COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

To assist you in determining if your project is appropriate for Northeastern University School of Law’s Legal Skills in Social Context Social Justice program (LSSC program), we have outlined some of the components that have made prior projects successful. These elements are not determinative, and no project will be excluded because it does not contain one or more of these elements. The list is intended to serve only as a guide and is based upon a history of successful experiences.

1. **Clearly Defined Goals.** What are you trying to achieve? We have found that projects that result in the most useful outcome for both the community organization/state agency and the students are clearly defined at the outset and do not change over the life of the project. Successful projects seek to analyze the effect of a change in law or policy or involve comparative consideration of differing models and provide an opportunity for the organization to receive an in-depth, comprehensive analysis of the issues involved in such changes. Projects lacking clearly defined goals cannot be accepted into the LSSC program.

2. **Compatible Time Line.** Due to logistical issues, such as the limited time frame for completion and the fact that students will be doing the majority of the work, projects with deadlines set at times incompatible with the program calendar cannot readily be undertaken. *(See the back panel of our brochure for the project time line.)*

3. **Reports, Conferences and Training Manuals.** Projects that forecast a need and have, as their end goal, a final report analyzing the legal findings, the preparation of legal materials for a website or a conference on a substantive legal issue, the production of a training manual for practitioners or for the public are ideal for the LSSC program. The LSSC program can benefit organizations presenting such proposals by providing the resources to undertake work that would not otherwise be possible given an organization’s limited resources. Additionally, the students who undertake the project gain their first representational experience by honing their legal problem-solving skills on behalf of a client organization. They also benefit from seeing their work put to productive use.

4. **Library Research.** Preferred research areas include: federal laws (e.g., Constitution, statutes, cases, administrative regulatory laws and most types of legislative history); state laws (e.g., state constitution, statutes, cases, administrative laws, legislative history, historical needs); other states’ constitutions, statutes or case law; multi-disciplinary literature reviews (e.g., basic humanities, social science, medical subjects); general statistical sources (e.g., US Census data). Multi-state surveys can often be quite successful. Those requiring greater depth must include a strategically selected and limited number of states (e.g., comparative research in three key jurisdictions). The LSSC program reserves the right to scale back research if it is not feasible in the time span allotted.

5. **Investigative Field Research.** Seeking the information, experience and opinions of specific experts and stakeholders on changes in law or policy, and/or contacting such individuals on the state or federal level to identify model programs and/or “field test” specific working hypotheses or recommendations is often a critical component of a lawyer’s role when exploring legal changes for social justice. Thus, proposed LSSC projects that include at least some investigative field research are preferred. However, students cannot be asked to perform extensive surveying of particular respondents, and are not in a position to use statistical methodology to produce empirical evidence, although they may be charged with identifying and summarizing existing studies or research results.

**NOTE:** More than 300 examples of successful project reports are on file with the director of the LSSC program and available for review upon request. Descriptions of successful projects and sample project abstracts in recent years are also available on our website at northeastern.edu/law/lssc. See insert for a list of organizations we have served in recent years

*(See other side for Expectations)*
Thank you for your interest in the LSSC program. We understand that the time of your staff members is a scarce resource, so we want to clarify what you can expect if you participate in the LSSC program at NUSL. If your proposed project for the Legal Skills in Social Context program is accepted, your organization will become a client and your contact person will work with a law office, comprised of a Lawyering Fellow (an upper-level law student) and a team of about 12 first-year law students, with backup from a project advisor and an LSSC professor. Together, working at our law school with excursions for field work as necessary, the team will produce high-quality work for your organization. Your organization should contemplate approximately 20 hours of collaborative transactional time with your student law office via several in-person or telephone meetings and e-mail conversations. In exchange, your organization will receive more than 2,000 hours of closely supervised student work during the course of the academic year. From September through mid-March, your organization should expect to:

- Provide appropriate background materials about your organization’s mission and programs, its history with the issue proposed for the project, and any relevant legal materials and research that you have assembled about this and other related projects.

- Scope the project in collaboration with the law office. **Beginning in the first week of September,** you will work with a Lawyering Fellow and an LSSC professor to agree on scale and scope that are appropriate for the time frame and the level of effort that can be brought to the project. Together, you will detail the objectives and develop a work plan that identifies major benchmarks and key progress dates. Project scoping may require your participation in identifying and notifying field contacts for interview purposes.

- Participate in three critical meetings, two of which are held at Northeastern University School of Law. The onsite meetings are typically held in early October, when you meet the team of faculty and students to discuss the early phase of the project, and at the end of March/early April, when the team delivers an oral presentation of the project’s findings and recommendations. The third meeting takes place in January; it can be arranged in person or through other appropriate technology. Additional meetings are possible at your election.

- Respond to questions from the team. The team will establish an agreement with you about the content and frequency of regular progress reports along with expectations about your feedback.

- Review and comment on drafts of outlines for your work product(s) and, in some instances, a draft of part, or all, of your work product(s). You will develop a mutual understanding with the team about the scope and timing of your reviews. You can anticipate that we will especially welcome your feedback on any aspect of your final product that you review in draft.

- Respond to several multiple choice and short answers evaluations about your experience with the Lawyering Fellows and the program.

While your primary role throughout the project is that of a “client” or “partner,” this program is an important part of the learning experience for law students at Northeastern University. Therefore, we hope that you will also offer your guidance as a “mentor practitioner” or “mentor expert” during the course of the academic year.

Additionally, while working on your project, the law office team will take a full first-year curriculum that includes: LSSC, Property, Civil Procedure, and Torts in the first semester, and LSSC, Contracts, Criminal Procedure, and Constitutional Law in the second semester. Your project will be our students’ first experience of real lawyering to serve social justice. You and your organization’s project are our partners in formulating future practitioners. Thank you!