30-35,000
Contract:	Full-time, permanent (flexibility considered)

Hours: 35 per week
Holiday: 30 days per year plus Bank Holidays

Location: Central London and remote
The post-holder would need to be based in the London office for 2 days per week but could choose to work from home for part of the week.

Reports to: Head of Grants

Main responsibilities

- Provide advice to organisations about potential grant applications to support a pipeline of quality applications.
- Assess applications for grants including reading written material, reviewing accounts and budgets, and making phonecalls and/or visits.
- Make recommendations to the Grants Committee on the strength of applications including organisations' capacity to deliver, the balance across the grants portfolio, and alignment with the Foundation's strategy.
- Manage a caseload of grants including building relationships of trust with grant partners, reading progress reports, responding in a timely and sensitive manner to grants management issues, and making regular proactive contact as part of agreed reporting mechanisms.
- Take part in regular reflection meetings with grants team colleagues to share learning from grants assessment and management to improve the Foundation's practice.
- Identify where grant partners – or groups of grant partners – need additional help and work with colleagues to develop appropriate support.
- Work with the Operations team to support the smooth-running of the grants application and monitoring processes.
- Attend meetings of the Grants Committee for the Foundation.
- Use Salesforce to record key interactions with applicants and grant partners.
- Keep up to date with changes and developments in the external environment and work with colleagues to reflect this in strategy and practice.
- Carry out such tasks as the Chief Executive, Director of Grants or Head of Grants may from time to time deem necessary for the effective and efficient functioning of the Foundation.

Person Specification

We are interested in examples of your skills and experience from voluntary as well as paid work.

Essential

- Commitment to the aims and values of The Legal Education Foundation.
- Experience of managing grants (either as grant holder or a grant maker).

- Experience of building and managing relationships with external stakeholders.
- Strong written and oral communication skills, including the ability to interact sensitively with people of all backgrounds.
- Accuracy and attention to detail.
- Ability to multi-task, plan ahead and to meet deadlines.
- Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team.
- Familiarity with Microsoft Office and experience of using a database.

Desirable

- Lived experience that is directly or indirectly relevant to the mission and work of the Foundation.
- Experience of assessing grant applications, either as a staff or committee member.
- Experience of working or volunteering in the voluntary sector outside grant-making.
- Understanding of the legal advice sector in the UK.

How to apply

Accessibility

The Foundation is committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you have any access requirements or would like us to do anything differently during the application, interview or assessment process, including providing information in an alternative format, please contact Belinda Berry at belinda.berry@thelef.org. We guarantee any applicant who declares they have a disability will be offered an interview if they meet the minimum requirements of the job specification.

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact our recruitment partner:

Simon Lloyd, Director, NFP Consulting

T: 07961 988 523

E: simon.lloyd@nfpconsulting.co.uk

Apply online at www.nfpconsulting.co.uk/telegrantsofficer

Your application should comprise a CV along with a supporting statement of around two sides of A4 indicating how you meet the person specifications of the role and your motivations for applying.

Closing date: 23rd June

First Interviews: Friday 30th June

Second Interviews: Friday 7th July

Following pre-qualification by NFP Consulting, there is a two-stage process for shortlisted candidates comprising an initial remote interview followed by a panel interview held on site at our central London office.