

## **Project Overview**

In 2004 Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA), Iowa Legal Aid (ILA), and Pro Bono Net (PBN) received an LSC Technology Initiative Grant (LSC TIG) to support the LiveHelp Pilot Project, which would allow MontanaLawHelp.org and IowaLegalAid.org Web site visitors to ask remotely-located Web Site Specialists for help finding online legal information and resources. Through an online chat, the Specialists are able to immediately direct the Web site visitors to appropriate legal information, and in the case of IowaLegalAid.org, help users complete an intake online. LiveHelp is currently being expanded in several areas.

## **Current Status**

LiveHelp was launched in June 2006 on MontanaLawHelp.org and IowaLegalAid.org. Implemented with LivePerson Pro software (<http://www.liveperson.com>), the feature currently allows Web site visitors to click a button, connect with a Specialist, and ask for information about a legal problem. The Specialist then provides the visitor with a link to the appropriate information or escorts the visitor to relevant resources on the site. (If a Specialist is unavailable, the visitor can choose to leave a message and receive the information in an e-mail.) In Montana and Iowa, LiveHelp is staffed by VISTA volunteers, paralegals, interns, attorneys, and other willing staff members.

With implementation support from PBN, LiveHelp has also launched on LawHelp.org/LA (October 2007), GeorgiaAdvocates.org (December 2007) and ArkansasLegalServices.org (January 2007). The Georgia project is the first LiveHelp initiative to serve advocate site users. The Arkansas project is the first cross-platform LiveHelp initiative.

## **Lessons Learned**

Several important lessons have been learned from this project.

- Marketing must accompany the launch of the feature and be integrated with ongoing website marketing.
- Specialists must be familiar with Web site content and services in the state.
- More experienced visitors may be using LiveHelp once they have identified content that does not exist on the Web site, leading Web Site Coordinators to be able to better identify missing content.

## **Upcoming Innovations and Replication**

MLSA, ILA, PBN, the Georgia Legal Services Program and its State Bar of Georgia Pro Bono Project, received 2006 TIG funding to support a focused expansion of the LiveHelp initiative in three areas that have high-impact potential to increase access to justice: 1) use LiveHelp to support and expand pro bono participation in Georgia; 2) integrate LiveHelp further with document assembly in Montana; and 3) test a cross-jurisdictional approach to delivering LiveHelp assistance that builds a national network to help clients in times of crisis. Work is currently underway in all three areas. In addition, Pro Bono Net is building capacity to support LiveHelp replication in other states through a 2007 TIG grant awarded to MLSA.

## **Want to know more?**

If you'd like to learn more about this project or see a demonstration, contact:

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