

Tender for Learning Partner

Establishing sustainable fee charging Immigration work for Refugee and Migrant charities.

About the project

AIM: To support 3 organisations to set up a sustainable advice service each year (for an initial 3 years) that supports people who cannot access legal aid and are unable to afford high street solicitors but who have some ability to pay for advice.

Even after securing immigration status in the UK Refugees and Migrants can face lengthy and expensive processes to full citizenship. They are either out of scope of legal aid or in reality can't access it. They therefore face paying for legal advice, one issue is quality of advice and the other is cost. This project looks to establish an approach in the sector of charities providing good quality low cost advice for those who have status and are looking to extend their leave. If a charity operates below the VAT level (currently £90,000 of income) then they do not need to charge VAT, making them around 20% cheaper than most high street solicitors. Combined with a not for profit ethos we aim to ensure advice is at least a third cheaper overall. There is also a benefit to small and medium sized charities, who often face funding gaps, which is better sustainability. In a situation where a staff post becomes partially unfunded, a temporary increase in fee charging work can help cover that gap instead of reducing that staff members days or eating into charity reserves. Charging clients for advice is a difficult path for charities, who pride themselves on free advice, this project will help charities create a clear strategy as to why they want to undertake this work and why they can justify charging some clients and not others. At RAMFEL we only undertake charging for clients with status and ability to pay and this gives us more capacity to utilise grant funding to work with those who are without status and are destitute. Through our paying work we are able to pick up that people renewing leave on 3c were being discriminated against and were able to undertake charitable work to support them and to launch a legal challenge to overturn the issues that were causing people to lose their tenancies, jobs and access to benefits.

Evaluation & learning overview

Expertise is sought to enable the partnership to learn from and evaluate the service. We want to know what has worked well for the charities taking part and for the clients receiving the service.

We wish to recruit a learning partner to enable the assessment of progress towards outcomes; determine what is and isn't working, for whom, in what circumstances and why; and to facilitate continuous improvements for all parts of the project. The evaluation partner will also help test and refine our theory of change and play a key role in sharing our ongoing learning with our wider partners and the sector.

The project will run initially for at least 3 years, we have funding of £15,000 and want to secure an initial baseline in January 2025 and then undertake a yearly reflection at the end of each year.

Scope and specification

Main aim is to assess how we have met the aim of the project.

- Are project activities likely to deliver long term sustainable advice services that are at least a third cheaper than commercially available advice.
- What is the effect on people accessing the service? Did they feel services were affordable, what effect did it have on their finances? How did it compare to private services they or people they know have used in the past.
- What was the effect on the charity did it support them in delivering its mission overall? Will the service be sustainable?

1) What has been achieved?

What progress has been made towards the agreed outcomes?

How significant has the impact been on direct beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries?

2) What led to success and where has impact been limited?

How significant was RAMFELs impact on supporting partners to establish their own service?

How significant was the funding to learning partners?

3) How effective was the guidance provided and the overall model?

What improvements could be made or what elements were lacking from the programme of support?

4) How long lasting will the impact be?

How confident are the charities who took of running the service for the foreseeable future?

Evaluation Partner

We are looking for a learning partner that embodies our principles and can bring in expertise critical for executing a complex intervention; specifically, a project that focuses on quality of legal advice, impact on beneficiaries & impact on charities . Our partner must have a track record of working in a proactive way.

In assessing applications we will consider:

- Professional research, monitoring and evaluation experience
- Experience of working with organisations that deliver advice, immigration advice and not for profit (paid for) advice in particular

- Experience of writing reports for a voluntary sector audience, and other creative ways to share insights
- Experience of gathering and collating feedback
- Experience of collaborating with partners and stakeholders in the production of learning pieces
- Understanding of the implications of learning in a complex and changing environment
- Understanding and interpretation of the brief and its objectives

We would particularly welcome applicants who have direct experience of the UK immigration system, or/and applicants from a minoritized background.

Budget

Up to £15,000 including vat over 3 years

Our project is funded by trusts and foundations and one particular funder has agreed to support the costs of learning and evaluation and their grant is ring-fenced for this purpose. Expressions of interest are sought for this long-term piece of work the life of the project (3 years). Please provide a cost estimate in the expression of interest of your budget. A more detailed budget will be requested from those who are invited to submit a full proposal. The budget should include participation support costs for those invited to contribute to the learning and evaluation activities.

Evaluation deliverables and suggested timelines

We are happy to discuss and to receive further advice on the plan below including timeline, outputs and process based on the experience of the any bidders and what they feel is deliverable within the budget and timeframe.

Rough timeline of reporting (to be adjusted in partnership with the appointed evaluation team)

Deliverable expected

['Report' is meant as a catch-all below and would appreciate evaluation teams who can think creatively about ways to share their findings to maximize accessibility and internalisation of learnings.]

January 2025

- Detailed plan (including adjusted timelines) of all process evaluation activities and agree set of evaluation questions

February 2025

- Initial baseline report outlining key areas to focus on for improvement and learning

June 2025

- Update report on all process evaluation activities including information on any adjustments made to existing plans
- December 2025
- Mid-project comprehensive developmental evaluation report underlining key areas of success and key areas of weakness to support improvement and learning
- December 2026
- End of Year report
- December 2027
- Final report of summative evaluation incorporating details from all evaluation activities

Timeline for proposals and decision making

Please submit an expression of interest in the form of a CV and no more than one page on how you would deliver the work. Please send this to james.tullett@ramfel.org.uk by 6th December.

A decision will be made by 18th December, and the project will start in January 2025.