

**LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION  
TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE GRANT PROGRAM  
CONTINUATION (THIRD) WEBSITE FINAL REPORT**

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## **I. Project Goals**

- Improve, expand and maintain LawHelp/NY for low-income New Yorkers and their advocates
- Develop “Know Your Rights” material in new legal topic areas
- Update and improve existing resources
- Expand content in our new court channel
- Increase the number of resources specific to upstate and western New York
- Expand access for LEP communities
- Post more innovative interactive content using audio, video and document assembly
- Work with Legal Assistance of the Finger Lakes (now Legal Assistance of Western New York) to make I-CAN modules available in legal topics of value to our client communities

## **II. Web Site Description**

The New York State LawHelp website is built on the Pro Bono Net template. ProBono.Net is a member of the New York LawHelp Consortium which oversees the site. The LawHelp/NY site is designed for the lay public and client population; there is a separate Pro Bono Net site in New York for advocates.

The New York site was the first LawHelp site in the country and is now six years old. It has steadily grown and improved during these years. The current site is composed of 13 major content areas—the Senior topic area being added at the end of 2006; a mirror website in Spanish; and resources in 30 languages other than English and Spanish.

Annual website usage has increased dramatically to more than one million page views, an increase of more than 273,500 over 2005 figures. This represents, on average, an increase of more than 22,000 page views a month.

As of the end of 2006, the LawHelp/NY website included 1,766 Know Your Rights and Self-Help resources. This represents an addition of more than 500 resources during 2006.

Also, at the end of 2006, there were more than 430 free legal service programs listed on the site—many were added as a result of the Senior topic area, since the LawHelp site now includes

details of each county's (62 counties in NYS) Office of the Aging, which provide legal referrals. LawHelp/NY keeps all this information up-to-date through the use of a computerized "tickler" system which was put into place during this grant period. Each year via the tickler organizations have the opportunity, and indeed are required, to review and update their organizational details listed on LawHelp.

LawHelp/NY staff has also grown during this period. There is a Project Director who oversees and manages all activities related to the site, including content review and development, outreach, fund raising, budgeting, organization of Consortium participation and management of staff; a Program Associate who combines site upkeep with outreach work focusing on the Hispanic community; a consultant who oversees the organization tickler, fixes broken links and also does outreach; a part-time attorney with high level technical skills for developing ICAN/HotDocs interviews that are posted on the site; and a range of content management and development consultants.

During 2006, a new survey instrument was added to the site, and responses average between 45-50 per month. The survey results inform the Consortium about user demographics, general site improvements and general comments. The program Associate regularly compiles survey data and reports to the Consortium for review and action.

### **III. Major Accomplishments of 2006**

- **New and Improved Content for Non-English Speaking Communities.**

Of the more than 500 Know Your Rights resources added in 2006, 232 were in languages other than English. Of these, 70 new resources were added in Spanish, covering all the major topic areas of LawHelp/NY.

In addition, there were significant enhancements to LawHelps language resources. A programming enhancement has made locating and identifying a desired language resource easier by grouping language resources by topic area. Previously, a user had to scroll through all the topic areas in a language group to find a desired resource. Now, after clicking on the user's language of choice, a Contents page lets the user select only those resources contained in a major topic area, thereby cutting down on the amount of scrolling necessary, and making the language resources more user friendly.

The Chinese language resources were significantly enhanced in 2006. First, 17 new Know Your Rights resources were added. But more importantly, all the topic area titles and all the titles of the resources have been translated into Chinese, making the LawHelp website far more useful for New York City's large Chinese population. Now with all the titles in Chinese, the Chinese LEP community will be able to use LawHelp much more easily. Finally, at the request of staff of University Settlement, which serves the Chinese community in Manhattan, the LawHelp brochure has recently been translated into Chinese, and was ready for distribution by mid-February, 2007.

In 2006, new resources were added in the following languages in addition to Spanish and Chinese: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, French, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog, Urdu and Vietnamese.

A set of 17 Know Your Rights resources, covering many topic areas, has been identified as important to be translated into as many languages as possible. The full set was translated in 2006 into French; the same law firm that accomplished the French translations is working on completing the Spanish translations. Although they were promised in 2006, these translations won't be completed until 2007.

In addition, 18 Know Your Rights resources included in the new Senior topic area have been identified for translation; some of these are in process now.

Several volunteers have come forward offering to translate various LawHelp/NY resources into Spanish and Arabic, including topic area titles. This work is in process.

- **Major Topic Area Addition.** At the end of 2006, LawHelp brought on line its newest major topic area, Senior Help. Although LawHelp already included resources for Seniors within its other major topic areas, adding Senior Help as a distinct topic area makes the website far more user friendly for New York City's Seniors. A unique website enhancement to the topic area is the ability to send an email directly from the LawHelp website to NYSLA (New York Seniors Legal Assistance) requesting help with a Living Will, Health Care Proxy or Power of Attorney form. A user may also request assistance by phone; NYSLA commits a response within 48 hours.
- **New Organizational Listings.** With numerous new additions, many as a result of the new Senior topic area, LawHelp now keeps track of the organizational information, including contact numbers, intake hours, income guidelines and related data for more than 400 projects and programs that provide free legal services. The automated tickler system is managed by a 15 hour per week consultant who augments the information retrieved by tickler with direct personal contact with organizations. This year LawHelp/NY regularized the listing procedure by developing a standard questionnaire for groups that are seeking to be listed with LawHelp.

The following organizations that provide free legal services and are dedicated to serving the immigrant community have been added in 2006 and profiled in the Find A Lawyer channel: Immigrant Services & Hispanic Outreach Services; Catholic Charities; International Immigrants Foundation; Immigration Justice Clinic, Pace Law School; Westchester Hispanic Coalition, Inc.; Immigration Equality; Arabic American Association of New York; and Dwa Fanm, Jistis Pou Fanm (Justice for Women, in Haitian Creole).

The following is a list of other organizations that have also been added to LawHelp's Find a Lawyer channel in 2006: Fair Housing Justice Center, LSNY-Bankruptcy Project, LSNY-Unemployment Project, Pace Women's Justice Center, Brooklyn Housing and Family Services, Bronx Housing and Family Services, Bronx AIDS Services, Minority

Task Force on AIDS, NYU Family Defense Clinic, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Law Association Foundation, West Village Trans-Legal Clinic, Association for the Help of Retarded Children, St. John's School of Law Child Advocacy, Elderlaw and Securities Arbitration Clinics.

- **New Resources for the Immigration Topic Area.** In 2006 LawHelp/NY staff added more than 60 new resources to the legal topic area of Immigration/Immigrants. In some cases, the resources are available in multiple languages. For example, the resource "What You Need to Know About Immigration Services Providers" was added in English, Arabic, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian and Urdu.

The focus group on immigration, held in April, 2005 with representatives of 15 organizations that serve immigrants, specifically requested that LawHelp include information on Immigration Fraud. As a result, LawHelp has mounted an Alert focusing on immigration fraud resources including information on how to make complaints about attorneys and judges. The immigration fraud resources are also available from various sub-topics of the Immigration topic area.

LawHelp staff participated in several important forums dealing with immigration issues including immigration fraud which helped in the harvesting of immigration fraud resources as well as identifying publicity and training opportunities. These included the Immigrant Access to Health Care training sponsored by the NY Immigration Coalition, a conference held at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn sponsored by community organizations and government officials called "Eliminating the Crime of Fraud Committed Against Individuals Seeking Immigration Legal Services," and the New York Hispanic Fraud Prevention Forum, sponsored by the US Federal Trade Commission, the US Postal Inspection Service and the Manhattan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. At the latter two events, LawHelp postcards and flyers in English and Spanish were distributed.

- **Website Enhancements**

There were a number of important website enhancements during this year. Those most important for the Hispanic, immigrant and LEP communities include:

**New Survey Instrument.** In 2006, LawHelp replaced its old survey, which had not been attracting the responses we needed, with a revised survey. The revised survey is in English and Spanish, and has been placed prominently on the website at the bottom of most pages. The LawHelp Consortium reviews and evaluates summaries of the responses on a regular basis. The total number of surveys completed from mid-May 2006 to December 2006 is 390.

**Flash Video.** A flash video instructional "Help" module in English and Spanish has been developed and will be added to the website in early 2007. Since Family Law is one of the most visited parts of the website, the instructional focuses on how to file an order of protection and exemplifies locating self-help resources on the site. This resource is available in several languages including Spanish. The flash video also demonstrates how to select Know Your Rights resources in the 29 languages other than English and Spanish on the site.

**Email Capability From Senior Help.** The capability of emailing from the new Senior Help topic area for individualized help is described above.

- **Outreach**

LawHelp successfully expanded its outreach to the immigrant community and to a wide range of other potential users, specifically targeting non-lawyers who provide services to low-income New Yorkers seeking help. For example, we have been targeting the social service staffs of elected officials, visiting community based offices to provide training. We have also targeted community technology centers and have trained, for example, the New York City Parks Department staff that service the 20 plus technology centers in NYC Parks. We visited Per Scholas, an organization in the Bronx that provides technology classes to Hispanic New Yorkers in preparation for employment and refurbishes computers donated by large corporations for re-sale at low-price to the immigrant community. They have added LawHelp training to their 17 week technology training curriculum for low-income persons. Each session included 50 persons.

- ▶ **Outreach in Up-State New York.** Because Legal Assistance of Western New York Inc. joined the LawHelp Consortium and devoted staff to LawHelp work, outreach in Up-State New York grew significantly. LawHelp training events included approximately 15 legislative offices, five county bar associations, two library systems and a court personnel training.
- ▶ **Organizations Serving Immigrants.** As result of attending the Hispanic Fraud Prevention Seminar described above, and based on her knowledge of groups serving immigrants, LawHelp's Program Associate has contacted the following organizations through email, phone calls and mailings about LawHelp/NY: 100 Hispanic Women, Catholic Migration Office- Queens, Asian American Foundation, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., Asociacion Benefica Cultural Padre Bellini, Jackson Heights Community Services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Amboy Neighborhood Center, Center for Disability Advocacy Rights, Inc., Chinese-American Planning Council, Church Avenue Merchants Block Associations, Inc. (Department of Refugee and Immigrant Services), Citizens Committee for NYC Community Technology Center, Claremont Neighborhood Centers, Coalition of Hispanic Family Services, Community Access Inc., Community Association of Progressive Dominicans, Community Impact, Davidson Community Center, Dannelisse Corporation, Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, Brooklyn Community Housing and Services, Inc-Gateways to Opportunity, Casa Atabex Ache, and Advocates for Children of New York Inc.
- ▶ **Elected Officials.** LawHelp/NY's Project Director participated in Legal Services for New York's Constituency Services training for staffs of elected officials. Following up on that opportunity, emails and letters were sent to participants in the training about the availability of LawHelp/NY training; leaflets and other promotional materials were sent to 167 New York City based elected officials. Follow-up phone calls are in process to 47 City Council member offices. This has resulted in numerous training opportunities, which will continue in 2007. For example, Councilman Liu's office organized a

LawHelp/NY training at the Flushing Library in Queens. Congressman Rangel, whose staff received training in July, is sponsoring a large event for his district in May, 2007.

- ▶ **Mailings.**
  - 230 packets that included leaflets and postcards in English and Spanish were sent to organizations listed in LawHelp/NY. (LawHelp's promotional postcard is now available in English and Spanish.)
  - More than 100 packets were sent to the mediation community by the Office of ADR & Court Improvement, NYS Unified Court System.
- ▶ **Community Technology Centers.** More than 60 faxes about LawHelp/NY were sent to community-based technology centers.
- ▶ **LawHelp Outreach Tables.** LawHelp/NY set up and staffed informational tables at Law Day activities in each of the five boroughs, at the Walton Educational Campus Student Fair for high schools students in the Bronx, and at the Bronx Clergy Day activities. Follow-up to Bronx Clergy Day included twenty-nine follow-up calls and emails.
- ▶ **Small Bar Associations.** LawHelp/NY Project Director led a training at the Conference of Bar Leaders of small Bar Associations sponsored by the NYS Bar Association. A follow-up mailing about the LawHelp/NY website and the availability of training has been sent to 46 attendees, including the following NYC based minority and immigrant Bar Associations: Dominican Bar Association, Korean American Lawyers Association of Greater New York, Latino Lawyers Association of Queens County, Black Bar Association of Bronx County, and Association of Black Women Attorneys.
- ▶ **Legal Services Community.** LawHelp was on the agenda at several statewide Project Directors meetings, and the LawHelp Consortium sponsored a reception at the 2006 Legal Assistance Partnership Conference in Albany.
- ▶ **LawHelp Posters in Spanish.** As a result of LawHelp's collaboration with the Office of Court Administration, joint LawHelp and CourtHelp posters were produced; however, these were in English only. LawHelp/NY staff prepared a preliminary Spanish translation of this poster, which was finalized and produced by OCA. These posters have now been distributed throughout the Court system, including the Offices of the Self-Represented. LawHelp/NY is currently awaiting delivery of 500 Spanish posters.
- ▶ **Media Coverage.**

In 2006, with the support of a media consultant, LawHelp/NY distributed a news release in English and Spanish, with a press kit, announcing the Spanish 'mirror' website to a wide variety of media outlets, ranging from newspapers, magazines and newsletters to radio and television stations in the Metro New York area. In total 94

news outlets were reached, including 46 Hispanic media outlets. El Diario/La Prensa, the number one Spanish-language newspaper in New York (and the most widely read Spanish-language newspaper in the northeastern United States), with over a quarter-million readers a day, published a story. Telemundo 47 (an NBC affiliate) ran a feature story about LawHelp/NY featuring LawHelp/NY staff and community leaders speaking about the web site. NY1 Noticias featured a story about LawHelp. In addition to the press kit and news release, follow-up pitch calls were made to a number of key press contacts.

Additional media outreach by LawHelp's program associate resulted in LawHelp/NY PSA announcements in The Latin Post, New York One and Carib News. We are awaiting confirmation of the PSA in El Diario.

A press release/media outreach plan is underway to announce the new Senior topic area. All materials distributed will be in English and Spanish.

#### **IV. Assessment of Web Site**

LawHelp/NY worked to evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach campaign and content development by using a number of tools, described below.

- **Usage Reports:**

These reports measure usage and enable LawHelp staff to determine priorities in content development, to analyze usage of non-English language content, and to see how outreach or other activities have impacted on usage. In 2006, these reports showed that on a **daily** basis:

- There are **648** people visiting the site and **3,322** page views;
- Users download **203** Know Your Rights materials;
- Users access **473** Find a Lawyer Profiles.

On an **annual** basis in 2006:

- **5,200** visits were by individuals accessing the web site from computer terminals at court houses.
- Approximately **19,000** visits were by individuals who were referred from a court web site.
- There were **7,240** visits to and **22,000** page views of LawHelp/NY's foreign language resource page.
- There were **12,000** foreign language resources downloaded, **5,500** of which were in Spanish.

A comparison between 2005 and 2006 data demonstrates considerable growth in usage for 2006. This trend is continuing in 2007

#### **Daily Usage Comparison:**

Year	Visits	Page views	Know Your Rights Downloads	Users Access Find a Lawyer Profiles
2006	648	3,322	203	473
2005	424	2,250	176	356

## Annual Usage Comparison:

Year	Visits/Court House Terminals	Referred from Court Web Site	Foreign Language Resource Page-- Visits/ Page Views	Downloads of For. Lang. Resources	Downloads in Spanish
2006	5,200	19,000	7,240 / 22,000	12,000	5,500
2005	5,000	16,500	6,000 / 19,000	7,500	4,000

- **New Survey Instrument.** From mid-May 2006 when it was posted to December 2006, LawHelp/NY received 390 completed surveys
- **Feedback button.** LawHelp/NY receives information on ease-of-use, requests for types of legal information, criticisms and compliments via the “Feedback “ button that appears on LawHelp/NY home page.
- **LawHelp Consortium Assessment**

With the advent of a new Project Director, and expansion of staff, the LawHelp Consortium has realized that the time has come to re-evaluate and redefine its role to ensure that LawHelp/NY continues to build usage, content and engagement with the greater legal services community. To achieve these aims, in 2006 the LawHelp Consortium began a self-assessment and strategic planning process that it is still engaged in. The Consortium hopes to further define the roles and responsibilities of Consortium membership and plan for growth through 2010.

Another challenge facing the LawHelp/NY Consortium is to enhance its ability to systematically update and improve content. LawHelp has been successful in establishing clear processes and procedures for updating organizational information. However, the expansion of Know Your Rights and self help content on the website over the last year, and the need to expand the Finding Other Help resources, has led the Consortium to envision a more structured approach to content management. For 2007, LawHelp intends to hire a part-time content manager and explore the viability of establishing a formalized Editorial Board of experts with responsibilities for content review and expansion of the major topic areas.

## V. Partnerships

LawHelp/NY's extensive partnerships and collaborations are essential to the long-term growth and usability of the website.

First, the LawHelp Consortium membership has expanded to include two new upstate members, Legal Assistance of Western NY Inc., and Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. The LAWNY partnership has become particularly productive—LAWNY houses up state LawHelp projects, both outreach and content expansion, with an emphasis on new technologies such as interview and document assembly software. LAWNY also assists in the LawHelp collaboration with NYS OCA. And the collaboration with OCA has resulted in a range of new outreach events including a mailing to OCA mediation centers and teams across the state and a training event for NYS Court librarians.

LawHelp is partnering more often with law schools. For example, we work closely with the clinic program at Touro Law School, and they regularly send students who are fulfilling pro bono requirements with LawHelp/NY projects. We have a similar relationship with NY Law School, with a Capstone Fellow devoted to developing the new Consequences of Criminal Charges topic area, which itself is a collaboration between LawHelp.org/NY, reentry.net, the New York State Defenders Association Immigration Project, Legal Action Center and others.

## **VI. Financial and In-Kind Support of the website**

1 and 2. During the course of the TIG grant, LawHelp/NY has expanded its funding base primarily through expanded grants from IOLA, which reached \$100,000 in 2006 and \$120,000 for 2007. In addition, LawHelp/NY received two successive grants of \$50,000 for each year, 2006 and 2007, from the New York Community Trust. In kind resources provided by LawHelp Consortium members (identified above) equaled \$32,000.

3. LawHelp/NY had revenues totaling approximately \$220,000 in 2006. An expense budget is enclosed as a separate attachment.

## **VI. Major Lessons and Recommendations**

The most important lesson is the importance of having an expanded, dedicated professional staff, with a commitment to growth of content, outreach, technological innovation and, therefore, budget, over a sustained period. In our view, although this mature website no longer fits into the TIG support categories, TIG should consider opening up grant opportunities to support the longevity of statewide websites.

LawHelp/NY has learned that outreach needs to be focused at the community level. Bring LawHelp to the community rather than trying to get the community to come to LawHelp. This strategy has proven to be quite successful in promoting website use. All LawHelp/NY staff and interns are engaged in going out to community groups, elected officials offices in the community, social service agencies in the community, and the like.

Technological innovation is also key for keeping a statewide website relevant. For example, LawHelp/NY is collaborating with Legal Assistance of Western NY, Inc., LSNY and the NYS Office of Court Administration in a plan for developing interactive content for the self-represented. A project proposal has been submitted to TIG covering 2008 and 2009 for the development of at least 15 A2J interviews for the self-represented, as well as pleadings for pro bono attorneys representing low-income litigants. If funded, LawHelp/NY will engage in an extensive outreach campaign to train community based organizations, social services, constituent service offices, intake personnel, libraries and others on the front lines answering questions from low-income people facing difficult legal issues on how to use and advise on the use of the A2J interview process.