



**SPECIAL
EDUCATION
LEGAL
FUND**

Frequently Asked Questions ADVOCACY SUPPORT PROGRAM – PILOT April 2021-June 2021

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 resources and knowledge to families in need so that they may achieve full advocacy for their children in the special education system. Special Education Legal Fund was founded in 2018 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 providers in the special education process.

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

Your family may be eligible for an ADVOCACY SUPPORT PROGRAM grant if you live in Fairfield County, Connecticut and you have a child with a current IEP (Individualized Education Plan) or 504 Plan. S.E.L.F. is currently accepting applications for the Advocacy Support Program from families with adjusted gross income at or below 300% of the federal minimum poverty level (FMPL). Families are eligible to receive one (1) grant from the Advocacy Support Program; once a family has received an ASP grant, they are not eligible to apply again for funding. Previous S.E.L.F. grant recipients under the Legal Assistance Program (LAP) or the COVID-19 Fund are not eligible for consideration under the Advocacy Support Program. Current clients of the advocates on the SELF ASP List (see below) are not eligible to apply for this program.

How do I apply for a S.E.L.F. ADVOCACY SUPPORT PROGRAM grant?

First, you must be prescreened to ensure your family meets the guidelines for the program. For a prescreening, please email S.E.L.F. at christine@spedlegalfund.org. Should you meet the qualifications for the program, you will receive a grant application form, which must be returned to S.E.L.F. with appropriate documentation. This includes documentation of the income reported in the prescreening and on the application (first page of your most recent tax return or a verification of government assistance), and your child's IEP (Individualized Education Plan) or 504 Plan. After the completed application has been received by S.E.L.F., a representative will contact you to schedule a short phone interview (15-30 minutes).

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

A S.E.L.F. Advocacy Support Program grant covers up to \$1000 of fees related to a qualifying family's special education advocacy, provided by an special education advocate Special Education Legal Fund's ASP (Advocate Support Program) List. All S.E.L.F. grants are payable directly to the professional. S.E.L.F. does not, through the Legal Assistance Program, Advocacy Support Program, or any other program, cover ancillary expenses related to the special education process like private evaluations.



SPECIAL EDUCATION LEGAL FUND

Frequently Asked Questions, Part II

What is the Special Education Legal Fund ASP List?

The Special Education Legal Fund ASP List (“The List”) is a list of special education advocates in Connecticut who are approved by S.E.L.F. to receive grant funding on behalf of approved ASP recipients. The List was constructed through a nomination process conducted by Special Education Legal Fund. Special Education Advocates on the List received at least one nomination from a Connecticut special education attorney to qualify for inclusion on the list. Advocates who are not on the List are not eligible to receive grant funding from S.E.L.F. through the ASP Program.

Who are the Advocates on the S.E.L.F. Advocate Support Program List?

The List is comprised of the following advocates:

Virginia Blum	www.cteducationadvocacy.com	virginia@cteducationadvocacy.com
Jill Chuckas	www.cteducationadvocacy.com	jill@cteducationadvocacy.com
Janine Kelly	www.collaborativeadvocacy.com	jaysav91@gmail.com
Laurie Marcus	www.advocacyforkids.net	laurie@advocacyforkids.net
Anne Munkenbeck		annemunkenbeck@optonline.net
Allie Nicolari-Grafn	www.collaborativeadvocacy.com	anicolari@collaborativeadvocacy.com
Judy Reilly	www.judyreilly.webs.com	judyreillyllc@gmail.com
Julie Swanson	www.jsadvocacy.com	julieswan@comcast.net
Stacey Tíe	www.specialed.law	stacey@specialed.law
Marla Wayne	www.jwadvocates.com	mwayne@jwadvocates.com
Jennifer Weitz	www.jwadvocates.com	jweitz@jwadvocates.com
Diane Willcutts	http://www.educationadvocacyllc.com	diane.willcutts@gmail.com

What is the application review process for the S.E.L.F. ADVOCATE SUPPORT PROGRAM?

Special Education Legal Fund’s ADVOCATE SUPPORT PROGRAM grant review process is conducted on a rolling monthly basis from October through June of each year. Applications, including phone interview if requested, are due on the last day of each month. Decisions are rendered based upon available funding and applicants are notified within 7 days of the end of the month in which they have submitted their application..

My application for a S.E.L.F. Advocacy Support Program grant was denied. Can I reapply?

Unfortunately, each month Special Education Legal Fund receives many more applications than grants that we can support. If your initial application for funding is not approved, you are welcome to reapply in the following month’s grant cycle by notifying S.E.L.F. in writing (email) of your intent.