



Frequently Asked Questions

What is S.E.L.F.'s mission?

Special Education Legal Fund's mission is to level the playing field in special education for all families, by providing funding to families in need so they can access legal assistance in navigating the special education system.

Who is S.E.L.F.?

Special Education Legal Fund was founded by parents who have navigated the special education system for their children. In so doing, they discovered cracks in the special education system, particularly for families and children without the means to afford lawyers, advocates, and advisors in the special education process.

Is my family eligible for a S.E.L.F. grant?

Your family may be eligible for a S.E.L.F. grant if your family's gross income meets S.E.L.F.'s guidelines, you live in Connecticut (excluding Greenwich) or Westchester County, New York, and you have a child in district special education with a current IEP (Individualized Education Plan). The applicant must complete an in-person or phone interview with a representative from S.E.L.F. The qualifying family must agree to contribute a modest (income based) portion of the legal fees in their case. Finally, the grant recipient family agrees to update S.E.L.F. on their child's progress for a three year period after the receipt of the grant from S.E.L.F.

What documentation do I need to provide to apply for a S.E.L.F. grant?

You must complete and sign the grant application and provide documentation of income (summary tax return or verification of government assistance), your child's IEP (Individualized Education Plan), your child's most recent evaluation (if applicable), and an invoice/estimate of proposed legal fees from a qualified special education attorney (if available).

What expenses are covered in a S.E.L.F. grant?

A S.E.L.F. grant covers up to \$5000 of fees related to a qualifying family's special education legal issues, provided by an attorney that meets Special Education Legal Fund's professional requirements. All S.E.L.F. grants are payable directly to the attorney. For more information on professional requirements, please visit our website.

What is the grants process for S.E.L.F.?

Special Education Legal Fund's grant review process is conducted on a rolling basis. S.E.L.F. conducts interviews of qualifying families after receiving completed applications including supporting documentation. The Grants Review Committee and the Board of Directors will review applications based upon available funding.

Will S.E.L.F. recommend a special education attorney for my family?

Special Education Legal Fund does not make recommendations for families in need of a special education attorney. All families are responsible for obtaining their own legal counsel.