

Public Libraries and Access to Justice: **2. The Role of Public Libraries**



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Public Libraries and Access to Justice: The Role of Public Libraries

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Editorial Panel

- Melissa Barr, Ohio
- Judy Helms, Travis County Law Library
- Bonnie Hough, California AOC
- Liz Keith, Pro Bono Net
- Marcia Koslov, LA Law Library

I. In the Beginning

- You are the frontline for access to information – and so to access to justice
- You don't have to be a lawyer - but rather to help people navigate to the right information

Public Libraries and Access to Justice: The Role of Public Libraries

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Public librarians are the front line for access to justice, but in the role of navigator, not legal experts. Public librarians who have not been trained on legal reference want to hide under the desk when legal patrons appear. As reference librarians, we are used to being able to find answers, but in the legal field this can be difficult. This conference will showcase various programs for training public librarians in legal reference.

II. Stories and Examples –

- Hope you'll join us in our road to justice by
 - Assisting your patrons
 - Providing feedback to the website developers
 - Participating in access to justice working groups

Public Libraries and Access to Justice: The Role of Public Libraries

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Materials include stories from California, Montana, Texas, Ohio and New York. We will discuss benefits to public libraries, the courts, law libraries, Legal Aid, and your communities. We will show you websites and software already being used to help SRLs – jargon for self-represented litigants, NOT summer reading lists! SRLs are also called *pro se* patrons – that's *pro se*, two words, not prose. You should pick up some of the legal jargon as we continue. Please remember that we are not trying to turn you into lawyers or paralegals or legal assistants. This program is intended to enhance your reference skills so you may climb out from under the reference desk and face your legal patrons with confidence.

II-A. LA Law Library

- 8 Branch Locations in Courthouses
 - Open 4 hours per day
 - Paraprofessional Staff
 - Lack Technology
 - Older collection / Not maintained

LA Law Library: Pasadena

- Pasadena Public Library
 - New leadership
 - Mid-size public library
 - Government document collection
 - General public legal materials

LA Law Library – Pasadena Partnership

- LA Law Library
 - Moved law practice materials
 - Maintain the collection
 - Provide training to staff
 - Provide training to public
 - Provide online service

LA Law Library – Pasadena Partnership

- Pasadena
 - Provided shelf space
 - Reclassified all legal materials together
 - File and shelve materials in timely manner
 - Provided technology
 - 9 – 9 and weekends
 - Professional Staff

LA Law Library: Compton

- Compton Courthouse
 - Needed Library Space
 - Presiding Judge Request
- Los Angeles County Public Library
 - Compton Library undergoing renovation

LA Law Library – LACPL Partnership

- LA Law Library
 - Moved law practice materials
 - Maintain the collection
 - Provide training to staff
 - Provide online service

LA Law Library – LACPL Partnership

- Compton
 - Totally Renovated Library
 - Provided shelf space
 - Left LA Law materials together
 - Agreed to update Nolo Press materials
 - Provided technology
 - Evening and Weekend Hours
 - Professional Staff

II-B. Stories and Examples -- Montana

Public Libraries and Access to Justice: The Role of Public Libraries

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Early Identification of Public Libraries' Potential

- In Montana, there is only one public law library.
- But there are wonderful public libraries, who are critical community partners

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One public law library: www.court.mt.gov/library. They partner with public libraries in many ways, through connections at the State Library, through the Federation coordinators, directly with the larger, urban public libraries, and with the Montana Library Association.

Training Analysis

- Previously law library trained at state library conferences, which only touched a few.
- Next law library trained at the library federation meetings, which bring in the directors at regional events. Still not always the right people.

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Here is a list of the Federations: http://msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/For_All_Librarians/Federations/Federation_Notebook/default.asp

Training Expansion

- The entire reference staff is the target of the new training. Law librarian goes to them.
- The training takes about 90 minutes, and is timed so that no one has to be at the reference desk.
- The following shows how many libraries have been involved through 2009. Remember that Montana is physically as large as California!

Public Libraries and Access to Justice: #2. The Role of Public Libraries



Contents of Training

- Why the public library is so important
- What is legal information?
 - How is it different from legal advice?
 - Who produces it?
 - How is it organized?
 - Where can you find it?

Montana Training Contents

- State and community resources for referrals.
- Reliable websites; caution about forms
- Sample questions: how would you answer this?.....

Remember the Nature of SRLs

- Foreign land; foreign language
- Frequently have not chosen to be in court
- Scarcity of legal aid attorneys available
- Invitation to be our partners in providing access to justice

II-C. Stories and Examples -- Texas

Austin public librarian trained by Travis County Law Librarian

- Training was informal, flexible, personalized.
- Law librarian asked public librarians to list the questions they had been asked and their most frequently asked questions.
- In 90 minutes she showed them how to find the answers to those plus additional resources.

The sessions were very informal. Each librarian was at a computer.

The librarians were seated at a group of computers in close proximity. We navigated through the websites, stopping along the way to browse articles of interest. The librarians spoke up about what they were seeing, making comments, asking questions and interacting with me and the other librarians. It was like showing a group of friends a website that was focused on a shared interest.

Who?

- Arranged by the Director of Training for APL and the Travis County Law Library Manager
- Taught by head reference library for the law library.
- Students were public reference librarians.

Because they use the internet every day to help patrons find legal information, teaching the sessions was very easy. The public librarians were very interested and enthusiastic about what they were finding on the main legal self help website for Texas. The website contains information in simple English without legal jargon.

Where and with whom?

Problem: Public librarians couldn't leave the reference desk unattended.

Solution: Law Librarian traveled to branches and trained at the reference desk.

They set up sessions both at branches and at the county law library, which is located within two blocks of the Austin Public Library's central location.

What?

- What kind of legal questions did the public librarians get?
- What kind of website will provide reliable information and answers?
- www.TexasLawHelp.org
- www.FreeTexasForms.org
- Handouts

At the sessions most of the questions received by the public librarians were very similar to the questions asked at the county law library. As they worked through the lawhelp website, more questions came to mind that the public librarians had been asked.

What else?

- Texas government portal
- www.texasonline.com
- Travis County government portal
www.co.travis.tx.us
- Travis County Law Library's Research Links www.traviscountylawlibrary.org
- Other Travis County websites
www.traviscountyinfo.org

The Texas government portal has been completely revised to be user friendly and from the citizen's perspective. Instead of choosing government departments, the website is constructed around the kinds of questions citizens have. For finding the law, the county law library has a portal for finding the law itself. So, for example, if someone is trying to find out what the law is on divorce, they can find the statutes that cover divorce. Cases can be found, but that is more difficult without access to the legal databases, which are either pay websites or available at the county law library.

Handouts and mouse pads

- Handouts to be copied and distributed -Texas Law Help/Free Texas Forms
- Legal Aid Clinic info
- Legal Assistance in the community Helpful Numbers
- Steps in the Texas Civil Litigation Process-4 pages
- Mouse pads from TexasLawHelp
- Business cards from the TCLL to give out

They encouraged the librarians to have the handouts on hand to give to patrons needing assistance with legal matters in the Austin area. The mouse pads with the Texas Law Help logo serve as reminders of the website. I encouraged the librarians to give out my card, if patrons had questions about the Travis County courts.

Results?

- Patrons at the public libraries will get better guidance to reliable online legal resources.
- Public reference librarians gained confidence in using TexasLawHelp and other trusted websites to find legal information, forms and community resources

The in depth navigation of the websites and the interaction with the websites helps to reinforce the existence of the websites in the minds of the librarians. When a legal question comes up in the future, the librarians know where to look even if they don't remember the exact place in the websites where the answer can be found.

Results

- Strengthened bond between APL and the Travis County Law Library
- Increased traffic to the law library and to the best and most reliable noncommercial legal websites.

It was a great opportunity for the law library to get to know the Austin Public Library librarians. They realized how much they do to help their patrons. And the public librarians got the chance to know how much they, and the other county law librarians do for patrons, too. Public and law libraries have so much in common and can help all patrons by working with each other.

II-D. Stories and Examples – Ohio

- Preservation of County Law Libraries
- Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation Web seminars
- Ohio Bar Association Public Resources
- Save the Dream foreclosure program
- Legal Aid community clinics and pro bono
- Ohio Supreme Court Opinions online
- Ohio's Public Libraries

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Preservation of County Law Libraries. Each of Ohio's 88 counties had law libraries that consisted of anything from a couple of shelves of law books in a judge's office to full-sized law libraries with professional staffs, with funding spelled out in state statutes. In March 2005 House Bill 66 changed the statutes in such a way that the law libraries would basically be defunded in increments over several years. Law librarians in Ohio, supported by fellow law librarians in other states and in the American Association of Law Libraries, mobilized to save the law libraries. After prolonged lobbying and negotiations the county law libraries were preserved, albeit in new configurations that are currently still being worked out. 2010 is the "reinvention" year for Ohio's law libraries.

Ohio Bar Association Website. The Bar Association's site provides an excellent public resource covering many aspects of Ohio law in a question and answer format with printable pamphlets, articles, and an online book. This free website is kept current through the vigilance and continuing support of the Ohio Bar. The site managers are happy to accept suggestions for new articles in areas not already covered. For example, we submitted requests for articles on expungement of criminal records and for emancipation of minors after repeated inquiries on those topics from patrons, and urged the Bar Association to post articles about the changing bankruptcy laws back in 2005. The website address is included in the handouts. (www.ohiobar.org)

II-E Stories: LawHelp.org/NY
www.LawHelp.org/NY

Access to Justice = Language Access

They have a Spanish url so they can be found by
Spanish speakers on Spanish search engines:

www.ayudalegalny.org

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From the home page (and every page), you can go to the Spanish site.

Users can go to LiveHelp, just brought online, in English and Spanish



This is the opening page of the how-to-use LawHelp/NY video in Spanish

There are Know
Your Rights
resources in 34
languages in
addition to
English and
Spanish. This is
the list:

**Legal Aid Resources in
Other Languages**

- ▶ Albanian / shqip
- ▶ Amharic / Amharic
- ▶ Arabic / العربية
- ▶ Armenian / Հայերեն
- ▶ Bengali / বাংলা
- ▶ Bosnian / Bosanski
- ▶ Bulgarian / Български
- ▶ Cambodian / Khmer
- ▶ Chinese / 中文
- ▶ Farsi / فارسی
- ▶ French / Français
- ▶ German / Deutsch
- ▶ Greek / Ελληνικά
- ▶ Haitian Creole / Kreyòl ayisyen
- ▶ Hindi / हिन्दी
- ▶ Hmong / Hmoob
- ▶ Italian / Italiano
- ▶ Japanese / 日本語
- ▶ Korean / 한국어
- ▶ Laotian / ລາວ
- ▶ Mandarin Chinese / 官話
- ▶ Polish / polski
- ▶ Portuguese / português
- ▶ Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
- ▶ Russian / Русский
- ▶ Serbo-Croatian / Srpskohrvatski Jezik
- ▶ Somali / Soomaali
- ▶ Spanish / Español
- ▶ Swahili / Kiswahili
- ▶ Tagalog / Tagalog
- ▶ Turkish / Türkçe
- ▶ Ukrainian / Українська
- ▶ Urdu / اُردو
- ▶ Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt

LawHelp.org/ny
Helping low income New Yorkers solve legal problems

About Us | Feedback | News Alerts
Brochures & Handouts

Clic aquí para español

Home | How to Use LawHelp/ny | Legal aid offices

Resources in Chinese / 中文

Click on a topic below to view resources in the language you chose.

- Taxes 税金
- Workers Rights 劳工权
- Disability 残障
- Family & Juvenile 家庭, 青少年
- Housing 房屋
- Individual Rights 个人权利
- Internet Fraud: Crimes and Prevention 网络诈骗: 网络犯罪及防范
- Public Benefit 社会福利
- Consumer 消费者
- Education 教育
- Health 保健
- Immigration/Immigrants 移民
- Seniors 老人
- Consequences of Criminal Charges 刑事控告的结果

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Search This Site
Need Help with Your Search?

Alerts!
Are you going to court or submitting legal papers without an attorney? ¿Vas a ir a la corte o presentar documentos legales sin un abogado? Click here for do-it-yourself interactive forms-Haga clic aquí para formas interactivas que usted puede hacer

You Are Here
NY / Kings (Brooklyn)

Legal Aid Resources in Other Languages
Albanian / shqip
Amharic / Amharic
Arabic / العربية

For example, with the help of law student interns, they we translated the navigation and resource titles into Chinese

Public Libraries and Access to Justice: The Role of Public Libraries

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Helping low income New Yorkers solve legal problems

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Legal Services NYC - Brooklyn Branch

WHO WE ARE
 The staff lawyers and paralegals of Legal Services NYC-Brooklyn Branch provide quality legal advice and representation through trials and appeals with the goal of assuring that no poor person will be denied legal access to justice.

En Español
 Los abogados y paralegales de Servicios Legales NYC-Subdivisión de Brooklyn provee asesoramiento legal de calidad y representación a través de juicios y apelaciones, con el objetivo de asegurar que ninguna persona pobre se le negará el acceso legal a la justicia.

Read this info in Russian (прочитайте на русском языке)

HOW TO GET HELP
 • To contact this group, CALL (347) 592-2100

Alerts!

Are you a New York City resident facing foreclosure?
 Find out what you can do to prevent this.

Search This Site
 [GO](#)
 ▶ Need Help with Your Search?

You Are Here
 NY / Kings (Brooklyn)

Choose Another Subtopic
 ▶ Foreclosure, Predatory Lending & Home Loans
 ▶ Homeless Families and Individuals
 ▶ Housing Discrimination
 ▶ Jiggetts-FEPS/Rent Assistance
 ▶ Mobile Home Park Tenants
 ▶ Private Housing: Landlord

For some legal listings, they were able to add info in Spanish and Russian

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Sanctuary for Families' Center for Battered Women's Legal Services

WHO WE ARE

Sanctuary for Families is dedicated to meeting the needs of victims of domestic violence, while advocating for societal change and raising public awareness to end violence against all women and children. To protect and empower battered women, Sanctuary for Families provides crisis intervention, emergency and transitional housing, individual and group counseling, job readiness and mentoring programs. Through the Center for Battered Women's Legal Services, representation is provided to women in divorce, child custody and visitation child support, immigration, and criminal court matters.

En Español

Santuario para las familias se dedica a satisfacer las necesidades de las víctimas de la violencia en el hogar, mientras que abogar por el cambio social y la sensibilización de la opinión pública para poner fin a la violencia contra las mujeres y los niños. Para proteger y potenciar a las mujeres maltratadas, Santuario para Familias proporciona intervención de crisis, emergencia y vivienda de transición, consejería individual y en grupo, disposición de trabajo y programas de mentoría. A través del Centro de Mujeres Maltratadas de Servicios Jurídicos, la representación está prevista a las mujeres en el divorcio, la custodia de los hijos de visita y manutención de menores, inmigración, asuntos judiciales y penales.

Read this information in Chinese: (用中文看這些資訊)

HOW TO GET HELP

- To contact this group, CALL (212) 349-6009

SSI extension for humanitarian immigrants provides for two more years of benefits
The law granting the extension expires in 2011.

Search This Site



▶ Need Help with Your Search?

You Are Here

NY / NYC

Choose Another Subtopic

- ▶ Becoming a U.S. Citizen
- ▶ Citizenship through Military Service
- ▶ Consumer Rights of Immigrants
- ▶ Criminal Charges and Immigration
- ▶ Deportation & Removal
- ▶ Discrimination, Immigrant Rights, & Your Right to information in your language
- ▶ Getting Permanent Residence (Green Card)
- ▶ Health Care for Immigrants, including Language Rights
- ▶ HIV, Sexual Orientation, &

and Chinese

Home

How to Use LawHelp/NY | Legal aid offices

Print Friendly

Immigration/Immigrants >

Immigrants & Domestic Violence (VAWA)

FIND A LAWYER

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

FINDING OTHER HELP

GOING TO COURT

Fact sheets and booklets about your legal rights

Click on any of the titles below to learn more. Scroll to see all resources.

Email or save this information for yourself or share it with others!

SHARE

There are 28 resources

How can I find safety and support if I am a victim of domestic violence? - (3)

I am an immigrant and a victim of domestic violence what are my rights to safety and assistance? - (4)

What benefits are my children and I eligible for? - (2)

I am a victim of domestic violence, how can I get a green card (Permanent Residence) for myself or my children? - (9)

Immigration Offices You Should Know - (4)

I do not speak English, what is my right to receive information in my language? - (2)

More information - (4)

How can I find safety and support if I am a victim of domestic violence?

Finding Safety & Support (Separate Website)

Search This Site

Need Help with Your Search?

GO

Alerts!

SSI extension for humanitarian immigrants provides for two more years of benefits
The law granting the extension expires in 2011.

You Are Here
NY / NYC
Choose Another City, County or Zip Code

Choose Another Subtopic

Becoming a U.S. Citizen

Citizenship through Military Service

Consumer Rights of Immigrants

Criminal Charges and Immigration

Deportation & Removal

Discrimination, Immigrant Rights, & Your Right to

Throughout the site, they added Language Access

Public Libraries and ALB Public Libraries

Public Libraries and ALB Public Libraries

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Using pro bono lawyers, they rewrote the new NYC language access rights rules into plain language and had them translated into the five official NYC languages other than English

SCHOOL TRANSFERS AND NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND.
By: New York State Education Department

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I do not speak English, what is my right to receive information in my language?

Did you know you can get your child's school paperwork in your language?
Contact NYC Department of Education's Translation and Interpretation Unit
 (Separate Website)

By: NYC Department of Education

I do not speak English and my child goes to school in NYC. What are my rights to get information in my language? 

By: Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP
Read this in: Chinese / 中文, Italian / italiano, Korean / 한국어, Russian / Русский, Spanish / Español

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More information

Are you a victim of education discrimination? Find out how to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights  (Separate Website)

By: United States Department of Justice
Read this in: Amharic / Amharic, Arabic / العربية, Chinese / 中文, Farsi / فارسی, French / Français, Haitian Creole / Kreyòl ayisyen, Hindi / हिन्दी, Hmong / Hmoob, Korean / 한국어, Laotian / ລາວ, Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, Russian / Русский, Serbo-Croatian / Srpskohrvatski Jezik, Somali / Soomaali, Spanish / Español, Swahili / Kiswahili, Tagalog / Tagalog, Urdu / اُردو, Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt

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Multilingual LiveHelp

- Thanks to a grant from LSC, they just brought on line LiveHelp in English and Spanish.
- It's a real time "chat" facility to lead low-income users to the legal help they need.
- It will be staffed by pro bono law students, pro bono lawyers and other volunteers

Search Engine Optimization and Marketing

- With a TIG grant beginning January 2010, NY LawHelp are developing search engine optimization and marketing strategies.
- This will combine natural search strategies (eg key word, linking, etc.) with paid marketing
- They will pilot SEOM in Spanish language search engines for: www.ayudalegalny.org
- They are developing models for replication and lessons learned for statewide website community

II-F. Stories and Examples

Santa Clara

- Outreach to public libraries to learn about –
 - Statewide Legal Aid website
 - Statewide Court Website
 - Forms completion program (EZLegalFile)
 - Resources at the law library
 - <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/innovations/accpubserv-16.htm>

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Representatives from the state and local court self-help website and document assembly programs made presentations to local librarians so that they learned about free, credible and up-to-date legal resources available for their patrons. They also provided bookmarks with links to the resources. The program was well-received and California is working to duplicate it throughout the state. It won an award for innovative programs from the Judicial Council of California. A video describing the program is available on the AOC's website. (PLEASE VERIFY THE ADDRESS SINCE ALL WEB ADDRESSES ARE CHANGING FOR THE CALIFORNIA COURTS BY JUNE, 2010.)

III-A. Benefits -- Libraries

- Service to Customers
- Increased comfort level for reference staff
- Sharing resources – budget saver
- Community outreach to other agencies (courts, legal aid, pro bono programs, etc.)
- Strengthening community support
- Superlibrarians - heroes to your patrons

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Service to customers is the premier goal of public libraries, and could result in that 92% approval rating.

Increased comfort level for staff means reference librarians will no longer be whimpering under the desk when a legal patron shows up with all those complicated questions.

Sharing resources can be a budget saver for libraries, courts, legal services, and other partners. By complementing services instead of duplicating them, everyone wins, especially the *pro se* patron.

Community outreach to other agencies like courts, pro bono programs, and legal aid raises everyone's profile, in a positive way, with the community at large. People like to see their tax dollars working for them, helping them out in a very personal and positive fashion.

Superlibrarians – you become heroes to your patrons.

III-B. Benefits – for the Public

- Public Library is:

Familiar
Accessible
Neutral territory
Has technology

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This is obvious to public librarians.

As you know, your library may be the only comfortable place for many of those most in need and crisis to access the system. Libraries are important gateways.

III-C. Benefits -- Courts

- Opportunity to serve public
 - When courts are closed
 - When public isn't sure of where to go
 - When courts are intimidating
 - When people need time to understand options
 - Court may not be the best way
 - There's lots to know before you file a case

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Libraries are a great resource for the court in serving the public by being available at hours when courts are generally closed, for people who don't know what resources are available at the courts, and for those who are intimidated by the court. It also allows people to get more information to find out if a court case is the right solution for their problem.

III-D. Benefits – Law Library

- Helps patrons
- Additional role for libraries
- Gateway into system
- Helpful at budget time

Public library partnerships leverage law libraries work. A common mission.

III-E. Benefits – Legal Aid

- Critical additional service
- Way of getting tools out
- Feedback mechanisms for content
- Brings new range of capacities

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Libraries provide a critical point of contact for legal aid clients, as well as people who are need help but do not make it the doors of a legal aid program, or are not able to be served. As such, library partnerships help legal aid programs extend the reach and impact of their services. Public libraries are also important sources of feedback and guidance on emerging needs, and bring training and outreach experience that can benefit awareness of legal aid programs and services.

IV. The Key Content

IV-A. The Key Content Tools – Legal Aid Websites



powered by probonotest

LawHelp.org

Helping people find solutions to their legal problems.

Lawhelp helps low and moderate income people find free legal aid programs in their communities, and answers to questions about their legal rights.

Use the state list to the right to find information to help you with problems related to housing, work, family, bankruptcy, disability, immigration and other topics.

Lawhelp is your gateway to America's nonprofit legal services providers.

WINNER
I won the 2007 Webby Award for Best Law Site of 2007

For free legal aid referrals and information, choose your state:

Alabama	Arkansas	Delaware
Alaska	California	District of Columbia
Arizona	Colorado	Florida
Arkansas	Connecticut	Georgia
California	Delaware	Hawaii
Colorado	Florida	Idaho
Connecticut	Georgia	Illinois
Delaware	Hawaii	Indiana
District of Columbia	Idaho	Iowa
Florida	Illinois	Kansas
Georgia	Indiana	Kentucky
Hawaii	Iowa	Maine
Idaho	Kansas	Maryland
Illinois	Kentucky	Massachusetts
Indiana	Maine	Michigan
Iowa	Maryland	Minnesota
Kansas	Massachusetts	Mississippi
Kentucky	Michigan	Missouri
Maine	Minnesota	Montana
Maryland	Mississippi	Nebraska
Massachusetts	Missouri	Nevada
Michigan	Montana	New Hampshire
Minnesota	Nebraska	New Jersey
Mississippi	Nevada	New Mexico
Missouri	New Hampshire	New York
Montana	New Jersey	North Carolina
Nebraska	New Mexico	North Dakota
Nevada	New York	Oklahoma
New Hampshire	North Carolina	Oregon
New Jersey	North Dakota	Pennsylvania
New Mexico	Oklahoma	Rhode Island
New York	Oregon	South Carolina
North Carolina	Pennsylvania	South Dakota
North Dakota	Rhode Island	Tennessee
Oklahoma	South Carolina	Texas
Oregon	South Dakota	Vermont
Pennsylvania	Tennessee	Virgin Islands
Rhode Island	Texas	Virginia
South Carolina	Vermont	Washington
South Dakota	Virgin Islands	Washington D.C.
Tennessee	Virginia	West Virginia
Texas	Washington	Wisconsin
Vermont	Washington D.C.	Wyoming
Virgin Islands	West Virginia	
Virginia	Wisconsin	
Washington	Wyoming	
Washington D.C.		
West Virginia		
Wisconsin		
Wyoming		

LawHelp.org is supported by:

LSC LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE
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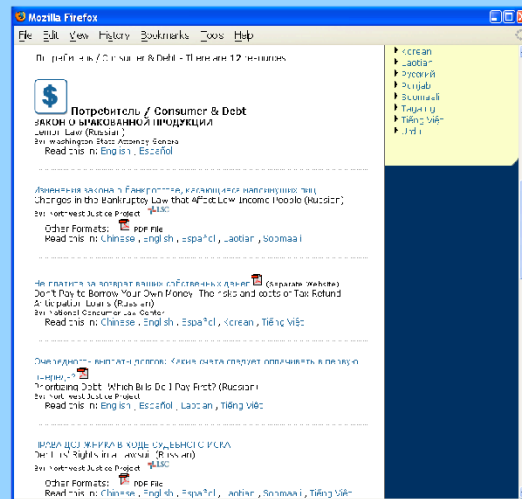
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Here is the national gateway to legal aid sites in all 50 states – lawhelp.org. Some of them are on a different software platform, but all websites are under a mandate to involve and partner with non-legal aid programs such as libraries and courts. These websites are intended to be statewide, collaborative projects with involvement from many access to justice entities.



Here is an example of a statewide legal aid website, MontanaLawHelp.org. Users are presented with topic-based browsing options and a search engine, among other tools. Each topic contains attorney-reviewed, know your rights resources as well as detailed referral information for legal aid programs that provide services in that area.

LSC Network Supports Multi-Lingual



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The LawHelp software is built fully to support multi-lingual content. Here is Russian content. The system supports multiple languages. Menu items, navigation and the underlying content can all appear in non-English.

Court Legal Aid Partnership -- NY



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Legal aid programs in all states are required to have statewide websites, and LSC strongly encourages their programs to collaborate with state and local courts in creating integrated access to justice gateways.

LSC programs are required to have legal information on the most common problems of low-income persons, which coincidentally are often the most common for the SRL. Since this information is there already, courts should take advantage of this resource and not recreate information on court sites that can be found on the legal services sites.

Or the courts can become more active partners. The LawHelp.org platform is used by 28 of the states. This platform has been specially engineered to facilitate an integrated approach. The software, shown on this slide, allows the creation of a “Court Channel” in which court information, accessed, like the other information by county or zip code, is both integrated with, and distinguished from, other information.

The user moves from tab to tab to access information from different sources. They do not need to re-enter their zip code or the problem with which they need help.

IV-B. The Key Content Tools -- Court Websites -- California Site



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The California court system provides a very comprehensive self-help website.

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp

It has over 1,400 page of content and has over 7 million viewers per year. It has high visibility within the court system, and for the public.

Many California counties operate their own court sites – you will see some of them later in this session – but they rely on this common site for much of their general legal information.

Other California technology-related innovative programs for SRL's can be found at: www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/innovations/allprograms.htm.

Additional information on this project is in the program profile titled 13-CA-Website.pdf.

NOTE – THE LOOK AND FEEL OF THIS WEBSITE AND ALL LINKS ARE SCHEDULED TO CHANGE IN MAY OR JUNE OF 2010. IT WILL ALSO BE SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDED.

The Spanish Version



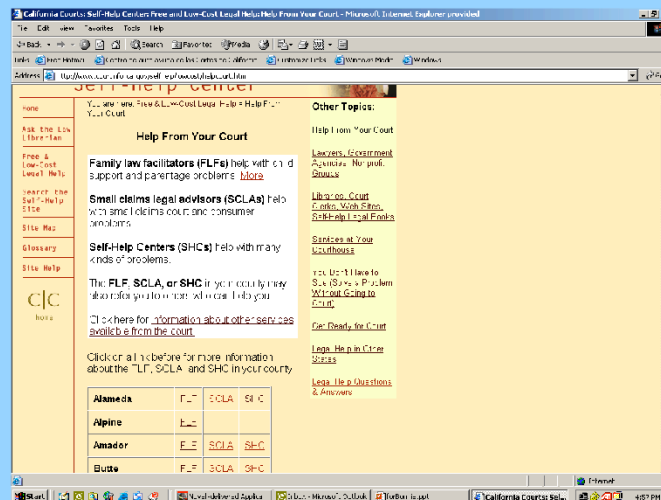
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The entire site has been translated into Spanish, not just selected parts. It is a mirror of the English site so that users can click back and forth between English and Spanish. Thus, if you can find information in English, you can click on a button for the Spanish version of the page.

AS PART OF THE CALIFORNIA REDESIGN OF ITS WEBSITE, THIS TOO WILL BE CHANGING IN THE SUMMER OF 2010.

Connecting to a Range of Services from the Court



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This slide shows the range of court self-help services available to the litigants with links to all 58 counties. The site is not just a legal encyclopedia, but an access gateway into the actual services that are needed to resolve an issue. It links to websites for lawyers, governmental agencies providing legal help, non-profit groups, libraries, and other governmental or non-profit websites with information.

Again, this website is changing in the summer of 2010.

Including Integrating Video



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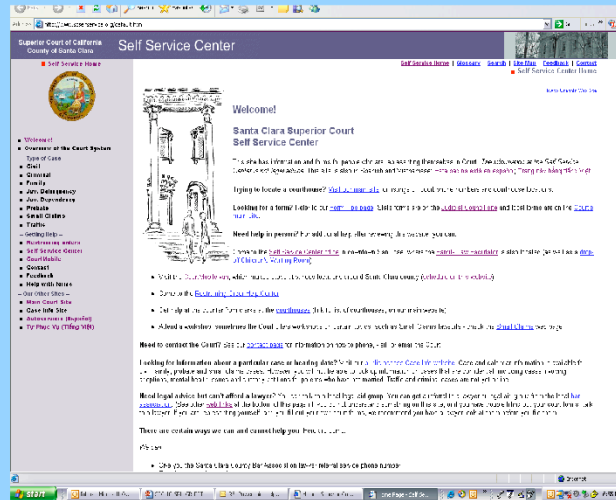
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Here an illustrative video has been integrated into the description of the probate guardianship process.

See particularly the Contra Costa Program Profile for its virtual self-help center, 13-Contra-Costa-Virtual-SHC.doc.

The URL is <http://www.cc-courthelp.org/>

Highlighting Local Self Help Services



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Here the services available from a country are highlighted. Note how the site serves a broad range of income levels.

IV-C. The Key Content Tools -- Online Forms

- Core Idea -- have computers conduct an online interview to get information to complete forms
- The software asks questions and use branching logic (subsequent questions depend on previous answers)
- The questions can screen for appropriateness, relief, etc.
- The software produces filable or e-filable documents
- LSC and SJI funds national server and circuit rider support – now available for courts

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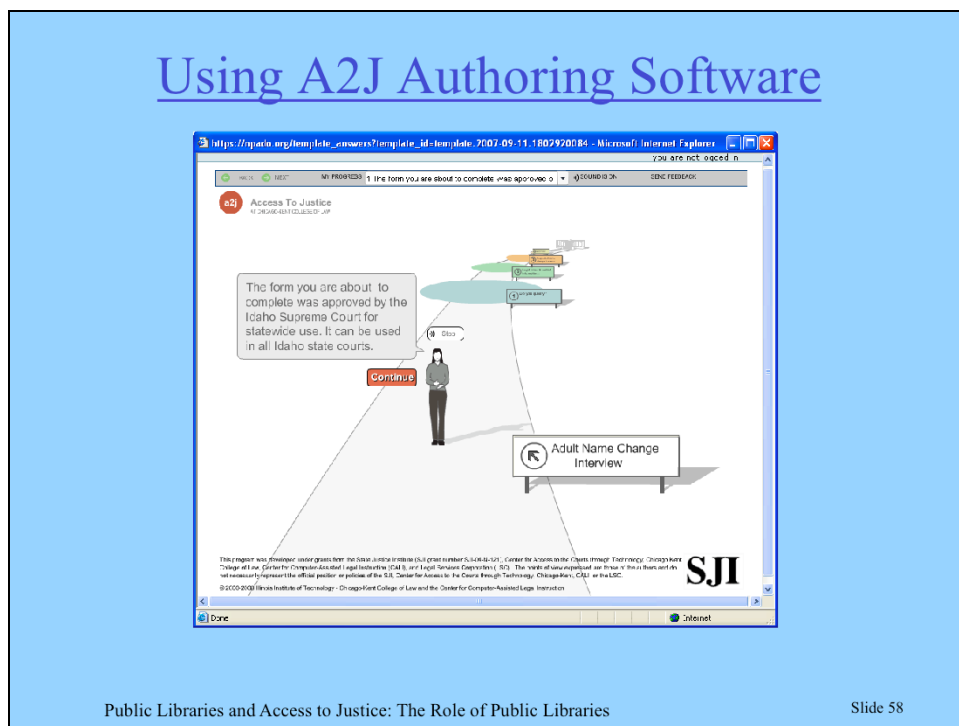
Automated forms that use document assembly software are a major component of the access solution.

Unlike informational websites, the document assembly software produces an actual legal product – the document needed for filing – based on answers the self-represented litigant has provided online.

The software branches, based on the answers to questions, and ultimately generates a fully customized pleading or form.

This allows has computers to do what they're good at: repetitive data entry, calculations, filling in forms, saving data, prompting and answering simple questions, while leaving for humans, what they do best: asking and answering more complex questions and providing emotional support. This can be done through the phone, in person, or by chat (discussed later.)

As a result of collaboration between LSC and SJI, there is now available for courts a low-cost national document assembly server using HotDoc technology and an associated access and document management interface. States or courts can generate the templates – the questions, the forms, and the language that is to be loaded into the forms depending on the answers the litigant gives. These services can then be delivered to the self-represented over the Internet. The project is managed by Pro Bono Net, the nonprofit group that also operates the LawHelp network of state access to justice websites.



Part of the package available is what is called “authoring software” that generates simple screens like this. They are un-intimidating. Some collect data, but usually ask for only a little on each screen, making it easier for the less tech-savvy user to work through the steps of providing the data needed for a form.

This software is completely free for the courts and can be used not only for document automation but for e-filing front ends and self-assessment tools. It is upgraded every year and is available in Spanish, and allows embedding audio, video and help screens. www.a2jauthor.org.

Idaho Forms Access



That A2J software has been used successfully in Idaho. This is the screen that helps users decide what forms they need. Note multi-lingual forms.

Montana Law Library Form Diagnosis

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Montana Law Library's 'Form Diagnosis' tool. The page has a green header with the 'mt.gov' logo and a navigation menu. The main content area is titled 'WHAT FORM DO I NEED?' and asks the user to select the situation that best describes their case. The options are:

- ☐ I am married and want to get a divorce.
- ☐ I am married and my spouse has served me with a set of divorce papers (Petition for Dissolution of Marriage). I need to respond or answer.
- ☐ I have a child(ren) with someone, but we are not married. We do not have a parenting plan or custody order in place yet. I want to get a parenting plan set up.
- ☐ I have a child(ren) with someone, but we are not married. The other parent has served me with a set of parenting plan/custody papers (Petition for Parenting Plan). I need to respond or answer.
- ☐ Other

A 'SUBMIT' button is located at the bottom of the form. The browser's address bar shows the URL: http://law.montanacourts.org/law/lib/topics/end_marriage.asp.

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Here is an example of a front end with a diagnostic process that helps litigants find the right form. The State Law Library of Montana provides a self-assessment for SRL's to determine which kind of divorce they should seek, thus freeing support staff from having to make an interpretive decision for the client.

http://www.montanacourts.org/library/topics/end_marriage.asp

IV-E. Tools Chat Starting the Process



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Many statewide websites offer LiveHelp, a real-time chat-based service to help visitors find resources and referral information on the underlying site and partner sites. Pro Bono Net supports the LiveHelp program nationally.

Here you see the process started. Note how the specialist asks the user to affirmatively consent to the terms of use – that there is no legal attorney-client relationship.

The assistance can not start till this is given.

Then the user is asked to state what they need help with.

The specialists are carefully trained to provide access to information – not legal advice.

Asking for Information

The screenshot displays the MontanaLawHelp.org website. At the top, the site's name is prominently displayed. Below the header, there are navigation links for 'National LawHelp', 'Advanced Search', 'Help', and 'Legal Programs'. A central banner reads 'Information and Resources for Low to Moderate Income Montanans.' On the right side, there is a section for 'MontanaProBono.net' with a link to 'Resources for lawyers and other legal professionals.' A live chat window is open in the center, showing a conversation between a user and a specialist named Kate B. The chat history includes questions about free credit reports and a survey. To the right of the chat window, there is a 'How May I Help You?' section with a search bar and links to 'Need Help with Your Search?' and 'News'. At the bottom of the chat window, there is a 'Live chat by LIVEperson' button. The website footer includes 'Admin Login | Disclaimer' and 'powered by probono.net'.

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Here you see a very specific question being answered very quickly and easily. The specialist has available canned responses that can quickly be pasted in and sent.

Links to other LiveHelp services in the legal aid context:

- LawHelpMN.org
- IowaLegalAid.org
- LawHelp.org/LA
- ARLegalServices.org
- GeorgiaAdvocates.org
- LawHelp.org/NY
- TexasLawHelp.org

V. Making it happen

- Intro to rest of conference
- Partnership
- Training
- Support
- Content
- Outreach and Marketing

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Over the rest of the Conference we will expand on these themes and ideas of partnership, training, support, providing content for websites and training, and how to engage in marketing and outreach.

VII. Conclusion

- We hope that you'll learn some skills – and where to find the answers to your questions so that you can be a key part of the movement for ACCESS TO JUSTICE

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We will ask for your input and expect some mutual brain-picking and idea-sharing while we are here. You wouldn't be here if you weren't already interested, intrigued, and involved in making access to justice happen, to making your staff more knowledgeable, your patrons more comfortable, and your courts more accessible. Libraries are all about sharing, and libraries are places where answers are found. We hope you will find, and share, answers here as well.