

# Legal Aid of Arkansas Technology Plan



Updated June 2012

## **Planning, Budgeting and Staffing**

This technology plan was created by Lee Richardson, Executive Director and Chris Wardlow, Director of Technology, with input from members of the Legal Aid of Arkansas (LAA) Management Team and Vincent Morris, Director of the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership (ALSP). This plan is intended to supplement the ALSP Technology and Justice Plan, which is attached hereto and referenced herein.

The planning process involved taking an inventory of current technology; identifying gaps and needs based on said inventory; creating a budget to meet needs based on average and expected shelf life of hardware and software and expected technology developments and advancements; and reviewing in detail the best practices of other programs and the Legal Services Corporation's publication titled, "Technologies That Should Be in Place in a Legal Aid Office Today" published in November of 2008.

The planning process also involved the creation of individual staff inventory sheets of hardware/software and master spreadsheets cataloging all technology. The planning process considered technology issues within the program's Disaster Plan.

The technology budget was developed by the Technology Director, Executive Director, and Fiscal Officer and includes sufficient funds to maintain and upgrade technology as necessary to exceed minimum standards and advance client services. Sufficient funding is also allocated for technology training and outside/consultant support as necessary.

The primary personnel involved in the acquisition, installation, and maintenance of technology are the Director of Technology and the Executive Director. However, other staff members are involved in training on software use, such as the Case Management System (CMS) and file-share systems. As the LAA program is rural in nature and covers thirty-one (31) counties, a technology responsible person is designated in each office in addition to the Director of Technology having the ability to address computer issues through the use of remote administration software.

Maintenance issues are minimal as the CMS, email, data protection, and phone PBX are hosted by vendors. Networking within individual offices is through a local area network (LAN) with a designated computer acting as the office file share. The Statewide website and the LAA Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) website are maintained by the ALSP.

## **Case Management System, Timekeeping, and Calendaring**

LAA uses version 8 of Client's Prime provided by Kemp's Case Works as a CMS. Upgrades are purchased as they become available. This CMS is hosted by an application service provider (ASP), Venture Technologies. This system has been in place for ten years with the only alteration being a change from a Citrix-based client to a terminal-based client as a cost saving measure. The CMS is fully integrated into the Help-Line intake system.

All staff is trained on the CMS, and Kemp's Case Works is employed to provide online and teleconference training when substantive upgrades to the system are made. Staff members attend national trainings on the CMS software as necessary, returning to the program thereafter, and training local staff.

Through the ASP, the CMS is available to all staff in real-time wherever Internet access is available. As the database is stored offsite by Venture Technologies on hardened, mirrored-servers, there is virtually no danger of losing information in the event of disaster and the data will also be available at the closest Internet connection.

The CMS performs all the functions listed in the Legal Services Corporation publication "Technologies That Should Be in Place in a Legal Aid Office Today".

Program policy dictates that staff utilize all relevant CMS features, including, but not limited to: case notes to record initial interviews and all client contacts thereafter, contemporaneous timekeeping by activity and funding code, calendaring and tickler functions, including a recitation of advice and services offered, or a reference to the location of same on the corresponding virtual file storage platform. A special program was built into the CMS to generate timesheets for staff to turn in for payroll purposes, based upon time entered during the pay period. This step effectively ensures contemporaneous timekeeping by staff members.

In addition to the calendaring-system available on the CMS, there is also a program-wide calendaring system available through the Statewide website which announces program events such as board-meetings, CLE training availability, outreach, and community education seminars.

The program has implemented the use of Google Calendar to enhance staff-tracking throughout all offices.

Timeline for further CMS/calendaring developments:

- Upgrade to latest version of Kemp's Prime (6 months): Pending
- Staff to attend Kemp's National Training as needed: In Progress

## **Document Production**

Statewide document production efforts are described in greater detail in the incorporated ALSP Technology and Justice Plan.

Each staff computer has the full Microsoft Office Suite 2010 installed for word processing needs. Within said Office Suite, PowerPoint and Publisher are also available for ancillary document production needs. Full versions of Adobe 8.0 Professional are available for creating Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) documents and converting them to forms and files that can be edited. All offices but one have copiers that function as network printers, which serve to reduce printing costs and to provide redundancy should an individual staff member's printer fail. These copiers also have the capability to scan documents into the PDF for storage or delivery as email attachments. The office lacking this capability uses a stand-alone scanner.

In addition, 225 client education materials (e.g., fact sheets, booklets, web pages, and brochures)<sup>1</sup>; 274 forms/pleadings; 75 model client letters; 194 automated advocate and pro se resources; and additional multimedia resources are available on the statewide website, and each office maintains a file-share where common pleadings, letters, and other forms are stored for easy access by staff members. Dropbox is now used for virtual file sharing and storage between all offices, with all HelpLine documents shared and stored on this platform, making the HelpLine paperless. This supplements, but does not supplant, the information available on the statewide website as unique pleadings or forms are uploaded to the website when identified, for review and sharing with all advocates. A virtual file is created on the local file-share and Dropbox for each client with all work products related to the client stored in the corresponding client file.

## **Online Legal Research**

LAA currently has a contract with Lexis-Nexis for online legal research. Attorneys and paralegals have unique user logins to Lexis-Nexis. In addition to this resource, all attorneys have access to Fast Case online research by way of membership in the Arkansas Bar Association. With said bar membership, regular case note updates on the latest Arkansas Appellate Court decisions are also available. Each attorney also receives copies of the Law Review and Law Note publications from both of the state's law schools.

The website has an abundance of research resources, including the Poverty Law Practice Manual wiki, Consumer Law Resource Center, a brief bank, and topical listservs, although most legal questions are posted on the program wide listserv maintained through the hosted email service for contemplation and response by all attorneys and paralegals. The website resources are fully described in the aforementioned ALSP Technology and Justice Plan, which is incorporated.

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<sup>1</sup> The amount of both client education materials and advocate materials does not remain static due to the need to pull material down periodically and re-post the updated versions as needed.

Timeline for further online legal research developments:

- Litigation Director and all legal staff to review brief bank and legal forms on website for obsolescence, additions, and subtractions: Continuous

### **Records and Knowledge Management**

Other than CMS records maintained by the vendor, all electronic records are stored on the file- shares within each individual office and on Dropbox. Each office has the capacity for maintaining electronic records and assuring their accessibility through the office file-share. The Technology Director also has access to each office's file-share database (and each work-station) through the use of remote administration software. Staff email is hosted on Google mail servers (Gmail) and may be saved in local folders as appropriate. These folders can be transferred to the file-share for back up at the discretion of the user. Instant messaging through the CMS and Gmail is also available to staff members. Voice mails generate an email to the individual recipient with the voice message attached in the .WAV format which can be archived as appropriate and saved within the individual client's virtual folder on the office's file-share.

LAA uses LogMeIn Backup product offered by LogMeIn, Inc. This service provides secure and reliable protection of LAA's critical data directly through the Internet. Data is backed up every two hours, and is also saved virtually on Dropbox, where successful data loss recoveries have been seamlessly and quickly accomplished. The LogMeIn Backup product has performed flawlessly since its implementation with successful recoveries made when necessary.

Electronic case records are maintained infinitely on the CMS and are retained for a minimum of five years on the local office file-shares and on Dropbox. Thereafter, an optical medium backup is created for each year and the corresponding data is deleted from the file-share as the corresponding paper files are destroyed. Storage is also maintained locally on the individual office file-shares, within folders organized by substantive law area. All program administrative forms and procedures are also stored on office file-shares, the website, and in some cases, archived within storage-capable copiers for quick production. Practice guides are maintained on the website and all web content is searchable. This is described in greater detail in the attached ALSP Technology and Justice Plan. The Google Docs product included with the Gmail product is utilized as an additional means of storage and also provides staff with quick access to some common letters, pleadings, and HR Forms.

Contact information is maintained on the CMS.

Full board packets are posted each quarter on the Statewide Website Board Portal, at [www.arlegalservices.org/boardmember](http://www.arlegalservices.org/boardmember), at least two weeks prior to board meetings and thus made accessible to all staff and board members for review and download. Board packets typically contain hundreds of pages of information so that distribution in this manner results in significant program cost reductions. Complete packets are mailed to

board members who lack ready Internet access or who specifically request that a packet be mailed to them. Each folder is then archived for future reference by the board and staff. As the minutes from a previous meeting are prepared, they are immediately placed on the statewide website for review. Committee minutes are similarly posted when prepared.

Timeline for further Records/Knowledge Management developments:

- Training on identifying information and submitting/preserving said information to be made available. ALSP will provide periodic trainings via the online meeting technology GoToMeeting: 6 months (usually training is provided annually at the Statewide Legal Services Conference, but decreased funding has unfortunately resulted in the cancelation of the conference for 2012).

### **Supervision**

The CMS provides user-friendly tools to all managers to support the supervision of ongoing legal work. A manager may access case listings in a variety of forms, depending on need, and ongoing case activity is documented on the CMS. Additionally, staff members are required to produce an Open Case Review from the CMS every 60 days and provide such to their respective managers for review. Said managers have the authority to require case listings more often as circumstances may dictate. The Legal Work standards and comments provide the foundation for said supervision.

All office file-share and individual staff computers are accessible to the Technology Director and the Executive Director through the LogMeIn remote access product which allows the review of digital case files as necessary and appropriate. Dropbox has also greatly enhanced the ability to review documented casework remotely.

### **Telecommunications and Intake System**

LAA utilizes Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) program-wide for phone communications. All staff members have individual voicemail accounts. The VoIP vendor is Jive Communications, Inc. ([www.getjive.com](http://www.getjive.com)) and the cost is \$30 a month for each staff member phone, which also includes soft-phone access for each staff member. A soft-phone allows a user to access the phone system from their home computer so that operations may continue without interruption in the event of natural disaster, hazardous weather, or if some need arises for staff members to work at an alternate location. Additionally, a LAA VoIP phone may be relocated to any Internet-capable location and used seamlessly at said location with its included separate power-supply. Long-distance service is also included in the base rate. This has resulted in the necessity of keeping only one analog line through the traditional phone company in six offices for facsimile/DSL purposes (the largest office now uses fax services provided by Jive with no analog line being necessary) and has resulted in enhanced capacity and substantial savings for the LAA program.

It has not been necessary to substantially increase bandwidth costs as standard DSL and cable Internet have proven more than adequate to handle the traffic created by the phone systems, CMS, and Internet data usage. In locations that are heavily-populated with users and HelpLine staff, both cable and DSL (or fiber optic U-verse) are utilized to divide data and VoIP traffic to ensure quality of service and provide for redundancy in the event of failure or service interruption of the DSL or cable service. Bandwidth adequacy is monitored and will be adjusted as necessary.

LAA technology staff have full access to PBX controls and access to make dial plan changes without Jive support through a web portal.

The Jive Communications phone system allows 100 concurrent calls to ring through each unique 10-digit number. As currently configured, the system can only handle 50 to 75 concurrent calls, but this capacity can be increased incrementally up to 500 concurrent calls as the need arises.

LAA has Spanish and Marshallese language call-routing for both the HelpLine and the main PBX. One phone number is published statewide for the HelpLine and LAA publishes one toll-free number for the main PBX. Once a Spanish language speaker reaches the auto-attendant, the applicant is immediately prompted to make a selection which seamlessly routes him or her into the Spanish queue. All callers have the immediate option to reach a bilingual operator if they feel intimidated or confused by the auto-attendant. Those speaking languages other than English, Marshallese, or Spanish will be assisted through an interpreter provided through LAA's contract with Language Line. The statewide website continues to expand non-English content with the translation of 22 fact sheets into Spanish, 12 web pages, and the addition of Spanish website navigation in 2011.

The HelpLine operates from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, with extended hours on Tuesday nights from 5:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. To avoid staff fatigue and provide the best possible service to applicants, HelpLine duties are shared by all case handling staff within the program, with the HelpLine Managing Attorney being responsible for scheduling rotational two-hour shifts. The HelpLine process is now bifurcated, with an eligibility screener first taking eligibility and logistical information, then forwarding the call to one of four substantive queues, depending on the callers self-identified legal problem. These queues are staffed by substantive workgroup members, who are usually able to provide immediate legal information and advice to the caller when completing a full legal interview. An advocate of the day from each workgroup then reviews and processes all cases in their substantive area.

The advent of the VoIP phone system has enabled LAA to place a HelpLine phones in the Legal Clinics at the University Of Arkansas School Of Law in Fayetteville and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Both students who are AmeriCorps members and volunteer students work shifts on the HelpLine. These students have access to the CMS through the ASP previously described, are supervised directly by the HelpLine Manager

and Advocates of the Day through email and chat, and can share and save documents, including advice letters approved by an LAA attorney, on Dropbox.

LAA is currently working on an enhanced ability to serve persons with speaking or hearing disabilities. This service is currently available through local telephone providers and the TTY operator is contacted as necessary.

The capability exists to have automated information and advice to the auto-attendant on both the main and HelpLine sides. Topics will be published in both English and Spanish. Recorded information about common legal topics will be played while callers to the HelpLine are in queue. Callers in queue are given the opportunity to continue to hold or leave a message for a callback at regular intervals.

The capacity for our intake system to review wait times has been added by Jive Communications. The LAA advocate gets an automated notification of the time a caller has waited when the call is received. The vendor plans to provide an automated callback feature soon. An application programming interface (API) has come online but is not fully robust, and reporting is still rudimentary.

An electronic desk manual is available for HelpLine advocates, and the HelpLine Managing Attorney continues to add questions and common advice to the CMS to streamline operations and assist advocates who are not well-versed in certain areas of the law.

The HelpLine is using Gmail-based instant messaging for advocates to contact the HelpLine Managing Attorney or other designated staff with questions during live HelpLine hours.

The intake system is paperless. All client letters are stored in virtual files by date and client name on Dropbox. Supporting documentation provided by clients, such as court documents or citizenship attestations, is scanned, converted to PDF, and stored in the client's virtual folder or in the Dropbox folder for the intake date. This has reduced copy and storage space requirements and expenses without having an adverse impact on client services or ethical obligations. All information is backed up every two hours and successful restores have been performed.

Timeline for further telephone/HelpLine developments:

- Automation of legal information and advice into phone system (6 months): *Pending*
- API interface for phone system (12 months): *Pending*
- Full development of questions and advice into the intake system: *Underway*

## **Direct Assistance to Low-Income Persons**

All web-based legal information and self-help support is described in the attached ALSP Technology and Justice Plan.

LAA has a website for its low income taxpayer's clinic at [www.laalitc.org](http://www.laalitc.org) which is maintained by the ALSP. Videos have been produced and posted on the website regarding ESL taxpayer rights and responsibilities. LAA promotes the use of I-CAN software for tax return completion through the website. The major impediment LAA has found to the use of this software is that it does not currently include the ability to file State of Arkansas individual income tax returns.

LAA currently has a computer Kiosk in the lobby of the Springdale office for client use in accessing website resources. Additionally, brochure racks containing legal fact sheets from the website are in place at four public libraries and one courthouse.

LAA has three LCD projectors spread strategically throughout the program for use in community legal education, continuing legal education presentations, and outreach events. Through the use of these projectors, video, PowerPoint, and web demonstrations are incorporated into presentations.

## **Support for Use of Private Attorney**

Support for efforts to accept, refer, and track PAI cases is described in the attached ALSP Technology and Justice Plan.

The CMS previously described is fully incorporated into the PAI program and performs all necessary functions, including timekeeping and allocation, and case tracking.

## **Security**

LAA offices have Internet connectivity through DSL or cable Internet Service Providers (ISPs) generally based on what is available at each location. The larger offices, which are more heavily-staffed, have DSL and cable to provide service redundancy should one ISP suffer downtime. At said larger offices, battery-backup power supplies are utilized to prevent inadvertent data loss and to maintain VoIP phone service in the event of a power loss. Routers at all offices are password-protected and are set to disregard anonymous pings from the Internet. Network address translation firewall protection is in place and each computer has Windows Firewall active. Anti-virus protection is provided for free by Microsoft Security Essentials, offered by Microsoft, Inc.

All staff computers are configured to automatically install critical Windows security updates. All anti-virus protection is configured to automatically update and run daily scans of all workstations and file-shares. Staff members demonstrating a lack of ability to comprehend security issues have had additional group policy restrictions placed on

their workstations and have additional anti-spyware protection active on their workstations.

All LAA laptops are password-protected to help prevent improper access in the event of equipment loss or theft. LAA is migrating directly to Windows 7 from Windows XP, bypassing Windows Vista. The Technology Director will implement the BitLocker drive encryption provided by the Windows 7 operating system on laptops for additional security and to prevent improper access in the event of equipment loss or theft. This will be implemented as equipment becomes obsolete and is replaced with equipment that is factory-loaded with Windows 7 with BitLocker technology therein.

LAA's Technology Use Policy was updated, made available on the website, and published to all staff members. As part of said policy, staff members are alerted that external storage devices such as flash, jump, or thumb drives are inherently insecure, and as such should not be used to store or transfer any confidential client information. The Disaster Recovery Plan was updated June 2011.

### **Training**

The Director of Technology attended the Legal Services Technology Conference in January of 2010. Training needs on technology issues are identified through management observation and staff survey to be offered at the Statewide Legal Services Conference each October (no conference will be held in 2012 because of funding cuts).

Technology is used for online training from time-to-time for substantive law issues and administrative policies and procedures.

### **Communication (other than Telephonic)**

Email is hosted by Google Inc. at zero expense. Each staff member has desktop email access and 24/7/365 access to their email wherever Internet access is available. Assigned program staff can configure email settings and assign new accounts through the web portal. A program wide all-staff mailing list is maintained. Additional lists may be created as necessary.

Email addresses are gathered from clients during intake (when available) for use in client contact should phone numbers be disconnected or clients become "lost". LAA has found that email addresses travel with transient clients. Care is taken not to communicate confidential information to client email accounts.

LAA's Technology Use Policy governs proper use of email and other communications tools.

Wikis and other collaborative work environments are available through the statewide website and more fully described in the attached plan.

The program is using Dropbox, and to a lesser extent, Google Docs for collaboration and document storage and sharing for projects and other uses.

### **Administration and Fundraising**

The program uses Cougar Mountain accounting software, version 14.0, for general ledger, accounts payable, receivables, payroll, benefits administration, leave use and accrual, reporting of budgeting and expenditures, and generation of internal and external reports. The client trust records are maintained on the CMS. Cougar Mountain updates are purchased each year, and a certified public accountant well-versed in the program is used as a consultant when updates are installed or questions arise regarding the software.

Personnel, procedural, and administrative manuals, and all human resources forms, are available on the website, Dropbox, and Google Docs.

The ability to accept online donations is available through the website. Donor list and information are maintained in excel format by the Fiscal Officer and Executive Director. The Executive Director maintains a master spreadsheet of all grants, including reporting and submission dates, purpose and restrictions, contact information, and CMS funding code. The Arkansas Access to Justice Commission, which takes the lead in statewide private fundraising, is using E-Tapestry software.

Timeline for further Administration and Fundraising developments:

- Latest Cougar Mountain accounting software updates be purchased and installed (12 months): Pending

# Arkansas Legal Services Partnership

## Statewide Technology and Justice Plan

### I. Statewide website (SWWS)

- a. **Mission:** The primary goal of the SWWS project, and all justice technology projects that have stemmed from the website, is to broaden access to justice in civil matters for all Arkansans through the use of online technologies.
- b. **Historical Overview:** The Arkansas Legal Services Partnership (ALSP) website was launched in October 2004 as a statewide effort representing both the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas.<sup>2</sup> The goal of the statewide website (SWWS) is to provide clear, concise and relevant legal information for low-income Arkansans, as well as providing a clearinghouse for poverty law resources for legal aid advocates, pro bono attorneys, stakeholders, and other justice partners.

ALSP originally used the Kaivo Open Source Template (OST) for the SWWS Content Management System (CMS). The OST was based on an open source Zope Platform. Arkansas began customizing the OST in late 2003.

- c. **Technical Overview:** ALSP now uses Drupal (pronounced “drew pul”). It is an open source CMS written in PHP and distributed under the GNU General Public License. It is used as a back-end system for at least 1% of all websites worldwide.

ALSP began development work on the Open Source Drupal Template (DLAW) for the statewide website (SWWS) Drupal Migration Timeline in November 2009. The new website was soft launched to staff on April 15, 2010 and was hard launched (live to public) on May 3, 2010.

ALSP received TIG funding support to upgrade our statewide website (SWWS) from the open source template Zope-based system to the open source Drupal template (DLAW). The TIG proposal is submitted by Idaho Legal Aid Services (ILAS) in partnership with the National Technology Assistance Project (NTAP) on behalf of the legal aid programs who wish to upgrade as a community from the Zope web platform to the Drupal Content Management System (CMS).

- d. **Open Source:** ALSP promotes the use of open source technologies because of the ability to modify, customize, and replicate online technologies as compared to proprietary systems. The use of open source technology and free Web 2.0 software greatly reduces project expenses and provides a greater chance of project sustainability. Additionally, the philosophy behind open source projects is more aligned with the concepts of access to justice that we seek to promote through the website.
- e. **Resource Overview:** ALSP will strive to have a large catalogue of quality resources and tools for self-help, advocate, and pro bono users of the website.

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<sup>2</sup>. The only two LSC funded civil legal aid providers in Arkansas.

These materials will be placed in multiple formats and posted to the SWWS. The ALSP currently has several multimedia features on our SWWS including: fact sheets, model client letters, static forms, automated forms, streaming video, streaming audio, and other resources.

The document library is composed of a public area and an advocate/pro bono area with over **1000 total resources**. Currently there are over 400 documents in the public area of the Online Legal Library and over 600 documents in the advocate area. LiveHelp Chat Assistance is available to help visitors locate and use these resources. Visit [www.arlegalservices.org/library](http://www.arlegalservices.org/library) to view resources by NSMI index.

## 2011 Content Catalogue

- **Automated Document Resources** (advocate): 154
- **Automated Document Resources** (pro se packets): 40
- **Client Education** (fact sheets, booklets web pages and brochures): 225
- **Forms/ Pleadings:** 350
- **Form Packets** (static): 25
- **Model Client Letters:** 75
- **Organizational Documents Resources** (e.g. Board documents, HR forms): 225
- **Poverty Law Practice Manual Sections** (not including wiki resource): 10
- **Training Materials:** 29
- **Questionnaires:** 16
- **Videos:** 15

- f. **Steering Committee:** The Arkansas Access to Justice Commission is the primary stakeholder group and a critical partner in many ALSP technology and justice projects. The commission has formed five standing committees; three of these committees are exclusively devoted to supporting self-help efforts, legal aid staff, and pro bono recruitment and assistance. Technology plays a vital role in all of these efforts.

Additionally, both Executive Directors from the two legal aid programs in Arkansas provide support and feedback to these projects.

- g. **Content Protocols:** ALSP has developed a content protocol document stating the proper formatting, drafting, editing, and maintenance procedures for posted content.<sup>3</sup> ALSP will strive to provide all content (self-help and advocate) in plain language. ALSP will attempt to write all public content between a 5th – 8th grade reading level for better access by the LEP population. ALSP will attempt to place as much information as possible into multiple languages. There is a current TIG grant that funds and supports the development of Spanish Mirror Site.<sup>4</sup> See *Section VI for more information.*

New Content Provider Training Materials are currently being developed for use on the Drupal DLaw CMS. These materials will be used in content provider

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<sup>3</sup> Contact the ALSP Director for a copy of the ALSP Content Protocols

<sup>4</sup> See TIG 2010 Full Application - #10042 Spanish Portal Project

trainings and posted on the website.

## II. Budget

- a. **Funding Sources:** ALSP Technology and Justice Projects have primarily been funded through various grants and the assistance of the two free providers of civil legal assistance in Arkansas.

This hodgepodge of grant sources has included the Legal Services Corporation Technology Initiative Grants (TIG), State Justice Institute Grants, and Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation Grants. ALSP and the Commission sent a proposal for funding support to the Administration Office of the Courts in September 2008. The Supreme Court of Arkansas issued a Per Curiam, In Re: Access to Justice Commission and Bar of Arkansas License Fees, stating that AOC funding is needed for these projects and will help the Commission “in achieving its goals and will assist the Partnership (ALSP) in its mission of providing free legal services to low-income Arkansans.”<sup>5</sup> These funds did benefit the access to justice community, but ultimately were not used to directly support technology and justice.

As there is not an ALSP grant writer or grant reporting manager the ALSP Director currently researches, drafts, reports and manages the LSC TIG funding requests with assistance of the Content Developer. TIG funding has made up the bulk of the funding for these projects.

**FYE 2010:** ALSP requested funding for multiple projects for FYE 2010 that resulted in \$246,400 total technology grant funding awarded.

**FYE 2011:** ALSP requested funding for multiple projects for FYE 2011 that is projected to result in \$51,523 total technology grant funding awarded. This total includes one sub grant that ALSP has also been included in, under subcontract, with one other organization (Pine Tree Legal Assistance) for justice technology development totaling \$23,342 in requested funds in 2011. See *the ALSP Grant Project Revenue and Contracts 2011-2013*.

**FYE 2012:** There is one TIG funded project for 2012. TIG #11054 Arkansas Court Channel Project for \$41,500.

- b. **Staffing:** There is currently 1.5 FTE dedicated to the ALSP Justice Technology Program although assistance is provided by the ALSP Director and ALSP Project Coordinator as needed. Volunteers are utilized when possible.
  - i. **ALSP Director:** 0.75 FTE
  - ii. **ALSP Assistant Content Developer:** 0.75 FTE
- c. **Open Source:** Open systems are often free or cheaper than proprietary systems/software that requires licensing restrictions beyond the GNU General Public License (GPL) or those approved by the Open Source Initiative (OSI)

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<sup>5</sup> See [http://courts.arkansas.gov/court\\_opinions/sc/2009a/20090402/published/inre\\_licensefees.pdf](http://courts.arkansas.gov/court_opinions/sc/2009a/20090402/published/inre_licensefees.pdf)

based on the Open Source Definition (OSD). An “open source license is a copyright license for computer software that makes the source code available under terms that allow for modification and redistribution without having to pay the original author.”

ALSP believes firmly in the open source philosophy in all aspects of our work where it is appropriate. Both the content and technology developed by ALSP Technology will be shared with the community.

- d. **Group Purchasing:** When possible, ALSP should use the national (or local) legal services community to purchase needed software, equipment, or other materials need for the program in bulk with other organizations. Currently, ALSP is using a group license for LiveHelp Chat Services on the SWWS, partnering with seven other states.
- e. **Sustainability:** All projects will seek support, partnership, and collaboration from the larger legal community and other service providers focused on needy Arkansans. ALSP is committed to the importance of innovation, replication, and sustainability in every endeavor we pursue. Technology projects, especially web-based projects, provide an opportunity to meet these goals. Arkansas’ justice technology projects, made possible through TIG funding, are in the process of achieving full sustainability. Some projects have already attained full sustainability and we expect to achieve independent sustainability and even expansion of our justice technology program in the near future.

**All of our TIG funded projects have continued after the initial TIG funding ended. All justice technology projects are currently operative, regularly maintained, and providing benefit to low-income Arkansas throughout the state.**<sup>6</sup>

While the program continues to seek resources through grants, it will become more and more difficult to secure any long-term funding.

The Arkansas Access to Justice Commission is a strong supporter of the ALSP Technology and Justice Program. The commission has sought additional funding for purposes of sustainability for justice technology in the past and it is still a stated goal of the Commission’s Court Assistance Committee (See Note 4). The Commission has submitted a grant request to the State Justice Institute (SJI) for the first in a series of grants that will provide funding for pro justice technology projects.

The Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation, which was established in late 2009, may be a possible source of future financial support for this project. The foundation is currently undertaking fundraising efforts to support, among other things, innovative programs that will increase effective access to the civil justice system.

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<sup>6</sup> See ALSP Justice and Technology Annual Report 2010

### III. Legal Services Technology Resources (Improved Case Handling)

- a. **Overview:** ALSP originally launched the legal services advocate area before launching the pro bono or public areas of the website. Since the launch, and the first series of staff trainings, the SWWS has become a critical vehicle in helping advocates deliver efficient and high quality services to a high quantity of clients. Additional staff trainings are planned for LAA work group content providers and CALS website stakeholders in the latter half of 2012.
- b. **General Content:** In 2012 there are more than 600 advocate document resources available to legal services staff. The launch of the new website provided an opportunity to edit and streamline the delivery of legal resources for advocate use. This actually resulted in fewer resources, but higher quality and improved usability of the advocate resources. These documents are providing tools to case handlers to improve the effectiveness of advice provided through the HelpLine, and to provide staff attorneys with tools to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. Content on the advocate area may go through the content protocol in place for the public area. If the resource has been edited by the standards of the protocol, it will be date stamped.
- c. **Model Client Letters:** There are more than 75 model client letters for use by the legal services staff. These letters were originally only in Microsoft Word format (form enabled) and in Adobe PDF format. Currently, 71 of these letters have been placed into the Hot Docs automated format and are currently available on the SWWS. These letters contain appropriate language for case acceptance policies and appropriate legal information. These letters also contain suggested fact sheet enclosures for the client.
- d. **Fact Sheets:** All fact sheets (currently more than 225) are to be written between a 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. These fact sheets will have the ALSP branding and last editing date. See the *Content Protocol Document* for more information. The majority of these fact sheets went through a task force editing process in 2009, with the exception of the family law category, and will be undergoing another task force editing process in 2012.
- e. **Automated Documents:** The Automated Legal Forms Project was officially launched in 2007. The primary goal of the Arkansas Automated Document Project is to use automated document technology to enhance access to justice for all Arkansans. We are attempting to achieve this goal by creating automated forms that enable both pro se litigants and advocates to easily, accurately, and effectively produce court pleadings. ALSP realizes that both staff and pro bono users need to be fully trained in the use of automated document resources, and has taken measures in provide training to pro bono and legal aid advocates. ALSP has trained several thousand pro bono attorneys (or potential pro bono attorneys) in the resources since the project began.

These documents are hosted on the LawHelp Interactive (LHI) server and developed in house by the ALSP Associate Director of Technology/Justice using donated LexisNexis HotDocs software and A2J interface software. There are currently **194 automated resources** on the SWWS resulting in **22,261**

**interviews and 13,261 assembled documents** in 2011. There was an annual completion rate of 60%. **Arkansas was 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation with most usage.**

- f. **LiveHelp:** ALSP launched the Online Chat Service (LiveHelp) in January 2008. The primary goal of the Arkansas Online Chat Assistance Project (LiveHelp) is to enable low-income people, legal services staff, and pro bono attorneys to more effectively and efficiently access and use the resources on the ALSP website by providing a chat-based navigational service for locating online resources. There were a total of **1,127 chats** providing assistance in locating legal resources in 2011.
- g. **Communication Infrastructure Component**
  - i. Member Area: Each legal services organization has their own portal homepage with link resources designed for that organization (e.g. webmail, benefits). There are additional portal pages for other advocate groups such as pro bono.
  - ii. E-Newsletter: *See section VII(c)*
  - iii. Staff Directory: Legal Services advocates have access to the online staff directory upon logging in. This directory includes both programs and the pro bono organizations information. The Drupal website has enhanced member profile information for better internal communications.
  - iv. Content Collaboration: ALSP needs to utilize the skill, knowledge and experience of the staff to develop and maintain high quality content. When possible, GoToMeeting has proven an effective collaborative tool.
  - v. Online Pro Bono Case Selection Database: *See section VIII(c)*

#### **IV. Pro Bono Resources (Improved Case Placement and Handling)**

- h. **Overview:** All resources described in Section V (Legal Services Technology Resources) are available to pro bono attorneys. They receive an email with password/username and instructions from ALSP upon becoming a pro bono volunteer. These resources have become a critical outreach and recruitment tool. *See Section V for more details.*

#### **V. Self-Help and Client-Focused Technology Resources**

- i. **Overview:** Arkansas is not alone in facing a steady rise of self-represented litigation. The National Center for State Courts has determined that nationally about 50% of all cases involve one or more pro se litigants and that this number is far higher in some geographic areas.<sup>7</sup> In response to the high demand for such services, ALSP launched the SWWS ([www.arlegalservices.org](http://www.arlegalservices.org)) to provide assistance to the self-represented litigant.<sup>8</sup>
- j. **Public Area Statewide website:** Statewide websites act as a portal for clients, and can provide them with a repository for legal information, referral, and general assistance online. Trends from the 2000 U.S. Census suggest that 25% of our client community already uses the Internet and that low-income persons are the fastest-growing users on the Internet. As more government applications and

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<sup>7</sup> The National Center for State Courts, *Court Leadership and Self-Represented Litigation Solutions for Access, Effectiveness, and Efficiency 2008*

services are available online, we have a responsibility to offer our services easily to clients over the Internet.

- k. **Fact Sheets and Static Forms:** All fact sheets (more than 225) are to be written between a 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. These fact sheets will have the ALSP branding and last editing date. See the *Content Protocol Document* for more information. Some static forms (with directions) are available to the public; however, it is preferable to automate forms.
- l. **Automated Document Project:** The Automated Legal Forms Project was launched as a direct response to the results from the Circuit Judge and Circuit Clerk survey that was administered by the Commission. The majority of both judges and clerks agreed that easy and accurate forms with instructions were needed in response to the pro se challenge in Arkansas. The primary goal of the Arkansas Legal Forms Project is to use automated document technology to enhance access to justice for all Arkansans. ALSP is attempting to achieve this goal by creating automated forms that enable pro se litigants to easily, accurately, and effectively produce pro se pleadings. There are currently 18 public packets containing multiple forms published on the SWWS.

These documents are hosted on the LawHelp Interactive (LHI) server and developed in house by the ALSP Director using donated LexisNexis HotDocs and A2J software.

- m. **Video Content:** The LegalTube™ Project was soft launched in 2008. The goal of this project is to provide multimedia self-help content through streaming video hosted by YouTube™ with video links embedded on the Arkansas website, but hosted on YouTube. There are currently 17 streaming videos with **40,341 cumulative views** as of this reporting.
- n. **LiveHelp:** ALSP launched the Online Chat Service (LiveHelp) in January 2008. The primary goal of the Arkansas Online Chat Assistance Project (Live Help) is to enable low-income people, staff and pro bono attorneys to more effectively and efficiently access and use the resources on the ALSP website by providing a chat-based navigational service for locating online resources. There were a total of **1,127 chats** providing assistance in locating legal resources in 2011.
- o. **Other SWWS Resources:** There are multiple static pages that provide self-help information including: the FAQ Substantive Law page, Legal Glossary, HelpLine information, and shelter information.

## VI. Limited English Proficiency, Accessibility and Non-English Resources

- p. **LEP:** The ALSP Associate Director of Technology and Justice works closely with the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission especially with the pro se, pro bono, and education committees. The public interactive forms are all vetted through the pro se committee before publishing to public website and scheduled for review. The information pieces are created or coordinated by ALSP and legal aid advocates provide feedback, editing and review for this content. The ALSP Associate Director of Justice Technology is a licensed attorney that has had

multiple plain language trainings in order to develop appropriate content drafting skills. All public content is analyzed by the Flesch–Kincaid Grade Level test that comes with Microsoft Word. This test uses a core measure of word length and sentence length and provides the content drafter with an estimated grade level needed to read the content. ALSP strives to have all content read between a 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. We are currently looking into other free, web based, and open source readability tools. There is current TIG Application pending for funding to support the development of Spanish Mirror Site.<sup>9</sup>

- q. **Accessibility:** ALSP will strive to meet all standard website disability standards under Section 508.
- r. **Non-English Resources:** ALSP has translated many key pages into Spanish and an “Español” link is listed prominently on the top menu of every page of the website. The translated pages include: Homepage, Office Location Finder, Homepage of the Document Library, HelpLine Section, and FAQ (a substantial substantive law section touching on all major areas of law). Additionally there are 47 Non-English resources available on the SWWS in various media formats.<sup>10</sup>

Additional Spanish content relating to the earned income tax credit is posted on the Legal Aid of Arkansas Low Income Tax Clinic website (launched in early 2008) providing information for low-income Arkansans with a special focus on ESL users.<sup>11</sup> This site was migrated in to the Drupal CMS environment in 2009.

## VII. Training and Outreach

### s. Training

- i. **Public:** ALSP and the commission provide substantial training and outreach to the general public. This outreach primarily includes educating the access point providers about the ALSP online resources. These audiences include: public librarians, law librarians, clerks, and trial assistants. ALSP will continue to market and train the general public and those who provide access points.

Additionally, ALSP provides public assistance in LiveHelp Chat for locating and using the online resources in real time and provide email responses to multiple forms on the SWWS. Chat and email responses usually total over 1000/per year. “Canned content” should be used, if possible, for both chats and email responses.

- ii. **Pro Bono:** ALSP and the commission have provided substantial training and outreach to the pro bono community, as well as outreach to recruit additional pro bono volunteers. ALSP has a pre-approved CLE 1 hour (Ethics) presentation that has been presented to several thousand Arkansas attorneys. ALSP will continue to market, train, and recruit pro bono attorneys until the four pro bono organizations are ready to begin

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<sup>9</sup> See note 3.

<sup>10</sup> See the *ALSP Public Content Catalogue (May 2009)* for more information.

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.laalitc.org/>

this outreach.

1. **iProBono:** ALSP helped to develop the first interactive pro bono mobile app available to Arkansas pro bono attorneys free of charge through iTunes. Now through their iPhone, licensed Arkansas attorneys can view pro bono cases representing low-income Arkansans, sort through those cases based on legal topic and county, and request cases with a push of a button.
  - iii. **Legal Services:** ALSP and the commission have provided substantial training and outreach to the two legal services organizations including five Statewide Conferences with online resources trainings, quarterly staff e-newsletters, and dozens of content development using online collaborative meetings. Additionally, as requested, new employees are provided instructions and/or live tutorials on using the ALSP online resources.
- t. **Promotion**
- i. **Printed Materials:** Several brochures, posters, annual reports, and other materials are distributed at trainings and mailed to access point providers to be placed near computer terminals. More than 35,000 print materials have been distributed since the beginning of this project.
  - ii. **Advertising:** Mp3 PSA's have been developed to highlight various areas of law, and provide HelpLine and website contact information.
  - iii. **Print or Web Circulation Materials:** ALSP provides information based from the ALSP Technology and Justice Project to publications as the opportunity arises (including the Arkansas Bar Association magazine and Aging Arkansas magazine).
- u. **E-Newsletters:**
- i. **ALSP NewsLink:** The first e-newsletter (ALSP NewsLink) is in its fifth year of distribution. It was created initially for legal services staff, board members, Access to Justice Commissioners, and other justice community leaders. This e-newsletter is scheduled for distribution monthly.
  - ii. **Pro Bono Case Alerts:** A second e-newsletter was launched in 2006 directed to the pro bono community in Arkansas. Entitled "Pro Bono Case Alerts" each issue features several one paragraph case descriptions that the pro bono attorney can select by email link. This e-newsletter is distributed monthly to more than 1,200 pro bono attorneys in Arkansas.<sup>12</sup>
  - iii. **The Justice Report:** A third e-newsletter was launched in 2008, directed to the whole justice community. Entitled "The Justice Report" each issue features stories and highlights of poverty law issues.

## VIII. Other Online Technologies (Non-SWWS)

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.arkansasjustice.org/newsletters/probono/Newsletter/archive.html> for archived issues

- v. **LegalTube YouTube Channel:** The LegalTube™ Project was soft launched in 2008. The goal of this project is to provide multimedia self-help content through streaming video hosted by YouTube™ with video links embedded on the Arkansas website. The streaming video resources range from 2- 8 minutes in length and focus on a variety of poverty law subjects. Though official TIG funding for this project did not begin until 1/1/2009, pilot videos were produced to determine the feasibility of the project. The statistics for these video resources are to be determined by YouTube™ “views.”<sup>13</sup>  
See <http://www.youtube.com/user/LunarDog1>
- w. **Wiki - Poverty Law Practice Manual:** The Arkansas Poverty Law Practice Manual Wiki that allows the advocate user to easily edit or contribute content to the PLPM has 203 participating advocates. See <https://povertylawmanual.wikispaces.com/>
- x. **Online Pro Bono Case Selection Database:** This system allows pro bono attorneys to login to the pro bono member area of the ALSP website and access these resources so as to select a case at their convenience. The database can sort by county, law type, pro bono organization type, and pro bono coordinator. The pro bono coordinators have been trained to upload and delete cases as necessary. *Also see iProBono.*
- y. **Arkansas Access to Justice Commission Website:** ALSP provides staffing support for the commission, and designs and maintains their web presence which functions as another gateway to the SWWS. This site was migrated in to the Drupal CMS environment in 2009. We will assist in migration to Drupal 7 in 2012. See <http://www.arkansasjustice.org/>
- z. **Arkansas Equal Justice Watch Website:** The **Arkansas Equal Justice Watch** website was launched in late 2008. The goal of this website project is to encourage action by state leaders to support equal access to justice for all Arkansans. This website is designed to provide legislative decision makers with the latest information about civil legal aid in their districts as well as enable constituents to easily research civil justice issues in their communities. Data for each of the 75 counties in the state include population demographics on poverty, education, disability, divorce, foreclosure, and bankruptcy in addition to the 2008 numbers and types of cases handled by civil legal aid. Through this website visitors can easily find poverty statistics and legal aid case statistics. The website also makes it easier for users to locate and contact their Senator and Representative to help support legal aid. See <http://www.equaljusticewatch.org/>
- aa. **Legal Aid of Arkansas Low-Income Tax Clinic Website:** The Legal Aid of Arkansas Low Income Tax Clinic website was launched in February 2008 providing income tax information for low-income Arkansans with a special focus on ESL users.  
See <http://www.laalitc.org/> - This site was migrated in to the Drupal CMS environment in 2009 and redesigned in 2011-2012.

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<sup>13</sup> There were a total of 4,526 viewings in 2008.

## **IX. Reporting and Analytics**

bb. The ALSP Director produces an annual report on not just website usage but all technology and justice projects. A variety of information including total traffic analysis, most downloaded materials, and most automated materials is collected. Evaluations have been sent to LSC pursuant to approved formats. Recently we have used the most downloaded materials as a launching point to determine priority for translations, automation and video streaming formatting.

This data has also been critical in our court collaboration outreach. Reports have been developed and sent to the Arkansas Administration of the Courts and to the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission. Usage information is reviewed in conjunction with the annual review of program priorities to identify any trends or shifts in usage.

cc. ALSP will provide an annual report to the two legal services programs in Arkansas<sup>14</sup>

dd. ALSP will provide all necessary LSC TIG reporting requirements.

ee. ALSP uses a variety of analytical software including WebTrends, Google Analytics, YouTube Viewings, LawHelp Interactive (formerly NPADO) Assembly Reporting, and self-calculation.

## **X. Conclusions:**

ff. The SWWS has become an important vehicle for legal services delivery in Arkansas and critical resource in providing better access to justice for all Arkansans. One in five Arkansans is eligible for free civil legal aid and seven of the poorest counties in the U.S. are in the Arkansas Delta region. The high level of traffic to the SWWS reflects the unmet legal needs and problems that low-income Arkansans face in acquiring access to justice. Through substantial outreach and training efforts Arkansas is proud of the amount and variety of visitors who use the SWWS.

gg. The website's importance to low-income Arkansans is shown by the steady and substantial increase of site traffic since its launch in 2004 (185,465 page views in 2004). Although there appears to be a decline in 2010 page views and visits, the decline is most likely due to the shift in statistical software and the migration to a new CMS resulting in broken links and bookmarks for historic users. Substantial usage increases can be seen in web contacts, LiveChat assistance, and document assemblies. Total web contacts leapt from approximately 1,700 in 2009 to close to 2,140 in 2010 and continue to increase with 2,309 total web contacts in 2011. LiveChat continues to increase in use with 1,127 chats in 2012.

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<sup>14</sup> See the *ALSP Justice Technology Projects Statistical Data Report 2005 - 2009*

## **Contact Information**

For questions, suggestions or for more information concerning the 2011 ALSP Justice Technology Projects Statistical Data Report or about other ALSP programs contact:

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