



Security Research Legal Defense Fund

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Security Research Legal Defense Fund Begins Operations, Announces First Grant

Representatives for the Security Research Legal Defense Fund announced major steps forward for the organization at a cybersecurity conference.

(Friday, January 12, 2024) — The [Security Research Legal Defense Fund](#) (SRLDF), a nonprofit organization that assists ethical hackers with legal representation, announced today that it had issued its first grant, to the Poland-based ethical hacking group Dragon Sector to help it obtain counsel to deal with legal threats the group encountered after researching the security of train software.

"The Security Research Legal Defense Fund is operational. We're thrilled to have begun helping ethical hackers obtain legal assistance for work that benefits the public," said Harley Geiger, Coordinator, Security Research Legal Defense Fund, speaking at the Washington, DC, security conference ShmooCon.

The **Security Research Legal Defense Fund** is a nonprofit organization with a mission to promote social welfare by providing financial assistance for legal representation of good faith security researchers.

"The SRLDF is here to help provide good-faith security researchers with the confidence to share their critical discoveries in the face of unfounded legal threats," said Kurt Opsahl, President of the SRLDF Board. "The discovery and remediation of vulnerabilities is a vital part of making our world more secure."

Michał "Redford" Kowalczyk of Dragon Sector said: "If it wasn't for the SRLDF, we would have to think twice before going public with our findings for fear of simply not being able to afford legal support. It's clear that this initiative will empower more high-stakes research into critical systems. We are very grateful for the support we received."

The Security Research Legal Defense Fund also announced that it had received official recognition as a 501c3 nonprofit charity from the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS' recognition of the Defense Fund as a public charity underscores the U.S. government's acknowledgment of the critical role that defending and promoting good faith security research plays in benefiting the

general public. Importantly, this designation makes all donations to the Security Research Legal Defense Fund tax-deductible, amplifying the impact of community contributions.

The first grant, coupled with the charitable status, signifies a pivotal step forward in the Security Research Legal Defense Fund's mission to champion and protect good faith security research.

The Security Research Legal Defense Fund was founded in 2023 by Harley Geiger. Its inaugural Board of Directors are Kurt Opsahl, Amie Stepanovich, and James Dempsey - each a recognized expert in technology law and policy. The Board considers applications for assistance where persons face legal threats due to good faith security research.

For more information about the Security Research Legal Defense Fund and its work, please visit: <https://www.SecurityResearchLegalDefenseFund.org/>

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