



# Grant Report Template

## Narrative and Financial Template

You may use this report template to structure your narrative and financial report. Please also feel free to attach your own materials. To submit all reports, please visit [www.tidesgrantreports.org](http://www.tidesgrantreports.org), and follow the instructions on the website.

**Grant ID:** TF2210-110914

## Narrative Report

Please provide a detailed narrative description of the activities undertaken as a result of this grant. In your report, we're particularly interested in understanding the following as it relates to the grant you've received:

- Impact and assessment
- Challenges
- Evaluation and lessons learned
- Funding and finances

### Impact and Assessment

MLFA and CAIR Chicago continue to be grateful to the TIDES Foundation for providing MLFA and CAIR-CHI with an opportunity that will transform the American Muslim Legal sector. The impact of this grant is felt the moment we start having conversations with other organizations and community members. With AMLE, we can multiply the number of people we can serve with access and knowledge that otherwise is not easily attainable. In 2024 alone MLFA responded to over 695 intakes, a 245% increase in intakes over the past 2 years, served over 277 clients, and expanded its impact with an increase in the number of legal cases with over 315 active cases/matters. CAIR-CHI took over 583 legal cases. Intakes sitting in the pipeline is the worst-case scenario as it hurts the organization's reputation, as you leave people in need hanging and it hurts the clients because they feel like a number and that the organization is not there to serve them. With AMLE, we believe that not only will we serve more people but equally importantly we will use our funds efficiently and ensure that people have access to the much-needed legal support they seek and that MLFA and CAIR-Chicago lawyers can focus on the cases that are within our mission. The database will also empower the community, which is a critical outcome of our grant. This project will singlehandedly shorten the entire process of referrals and make a steadfast approach when looking for any attorneys with specific expertise, focused on the Muslim community and it will ensure that the resources we have are used to serve our mission.

### Challenges

The challenges of capacity certainty remain as the number one challenge we face as mid-size growing organizations. This project is designed to help us with capacity however, we need to ensure we have a capable hire, who can follow through on the assignment to help us succeed. This project is ultimately managed by the CEO of MLFA and despite our best efforts to hire staff, train staff, and execute both MLFA and CAIR-CHI, their changing teams made it hard for us to complete the project this year in its entirety. We hired our AMLE project manager in October of 2023. Two MLFA staff members and one CAIR-Chicago member were assigned to help manage and lead the project. Despite our best efforts to support and guide the AMLE staff member through regular check-ins, constructive feedback, and a Performance Improvement Plan, his work consistently fell short of the expectations set by both organizations. Recognizing the need for a solution, the CEOs of MLFA and CAIR-Chicago collaborated closely, reviewing his progress and providing clear direction for improvement. Unfortunately, the necessary standards were not met, leading to the decision to end his employment on July 29th, 2024.

This experience prompted a comprehensive assessment of our processes, resulting in valuable insights and a strengthened collaboration between MLFA and CAIR-Chicago. Together, we have implemented a new plan to ensure future success and maintain the trust that underpins our partnership.

### Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Despite our challenges since October 7th and with the major influx of calls we have received and cases we have taken; we are just as committed if not more to the value of our project. In December of 2024, MLFA convened a meeting with over 54 American Legal/Human Rights organizations to discuss the negative impact we anticipate as a collective under the new presidency. Our convening hosted CCR, NAACP, ACLU, Charities and Securities Network; CAIR National; CAIR Chicago, Muslim Advocates, and many many more. This was a meeting first of its kind. This meeting stemmed from our desire to soft launch AMLE and discuss the need and power of collaboration and clarity. We spoke to one another and we determined a collective path forward. We recognize that there is no single space to understand what we all do and so having AMLE in the market in 2025 will be groundbreaking.

The old clunky methods of intake, information gathering, and creating reports and charting are also being significantly impacted by the integration of AI (Digital Transformation) technologies.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has documented an “appalling” rise in reported anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias incidents in the month since violence escalated between Israel and Hamas in 2023.

The new data, CAIR said, reflects a 216% increase in requests for help and reported bias incidents compared to the previous year. MLFA saw a 245% increase in requests for help.

We have been working hard and that is not going to stop now. We know that our resource and referral database and stakeholder map is going to be a game-changer. We are learning how hard it is to find organizations to list as Muslim-friendly, but we need to find professionals who will understand the dynamics and support our lives. We will build a most just and equitable America – and hold her to her promise.

We are going to hire after more vetting and have 4 people in the pipeline to become our Program manager in 2025; this person will help us close the loop and launch the program. We are now looking at Master's students in the Berkeley Law School and other stronger candidates for the job. We are now going to hire slow and fire fast which was a huge lesson for us in 2024. MLFA's board is also up to speed on what happened with the AMLE project this year and is sending MLFA and CAIR-CHI vetted candidates to review.

**Funding and finances**

See below.

**Financial Report**

Please add additional line items as necessary to provide detail into the budget. Please be sure your report is in U.S. dollars

EXPENDITURES (E.G. SALARIES, RENT, SUPPLIES)	EXPENDED	BALANCE TO BE SPENT
Salary: Project Manager & Research Associate	\$52,398.02	\$14,101.98
Marketing & Design	\$5,000	\$19,000
Website and Portal Development	\$5,000	\$24,000
Monitoring and Evaluation	0	\$10,000
Learning Activities/Events	\$4,200	\$10,800
Administration	\$15,000	0
Software/Platforms	\$2,000	\$4,000
Advertising (online)	0	\$4,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$83,598.02</b>	<b>\$85,901.98</b>