

**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grant Program
Renewal (Second) Web Site Grant Narrative Final Report**

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I. Project Goals

Summary of First Year (2005). LAWV's initial TIG web site grant was for calendar year 2005. The Advocate Side was designated as Phase I. Following initial design work, LAWV encountered delays due to underlying software problems in the template, which were not resolved by Kaivo until August 2005. LAWV launched the Advocate Side at a statewide staff meeting on October 20, 2005. By the end of 2005 the Advocate Side held approximately 300 resources for advocates.

Goals for Second Year (2006).

1. Strengthen and expand the Advocate Side
 - a. Continue to add to the resources posted for advocates
 - b. Expand outreach to advocates
 - 1) Regular communication of developments on the site
 - 2) Broaden LAWV staff participation in and ownership of resources on the Advocate Side
 - 3) Add advocates from non-LSC funded entities as users of the site
2. Implement Public Side as Phase II
 - a. Recruit volunteer attorneys as authors of original content
 - b. Add to resources posted to public side
 - c. Launch public side
 - d. Begin public outreach efforts to increase visibility of the site
3. Begin implementation of Pro Bono Side as Phase III

II. Web Site Description

1. Template choice. The initial web site project team included the LAWV Executive Director, the Legal Content Coordinator, the LAWV Data/Software Specialist, and the LAWV management secretary. This group reviewed approximately 20 existing statewide web sites, including views of the private Advocate Side components of a half-dozen. We selected the

Kaivo/OST template because we preferred the apparent greater flexibility to individualize both appearance and function. Because LAWV is the sole LSC-funded legal services provider in our state, we intended to add many components and features to the site for internal program use. With all that we have learned, and with all that we now know about the choices between the templates, LAWV is absolutely convinced that the OST template was the right option for our program.

2. Launch dates. Advocate Side - Phase I. LAWV designated the Advocate Side as Phase I, with a goal of launching during the first year (2005) of the TIG Web Site grant. With the relative availability of legal resources within the program for posting, we felt that we could launch the Advocate Side in significantly shorter time, with significantly more resources, and achieve a more robust presence. We further felt we would achieve strong staff support by starting with the Advocate Side. We did launch during the first year, at a statewide staff meeting on October 20, 2005. Our experience has confirmed all the original reasons for the choice of Advocate Side for Phase I. As noted in the Achievements section of this Report, advocate response to the site has been extremely enthusiastic and supportive.

Public Side - Phase II. LAWV designated the Public Side as Phase II, with a goal of launching by the end of the second year (2006) of the Web Site grant. By December 2006 the LAWV site was ready for a launch of the public side. We felt the resources posted had reached a minimum critical mass to support a publicity event and increased consumer use. We conducted user testing of the Public Side in December 2006, and received extremely favorable assessments. (See Achievements section below.) But due to conflicting schedules through the holiday season, of program staff and stakeholders planned to participate in the press conference for the Launch, that event did not take place until January 2007.

Pro Bono Side - Phase III. LAWV designated the Pro Bono Side as Phase III, with a goal of an initial launch by the end of the second year (2006) of the Web Site grant. The LAWV Pro Bono Project Coordinator achieved that goal, launching a pro bono component in October 2006. The resources there are fairly limited so far, and we plan additional work in 2007 to develop and strengthen the Pro Bono Side.

3. Breadth and Depth of Content. Advocate Side - Phase I. As of this writing (March 2007) over 1,000 resources have been posted to the Advocate Library. These are spread across 34 “top level” substantive categories in the Advocate Library and many sub-levels within those categories.

These include resources of broad range and comprehensive discussion, such as a Treatise on WV Family law, a WV Eviction Defense Manual, and a Guide to WV Unemployment Compensation cases. These broader resources are also grouped together with a separate Advocate Side button for “Major Resources.”

In addition, there is an array of more precisely focused, single issue resources such as briefs, motions, form pleadings, research memoranda, web site links, journal articles, and excerpts from national list serve substantive discussions.. Most of the resources in the Advocate Library are focused on the major topics of LAWV’s substantive case work: Housing - 333 resources; Family Law - 314; Unemployment Compensation - 301; and Health/Medicaid - 192.

LAWV has also developed eight “Interest Areas” on the Advocate Side covering both substantive topics (Housing, Domestic Violence, etc) and project focus topics (Ombudsman Program, Behavioral Health Advocacy Program, Training, and Support Staff Issues). There is a

“What’s New” feature, showing the three most recent additions to the Advocate Library, and a summary of other recent postings. And of course we maintain an Events Calendar and a News function.

Public Side - Phase II. As of this writing LAWV has 294 resources posted to the Public Library. These are spread across 36 different top-level categories, and numerous sub-levels. The categories with the 5 most resources posted are Consumer (120), Health (54), Family (51), Housing (40), and Disability (28). At this stage, few of these resources are original authorship content specific to West Virginia law. Strengthening that content is a goal for 2007.

In addition LAWV has over 500 web sites listed in our Public Links component. We have over almost 550 “Helpful Organizations” (domestic violence programs, food banks, unemployment and welfare offices, homeless programs, etc) listed in an interactive, searchable database on the Public Side. LAWV has added separate components to the web site with information about LAWV units providing advocacy other than legal assistance - our statewide Long Term Care Regional Ombudsman Program, and our statewide Behavioral Health Advocacy Program.

Pro Bono Side - Phase III. The Pro Bono Side consists primarily of static content describing the Pro Bono program, the statewide Pro Bono Project plan, recognition of past WV State Bar “Kaufman Award” winners for pro bono work, and the types of pro bono opportunities available for volunteer attorneys. Strengthening this component is a goal for 2007.

4. Multimedia capacities. On our Public Side are several public-radio style audio profiles and interviews with LAWV clients. (<http://www.lawv.net/Home/PublicWeb/About/ClientAudio>) Most of these were produced by an independent radio journalist, working in conjunction with the WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence to profile survivors of domestic violence. One was produced as a pro bono contribution by the same journalist, profiling a client of the LAWV Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. We have also linked to the “Poverty Tour” produced by the Campaign for Human Development. Otherwise LAWV has not developed other multimedia tools for the site.

5. Document Assembly Systems. LAWV on the Public Side has linked to a web site of the WV Supreme Court of Appeals that contains fillable pdf Family Law court forms. Otherwise, LAWV has not developed or posted document assembly systems to our site.

6. Standards and Quality Control. LAWV has adopted both a “Content Protocol” and a “Guide to Content Development,” modeled on similar documents developed by the Montana statewide web site. In addition, LAWV has written its own “Style Sheet Guidelines for Web Site Content Authors” (copy attached). This document is used primarily with volunteer private lawyer authors, to assist them in achieving the LAWV literacy level standard (6th-to-8th grade reading level) and the LAWV preferred style.

7. Usability and Usefulness. *Advocate Side - Phase I.* LAWV has conducted two separate rounds of advocate surveys to assess the Advocate Side.

The first was in December 2005, just six weeks after the Advocate Side launch. The results are summarized in a table attached to this report. There were only 14 respondents. Of those, as many as 57% stated they had Rarely or Never used one or more of the major web site features - indicating that six weeks was too soon after launch for the site to have developed much use. Yet

of those advocates who had used the site, a range of 71% to 78% found the features Very Easy or Easy to use; 57% to 79% found the features Helpful or Very Helpful. *More significant, every respondent, 100%*, agreed that the site “increased knowledge about the legal issues facing our clients.” From 86% to 93% positively reviewed all other evaluation criteria except “helps me take on cases in areas new to me” (where only 50% agreed).

The second advocate survey was in September 2006. (Results summarized in separate attachment.) The number of respondents almost tripled, to 41. Advocate responses (i.e., without support staff responses) were overwhelmingly favorable. Fully 97% of advocate respondents said the site increased their knowledge, helped them do quicker research, helped them do higher quality research, and improved the knowledge and skills they need to represent clients.

Public Side - Phase II. LAWV conducted public side user surveys in December 2006, just before the launch of the Public Side. We used two groups of testers. First was a group of current and former welfare recipients, gathered at a low-income after-school child care program. The other group consisted of current domestic violence victims staying a local domestic violence shelter (Results attached as a separate document.) *Every public respondent from both groups, 100%, stated that they would “Use the Site Again” and “Recommend it to Others.”* 69% found it Easy to Find Information on the site; 88% felt the information they found was Easy to Understand; and 94% found the information Useful.

III. Achievements to Date

1. *All Components Launched.* We consider it a major achievement that LAWV was able to meet the main initial goals and timetables and get all components of the site launched in the first two years of operation. The first year encompassed basic site design (and re-design), getting the mechanics and bugs resolved, posting substantial Advocate Side resources, and launching by the end of October 2005. The second year focused upon expansion of the Advocate Side, development of the Public Side, posting of sufficient Public Side resources, initiation of the Pro Bono Side, and launching both the Public Side and the Pro Bono Side just after the end of Calendar 2006.

2. *Achieving Substantial Numbers of Resources for the Advocate Side.* OST Circuit Rider Becky Levine surveyed OST sites in 2005. She found that the average number of resources posted on OST sites was around 500. By the end of 1st Quarter 2006, less than six months after launch of our Advocate Side, LAWV had almost 600 resources posted. We were pleased to have moved our site above the average in a short time. As of this writing, one year later, LAWV now has over 1,000 resources on its Advocate Side. We have solidly accomplished our second year goal of continuing to add to the resources posted for advocates.

3. *High User Satisfaction.* Surveys of advocate users in September 2006, less than one year after launch, showed very high advocate support and satisfaction with the site. 97% of advocate respondents (excluding support staff) said the site increased their knowledge, helped them do quicker research, helped them do higher quality research, and improved the knowledge and skills they need to represent clients.

Surveys of client users a few weeks before the Public Side launch were similarly enthusiastic. 100% of the surveyed client users said they would use the site again, and would recommend the

site to others. 88% said the information they found on the site was Easy to understand, and 94% said the information they found was useful to them.

4. *Successful Public Launch with Resulting Increased Usage.* In January 2007 LAWV held a public press conference for launch of the Public Side, followed by a presentation at the WV Women's Commission annual "Women's Day" events. Press coverage included three television stations, three statewide radio news networks, and a number of print outlets throughout the state. Web Trends statistics then showed an approximate doubling of visits (over 11,000), hits (almost 54,000) and page views (51,000) in the month of February 2007 as compared to the month of November 2006. A separate spreadsheet showing visits, hits and page views for the period from June 2006 through February 2007 is attached. This represents an achievement of the 2d year goal of launching the public side and initiating public outreach efforts.

5. *Start of Outreach Plan.* As part of the Public launch LAWV has designed and printed posters (11" x 17"), flyers (8.5" x 11"), bookmarks, and business cards. These are being mailed to all judges, family court judges, magistrates, and court clerks in our state. They have been distributed to all domestic violence shelter programs. They will also be mailed to all libraries in the state, all welfare offices, and other sites. We have made live presentations to the annual meeting of the state library association, and will be presenting in April to the annual meeting of the National Association of Social Workers. In 2007 LAWV will develop a more detailed Outreach Plan, building on these starting points.

5. *Partnerships with WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence, with West Virginia Advocates, and with the West Virginia Women's Commission.* Each of these partnerships have brought new advocate users to our site; have brought new resources to be posted to both the Public and the Advocate sides; and have heightened the visibility of the site among the clients and customers served by those entities.

IV. Partnerships

Our first partnership, of course, is the stakeholders group. Governmental members of our stakeholder committee includes representatives of the WV Supreme Court Clerk's office, the trial court clerk's office of the largest county in the state, the court administrator's office of the largest county in the state, the director of the WV State Bar, and a clinical law professor from the WVU College of Law. All of these have been actively supportive in implementing the site and thinking through additions and changes. The Kanawha County Circuit Court (trial court) clerk's office has been particularly helpful in identifying the most common issues and questions presented by pro se litigants in their office. LAWV is developing text and content to address those common areas of litigant concern. The Supreme Court's web site has its own Self-Help Center, and Legal Research Center for self-represented litigants, with which LAWV has linked and benefitted. Non-governmental entities include the state AARP chapter, the WV Senior Legal Aid Program, representatives from a collective of emergency and transitional housing providers in our region, technology representatives from two private law firms, and representatives of the statewide

LAWV has partnerships with three other advocacy organizations, all of whom are on the stakeholder group but who have taken a much more active role. First is the WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the umbrella organization for the state's 14 domestic violence programs. Many of their advocacy staff have registered as users of the Advocate Side, and have posted resources on our site. CADV staff have been particularly active in posting education and training events to the web site calendar, assuring their availability to all advocates. The shelter programs will also be invaluable allies in outreach to clients, and promoting the visibility of the site. We have done presentations to DV program advocates gathered at a CADV statewide meeting, to promote their knowledge, awareness and use of the web site resources with their clients.

Second is "West Virginia Advocates," the state's behavioral health Protection & Advocacy agency. Many of the WVA staff advocates, both lawyers and non-lawyers, have signed on as registered users of the Advocate Side. A number of have posted specialized resources in the field of Mental Health law and behavioral health advocacy, that have had cross-over value to LAWV staff. We are now having discussions among LAWV, WVA, a third behavioral health advocacy organization, and the state entity coordinating behavioral health services, about using the statewide web site as the primary vehicle for behavioral health consumer information from all those organizations. WVA is also becoming a vehicle to increase access to the LAWV web site by their clients, especially regarding the specialized behavioral health issues WVA addresses.

The third partnership is with the West Virginia Women's Commission, an agency of state government. The WVWC is in the process of editing and revising a third edition of their book "Women and the Law." WVWC is placing each newly revised chapter on to the LAWV web site as it is revised, in advance of completing the whole project and issuing a bound printed book. As of this writing two chapters have been posted. In the first two months they have been up, those chapters are the 3rd and 5th most downloaded files from the LAWV site.

V. Challenges and Strategies

LAWV has made a significant commitment of personnel and resources to implement the statewide web site. We have a highly capable Information Technology Specialist to address technical issues with the site. We have a lawyer with 28 years of legal services practice as the Legal Content Coordinator. While neither of those positions are allocated full time to the web site project, LAWV management has committed at least one-third time from each of them for the project. We believe this has enabled LAWV to avoid, or to successfully address, many challenges that may have been larger obstacles for programs without the same commitment. In particular, separating the technology knowledge issues from the legal knowledge issues allows both coordinators to work at maximum productivity on the issues within their spheres of expertise.

LAWV has launched the major components of the site, and has achieved relatively smooth operation of them. The future challenges are (1) expansion of content, and (2) expansion of use. Both will require long term and sustained attention and maintenance.

The greatest challenge facing the LAWV web site project is the need to expand the group of volunteer lawyers to write articles and create content. “Original content” is probably our weakest area; recruitment of volunteer writers is probably the best sustained solution. The beauty of the web site concept is that it can accommodate such a wide range of legal issues and needs. Correspondingly, the greatest challenge is finding a way to create content to cover that range of issues and needs. The LAWV Legal Content Coordinator is working with the LAWV Pro Bono Coordinator and the WV State Bar to recruit additional volunteers. The Pro Bono Coordinator has been promoting web site work with several of the major law firms in our state. We are using the State Bar magazine to promote visibility and recruit volunteers. Now that the site is fully launched, the next major goal is to develop the base of content contributors.

The other greatest challenge will be expansion of use of the site. This will require developing and implementing a long term, sustained plan for Outreach, to increase visibility; to increase client awareness; and to increase client usage. We will draw upon long term Outreach plans and approaches that have been formulated by other statewide web sites, and apply them to the unique circumstances of our largely rural state with dispersed populations and few urban centers.

VI. Financial and In-Kind Support

1. Resources devoted. For the first two grant years of 2005 and 2006, the total LSC TIG funds awarded were \$79,937. During that same period LAWV expenditures (including in-kind resources) were \$99,356 (set out in sub-part 3 below). Therefore the financial and in-kind resources devoted to the web site exceed the web site grants by \$25,931 (or 32% more than the grant funds received).

2. Entities providing resources. All resources exceeding the LSC grant amounts were provided by Legal Aid of West Virginia (including student interns and volunteer lawyers contributing in-kind to LAWV for the web site project. We have not attempted to quantify the value of time expended by stakeholder group members. No financial resources were contributed by any other entity.

3. Expenses paid and activities supported. The \$99, 356 total amount of resources are as follows:

Salaries and personnel costs	73,425
Operating and out-of-pocket costs	16,081
2 FTE summer college intern services	6,000
Summer law intern project time value	100
<u>Pro bono attorney author time donations</u>	<u>3,750</u>
Total	99,356

These costs include 29% of the Content Coordinator’s FTE time (salary and fringe costs for attorney with 28 years legal services experience); 30% of the Technical Coordinator’s FTE time; 30 hours from a designated staff attorney on special project time; \$14,000 for contract services from Kaivo; equivalent of one FTE summer college student; approximately \$900 for the Content

Coordinator to attend TIG 2006 (in addition to the Technical Coordinator's attendance paid by TIG); and about \$400 for phones, meetings, computers and other miscellaneous expenses.

VII. Major lessons and recommendations

1. Most Significant Lessons Learned. First, LAWV continues to believe strongly that the choice to make the Advocate Side its Phase I component was correct. We had already in existence, a large number of resources for advocates that could be posted immediately, without revision or re-writing. We built a broadly useful Advocate Side in relatively short order. We thus garnered widespread staff support and buy-in for the resources devoted to the web site effort.

In that process we learned much about how the platform works, and how to solve the inevitable bugs that arise, without placing them before the public eye. In turn, when we began implementing the Public Side as Phase II, the process was smoother and has posed far fewer glitches that might have frustrated public users.

Second, LAWV separated the web site technology responsibilities from the legal content responsibilities, and assigned them to different people with the knowledge and skills to perform them. We did not have a lawyer struggling to figure out software coding; we did not have a technology specialist trying to figure out how to help lawyers and advocates in their daily work. With two people using their best skills in conjunction, we felt we worked effectively to accomplish a great deal.

Third, LAWV's experience confirms the importance of the LSC requirement for public-side user testing. In working with the two groups we have used so far (one of welfare recipients, one of domestic violence shelter residents), we received useful suggestions, and strong support for the whole idea of the web site. We also recognized that "user testing" can become its own form of Outreach, and we are beginning to plan a series of "testing sessions" for the future that really are more about marketing and outreach.

Fourth, especially in the first year, LAWV relied on the Circuit Rider for guidance and suggestions, and for direction and linkage to other programs who could offer help. The Circuit Rider helped us with the template provider when it wasn't offering timely and effective assistance. We used the Circuit Rider to find out what others had done, who to talk to about what they had done, and then to decide what was best for our program.

2. Recommendations for other grantees.

(1) Attend the TIG Conference and network, network, network.

(2) Focus on building the Advocate Side resources first, for several reasons. One, you will have a far larger supply of immediately available content resources for posting. Two, you will learn to use the template software, and address inevitable glitches, without exposing that learning process to the public eye. Three, you will gain staff support for the whole project by giving them tangible resources they can use in their daily work.

(3) Separate the technology tasks from the legal content tasks. Don't ask one person to do both of those things.

(4) Take advantage of the help the Circuit Rider can provide.