

## 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 (LSSC) program, below are some of the components that have made prior projects successful. These components 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 outcomes for both the organization and the students are clearly defined at the outset and do not change over the life of the project. Successful projects may 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.
- 2. Compatible Time Line.** Due to logistical issues, such as the limited time frame for completion and the fact that first-year students will be doing the majority of the work, projects with deadlines set at times incompatible with the program calendar cannot readily be undertaken.
- 3. Reports, Conferences and Training Manuals.** Projects that forecast a need and have an end goal, such as a final report analyzing the legal findings, the preparation of legal materials for a website or a conference on a substantive legal issue, or the production of a training manual for practitioners or for the public are ideal for the LSSC program. The LSSC program can benefit organizations with such proposals by providing the resources to undertake work that would not otherwise be possible given an organization's limited resources.
- 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); 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 at 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 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 available for review upon request. Descriptions of successful projects and sample project abstracts in recent years are also available on our website at [law.northeastern.edu/lssc](http://law.northeastern.edu/lssc).