



# Northwest Justice Project

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## Continuation (Third) Web Site Grant Final Report

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### I. Project Goals:

The goals for the Website Continuation grants were twofold: to maintain and improve our existing Advocate Resource Center (ARC) site ([www.advocateresourcecenter.org](http://www.advocateresourcecenter.org)), a web accessed resource center for lawyers, advocates and service providers addressing the legal needs of low-income people; and to maintain and improve our client site, WashingtonLawhelp ([www.washingtonlawhelp.org](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org)).

Both the Advocate Resource Center (ARC) and the WashingtonLawhelp site have been improved over the years. With the re-design accomplished by Pro-bono Net in late 2007, the ARC footprint is more streamlined and orderly. The new improved search engine makes it easier to find desired information. Legal assistants and Pro-bono coordinators now have folders in the library to share best practices within their positions. NJP's Statewide Advocacy Coordinators have placed the ARC as an agenda item for all task force meetings in order to keep the interest level high, and content posting plentiful, relevant and of high quality. Groups statewide have made major use of the listserv capability and have moved most listservs from Yahoo to the ARC. Unlike most states, Washington launched the Advocate website (ARC) before the client based LawHelp site. Northwest Justice Project's program website was the repository for hundreds of legal information publications in Washington State from 1998 to 2004. The ARC website successfully achieves one of the main technology goals stated in Washington's State Plan for the Delivery of Legal Services which is to "facilitate effective representation of clients and provide an incentive for attorneys to volunteer their services" by "rapidly accessing information, legal resources and secure pleading banks."

WashingtonLawhelp, which launched in 2004, has continually improved with the addition of a mirrored Spanish site, translated publications available in 20 languages, the addition of the "Where to Find Legal Help" tab with valuable statewide referral information. A FLASH presentation "Need Help Using this Site" has added extra usability on both the English and

Spanish sites. Numerous Hot docs/ATJ interviews, including a “simple” divorce will be incorporated by the end of 2008.

## **II. Web Site Description:**

1. Template choice: The Website Working Stakeholders Committee (roster attached), which is composed of representatives from legal services programs, volunteer lawyer programs, law libraries, law schools, large firms, the Washington State Bar Association, Office of the Administrator for the Courts and other Alliance for Legal Services partners, has participated in the decision making and formulation of goals for all aspects of both sites. After evaluating both templates offered, the committee and staff chose the Probono.net template as it offered ease of use, design quality, creation of small program sites and came with a large support team at Probono.net.

2. Launch dates: The Advocate Resource Center, known as the ARC, launched in June 2003 and WashingtonLawhelp in June 2004 at the Washington State Access to Justice Conference.

3. The breadth and depth of content: Launched in June 2003, the ARC ([www.AdvocateResourceCenter.org](http://www.AdvocateResourceCenter.org)) has a membership of over 600 legal services, pro bono and volunteer advocates now able to access resources and tools that strengthen representation of low-income clients, including a library with over 2000 documents, training materials and forms, a calendar, roster, news area, listservs, a public interest job opportunities page and a listing of pro bono opportunities. New lawyer Orientation training and Advanced advocate training videos have now been added to the ARC along with some shorter substantive law trainings. The most accessed section and hub of the ARC is the Civil Law library. Information can be found in 31 topic folders. Documents posted include briefs, community education materials, memorandums, PowerPoint presentations, training materials and videos, legal assistant materials such as tech tips, a forms library, program policies such as emergency response and safety, volunteer lawyer program coordinator information, ethics opinions and legal strategy memos.

The WashingtonLawhelp site ([www.washingtonlawhelp.org](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org)) launched in June 2004. Built on a ProBono.net template, this site replaced the self-help section of Northwest Justice Project’s existing public web site which was the repository for legal publications statewide since 1998. In addition to legal education brochures, WashingtonLawhelp also provides legal services provider referral information. Since 1998, NJP has employed a full time Publications Manager/Webmaster who serves as site administrator, and continues to manage and develop the site. WashingtonLawhelp now offers over 400 self-help and legal education pamphlets, forms and packets on the site. (See July 2008 Updated Publications List attached.) In addition, a mirrored site in Spanish was also launched in 2004 with over 100 publications. Presently, over 185 publications are available in 20 languages including 41 Russian translations along with resources in Somali, Vietnamese, Korean, Laotian, Chinese, Hmong, Arabic, Amharic, Farsi, French, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Japanese, Bulgarian, Punjabi, Tagalog, Urdu and Cambodian. Family law content is the most prevalent with information on most family law actions presented in a detailed question and answer legal education

publication. Do-it-yourself family law packets are also available for many family law actions containing detailed instructions and necessary forms. Some of the dissolution packets have been translated into Spanish. The site also contains a variety of resources covering common landlord-tenant, public housing, government benefits, health, elder law, immigration and employment issues. Many fill-in court forms and instructions are available in these topic areas as well. A volunteer librarian has been recruited to re-write many of the most frequently downloaded publications applying language and formatting consistent with improved readability. To date, our top 10 resources have been reworked and made more readable.

4. Serving Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations. As referenced above, the WashingtonLawhelp public site contains over 180 publications in 20 languages in addition to a mirrored Spanish site with over 100 Spanish publications and a FLASH “How to Use this Site” presentation in Spanish. An informational paragraph on how to contact legal services providers has recently been added to the LawHelp site in Russian and Spanish. In order to assure the quality of translated documents, NJP is working on adopting a new translation policy wherein the translator must be court-certified in addition to working with an editor to review their work before submitting it to the webmaster who then has a third translator review the draft before posting to the website.

5. Multimedia capacities: WashingtonLawhelp contains a FLASH guide to using the site in Spanish and English as well as a SMIL presentation on farm worker rights. The ARC contains many on-line videos of past trainings available for viewing.

6. **Availability of document assembly systems:** The Hot Docs document assembly TIG received by NJP in 2007 will allow the public to create pleadings and forms for the following: a “simple” divorce with no children which encompasses 17 forms and 3 interviews - filing a dissolution, finishing by agreement and finishing by default; Domestic Violence Protection Order which encompasses 10 forms; and a standard letter for the return of a security deposit.

7. Existing standards and quality control practices: In an effort to help the Website/Publications Manager maintain the over 400 legal education publications, more responsibility has shifted to the statewide substantive task forces and the advocacy coordinators. A list of orphaned publications (not assigned to a particular advocate) is provided for discussion at all substantive law task force meetings. Maintenance of the legal education publications is either an agenda item or a subcommittee on the various task forces. The task forces have the responsibility of reviewing proposed new content, evaluating duplicative or rarely used content, identifying gaps in content, and possibly drafting new content. All submissions to the ARC library for posting must be approved by one of the four Advocacy Coordinators who rotate responsibility.

8. **Usability and usefulness.** All usability surveys and interviews with low income clients have found the public site to be very easy to access. NJP receives between 600 and 1000 user surveys a year, analyzes them and corrects any usability issues. The ARC usability has improved with the new search engine and design.

### **III. Major Accomplishments;**

There have been many major accomplishments over the years with regards to both the WashingtonLawhelp and Advocate sites. One terrific accomplishment is the important work that the Statewide Working Committee has done and continues to do, although less frequently these days. Among the issues that the Working Committee (Stakeholders) have worked on over the years include: Template choice and initial ARC folder organization, ARC membership criteria, selection of ARC advocate administrators, ARC library structure, WashingtonLawhelp topics and sub-topics, WashingtonLawhelp site design/banner, writing the dialog for the "Guide to Using this Site" FLASH presentation and creation of marketing plans and materials. (See meeting agendas in appendix.)

Statistics for the first 6 months of 2008 show 137,725 unique visitors, and 228,866 resource documents already viewed including those in html, .pdf and external links. (See full statistics report for July in Appendix.) The high usage statewide is partially a result of NJP's partnership with Washington's Office of the Administrator for the Courts, who not only direct all of their self- help traffic to the WashingtonLawhelp site, but have also provided funding for the creation of new content in the family law field. Increased usage is also a result of the various marketing initiatives put into place over the years.

The LawHelp website has increased the community's access to high quality legal resources. Aside from the legal education and self-help publications, the Legal Help Directory was added in 2006, which provides contact information for legal aid programs by county. This area of the site remains active. The Pro Bono Opportunities Guide on the ARC is also an excellent resource for those advocates looking for a pro bono project and was created in partnership with the private law firm Pro Bono Coordinators group in Seattle.

**[New! Pro Bono Opportunities: A Guide for Lawyers in Washington](#)**

Looking to volunteer? Whether you are a transactional lawyer in Seattle looking to help a community organization ... a law student looking to help immigrants ... or a litigator in Bellevue looking to help low income people ... this easy-to-use guide will help you find the right opportunity.

Another major accomplishment has been our outreach to the LEP population through translated publications, a FLASH presentation in Spanish, as well as numerous marketing initiatives. WashingtonLawhelp contains over 400 publications in English plus 185 in other languages. A sampling of the translated publications available to LEP populations follows:

- Spanish - 132 translations covering housing, family, employment, immigration, public benefits and consumer issues.
- Russian – 41 translations covering consumer, health, public benefits, domestic violence and housing issues.
- Chinese – 18 translations covering consumer, family, employment and domestic violence issues.

- Vietnamese – 13 translations covering consumer issues.
- Laotian – 7 translations covering consumer issues.
- Korean – 6 translations covering consumer and government benefit issues.
- Somali – 7 translations covering consumer, employment and health issues.
- Cambodian – 2 translations covering civil rights issues.
- Bulgarian – 1 translation covering general divorce information.

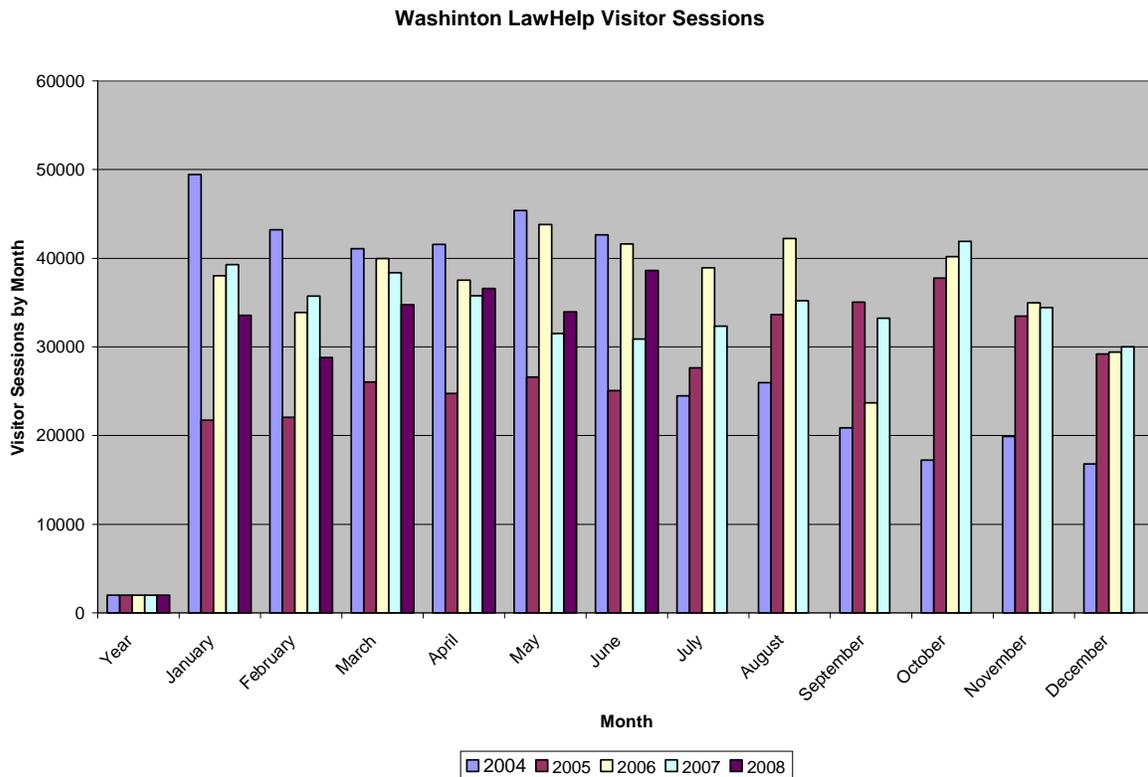
NJP, along with the marketing committee of the State Website Working Committee (Stakeholders group) has developed an outreach plan and continues to market the site. We continue to place numerous ads in the Russian language newspaper and Russian calendar and have placed bi-lingual posters in all of the public buses in eastern Washington advertising the site in English and Spanish in a massive outreach effort to the Hispanic community. Bi-lingual sticky note pads with the WashingtonLawhelp URL were created and distributed to all public libraries to be placed at publicly accessed terminals. Bi-lingual postcards have been sent to all of the Clerks offices in Washington to be kept at the front desk and passed out to those persons needing assistance. An email group of over 600 individuals, public and law libraries, advocates, agencies and the Courts receive a monthly WashingtonLawhelp Update email announcing any new and updated publications and other changes to the site.

WashingtonLawhelp bookmarks and bi-lingual postcards are given out at conferences, job and community fairs, Volunteer lawyers programs, courts, agencies, etc. Danielle Rebar, our webmaster, has done website trainings for public housing advocates and supervisors. Susan Encherman, Director of Administration, has done demonstrations for large audiences at the Access to Justice Conference, Pro-bono Coordinators meetings, new staff orientations and the statewide Civil Legal Services conferences. The WashingtonLawhelp URL is now being printed on the back of all NJP business cards. WashingtonLawhelp appears as a link on hundreds of appropriate websites aimed at helping the low income population. (See sample of monthly update and marketing materials in the Appendix.)

Finally, NJP has taken advantage of the ability to create program sites off of the LawHelp template. To date, we have designed small websites for numerous Volunteer Lawyer Programs, the Washington State Coalition for Language Access and the upcoming Statewide Legal Services Conference. In addition, in partnership with the King County Bar and the Seattle Pro Bono Coordinators, we created [www.LROD.org](http://www.LROD.org) – Legal Research on Demand. This is a program where civil legal aid providers can submit research projects to be adopted and completed by private attorneys and their summer associates. This is second summer of this project that is run entirely from the website. (See LROD announcement in the Appendix.).

#### IV. Assessment of the Websites:

**Visitors Sessions:** WashingtonLawhelp visitor sessions grew steadily during the first two years after its launch in mid-2004 ranging from 16,881 in December 2004 to 43,810 in May 2006. Over the past year and a half, the numbers have evened-out averaging 34,385 visitor session per month which is a very substantial number of visits for any website. October seems to be the busiest month. There have been significant boosts in visitor sessions after marketing campaigns, media coverage or appearances in agency newsletters. Below is a chart showing the visitor sessions from the July 2004 launch through June 2008.

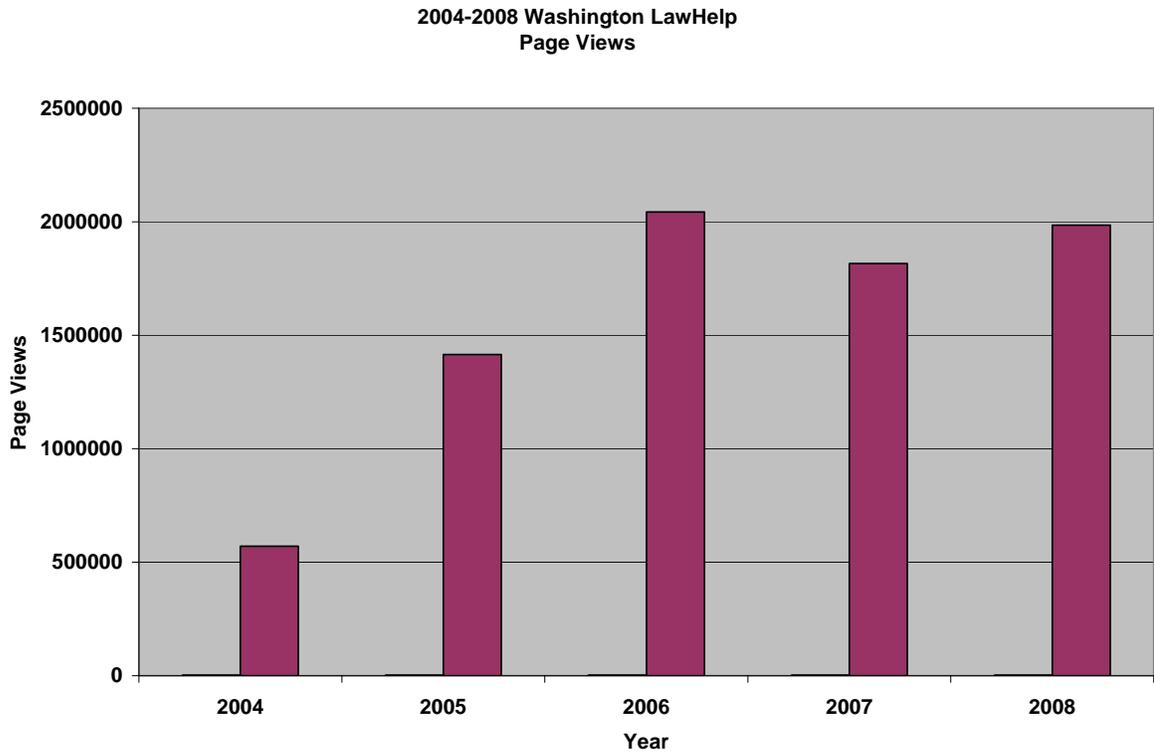


The Advocate (ARC) site’s visitor sessions have also increased since its launch in 2003. Below is a chart displaying the activity by organization measured by pages viewed for the latest 3 months of 2008 totaling over 3000 page requests for the quarter. In addition, a full statistical report for the life of the site is attached in the appendix showing membership breakdowns, activity and the most popular viewed library items.

**ARC: Most Active Organizations by Page Requests 4/1/08-6/30/08**

Northwest Justice Project	3160
Columbia Legal Services	586
Northwest Women's Law Center	111
King County Bar Association	84
Pierce County Family Justice Center	47
Washington State Bar Association	47
Columbia legal services	46
Solid Ground	41
<b>Total Page Requests:</b>	<b>4122</b>

Page Views: The WashingtonLawhelp website is an extremely active site with over 7.8 million pages viewed from 2004 through 2008. The chart below shows the total page views over the past 5 years for the entire WashingtonLawhelp website. (2008 is estimated for 12 mos. based on the 6 mos. total)



The table below shows the general statistics for the WashingtonLawhelp site. Special note should be taken of the last category “Resource Page Views” which shows just short of **2 million** resource pages viewed in the self help area from July 2004 through 2008. Family law forms, packets and publications are always the most popular.

<b>Washington LawHelp General Statistics 2004-2008</b>	2004 (July launch thru Dec)	2005	2006	2007	2008 (12 mos. based on 1 <sup>st</sup> 6)
Page Views	570,241	1,415,094	2,043,581	1,815,747	1,985,394
Visits	125,296	343,034	458,557	418,674	434,552
Average Visits per Day	4,081	939	1256	1147	1186
Unique Visitors	87,840	193,396	268,620	247,184	257,438
Visited Once	73,130	157,956	219,999	201,568	206,646
More than Once	14,710	35,440	48,621	45,616	50,792
<b>Total Resource Page Views: includes .PDF, html and external links (Total Resource views 2004-2008 = 1,906,528)</b>	147,048	395,513	490,170	416,065	457,732

**User Feedback:** NJP receives between 50 and 100 user surveys monthly from the public regarding WashingtonLawhelp. A link to a Survey Monkey on-line user survey has been placed at the bottom of every page of the site. **“In an effort to improve this site, we would appreciate learning about your visit to Washington LawHelp. After browsing, please complete our [User Survey](#).”**

The survey link was placed on the bottom of each page in September of 2004. Since that time, NJP has received 2887 surveys. Each survey comment is reviewed every 6 months by the webmaster and management staff for usability problems or suggestions, analysis to see if trends exist in any area of law where we do not have a publication and need one, and for basic user satisfaction. (The survey results and comments for the first 6 months of 2008 are attached). In addition to the survey, NJP ran a series of testing sessions with low income clients to test usability and navigation. Each client was given a legal problem to solve and all of their navigational clicks were recorded to test the organization of the site. Usability was not an issue and any suggestions made by clients were immediately acted upon.

In August of 2005 an on-line survey was sent out to all ARC members regarding the usability of the Advocate site. Results were examined and many suggestions followed

including the reorganization of many of the substantive law area folders and additional training was given to all of the task forces on how to search and use advanced searching functions. In addition, NJP added a Help Center to the ARC site with FAQ's, instructions on how to post a resource or document, password or login problem help, how to use the on-line library plus helpful search tips.

The use of the two websites directly addresses LSC's strategic goals with respect to technology: (1) to dramatically increase the provision of legal services to eligible persons and (2) to ensure eligible clients are achieving appropriate and high quality legal assistance. As seen by the number of pages viewed, low income people in Washington have expanded access to excellent legal publications. Pro-bono attorneys, as well as staff attorneys use the sites as well. As the internet is open to all populations, we can tell that many of our visitors come from URL's specific to public libraries, community centers and homes. The on-line survey asks if the participant is low income and over 65% of those completing the survey answer yes. As exemplified in our survey results, many low income people are thankful that the WashingtonLawhelp site is available to them if needed. Pro-bono attorneys are encouraged to join the ARC through their involvement with the many Volunteer Attorney programs in Washington. (ARC membership is only available to those lawyers who are presently taking a pro bono case.) All of the legal services providers, law and public libraries as well as social services agencies in the state use the websites as well as contribute content.

**V. Partnerships:** NJP has developed many partnerships around the websites. Some examples include: a small grant from the Legal Foundation of Washington to cover design and printing costs for 11x17 bi-lingual posters advertising the public site that were placed in over 500 buses in Eastern Washington as part of our outreach efforts to the Hispanic community; NJP continues in partnership with the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project in organizing the Immigration section of the public website and with the Washington Defender Association on development of civil/criminal re-entry information; Perkins Coie, Washington's largest law firm, donated design services and printing costs for ARC brochures and bookmarks for the newly launched LawHelp site which were included in the registration packets for all attendees at the 2004 Access to Justice conference; a programmer in the tech department of the State Courts designed the logo/banner for the WashingtonLawhelp site; a small grant from the Attorneys General office was received to develop content in the consumer area; several small grants from the Administrator of the Courts (AOC) were received to develop content in the family law area; a partnership with the Illinois program resulted in our Spanish and English FLASH presentation of How to Use the Website and our Hot Docs grant is based on a partnership with the Idaho program and utilization of their A2J interviews. AOC continues to direct all of their traffic to the LawHelp site as do librarians statewide.

NJP was one of the original members of SWAG - Statewide Website Advisory Group which has recently become an official committee of the Washington State Access to Justice Board. Sue Encherman, NJP's Director of Administration and Danielle Rebar, NJP Website/Publications Manager, are co-chairs. The committee meets quarterly to discuss new innovations in websites aimed at providing legal information to the public, accessibility issues, grant proposals, etc. A primary goal of the committee is to prevent duplication of content in the many Washington websites aimed at educating the public. Members include representatives of the Office of the Attorney General, Washington State Bar Association,

Northwest Justice Project, TVW, the Administrative Office of the Courts, The Washington State Law Library, and many others.

**V. Financial and in-kind support for the web site:** The financial and in-kind resources devoted to supporting the development and on-going implementation of the websites, that *exceeded* the total amount of the LSC website grants, is shown below. The funds for the websites have come from NJP program resources shared between LSC Basic and State of Washington Office of Civil Legal Aid.

Northwest Justice Project Website Cost Analysis 2003 - 2008							
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Estimated 2008	Total
Web-Master (Salary & Fringe)	44,000	47,500	49,800	60,100	60,100	67,200	328,700
Web-Master (Occupancy) Contracted Coordinator	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	15,000
NJP Management Staff (Est)	22,000	39,000	35,000	36,000	38,000	35,000	205,000
Pro-Bono.Net Fees	10,500	10,815	11,138	11,471	11,812	12,161	67,897
Printing/Materials/Travel/Other	5,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	55,000
Total Web-Site Expenditures	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	30,000
	<u>89,000</u>	<u>114,815</u>	<u>113,438</u>	<u>125,071</u>	<u>127,411</u>	<u>131,861</u>	<u>701,596</u>
					LSC TIG 1085		50,000
					LSC TIG 2709		26,818
					LSC TIG 4557		<u>27,037</u>
					LSC TIG Contribution		<u>103,855</u>
					*NJP Program Contributions		<u>597,741</u>

\* The NJP program contributions come from LSC Basic and State of Washington Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) funds at an average sharing of +/- 50/50 over the five year period..

**VI. Lessons, advice and recommendations:** Lessons learned, advice and recommendations to other grantees are one in the same.

- ◆ First and most important is dedicated staffing. It is essential to have full time staff dedicated to management of the website and content. NJP has employed a full time webmaster/publications manager since the creation of the original NJP site in 1998. In addition, we have contracted with a part-time content coordinator for the ARC since its inception in 2003. In order for these websites to be successful, kept up to date, relevant and active, there must be one or more staff whose primary responsibility is maintenance of the sites. That said, submission of content to the ARC continues to be a problem and one that is experienced by all of the grantees with advocate sites. Once the initial uploading of content for a new advocate site is completed, changing the routine of the advocates to incorporate the submission of documents to the ARC as an essential part of their day to day practice remains a challenge. NJP, in an effort to find a solution to this problem, may change the focus and responsibilities of the ARC staff person to be more content and process oriented as well as moving the responsible for submission of materials for posting and approval away from the advocates and to the legal assistants.
  
- ◆ Secondly, the organization who manages the website must have a protocol for updating and maintenance of the public site. NJP adopted the following system in November of 2006 and it has worked out fairly well. In an effort to help the Website/ Publications Manager maintain the over 400 legal education publications, more responsibility has been shifted to the statewide substantive task forces and the advocacy coordinators. A list of orphaned publications (not assigned to a particular advocate) is provided for discussion at all substantive law task force meetings. Maintenance of the legal education publications will become either an agenda item or is staffed by a subcommittee on the various task forces. The task forces will have the responsibility of reviewing proposed new content, evaluating duplicative or rarely used content, identifying gaps in content, and possibly drafting new content. The Website/ Publications Manager continues to be responsible for maintaining a master publications tickler calendar and also the Publication Update Table. The Advocacy coordinators will advise the Website/ Publications Manager when a publication has been assigned to an advocate or when any changes in update responsibility occur. The Website/ Publications Manager updates the publications table and tickle calendar, as well as sending out the most current Word document to the advocate for editing over email with a target date for completion. Updated and new publications are also uploaded to the case management system so they are accessible by hotline staff. Advocates send edits directly to the Website/ Publications Manager who updates the publications and sends them out for translation if needed. If a publication becomes delinquent for review, it will be reported to the appropriate Advocacy Coordinator for follow up. The Advocate Resource Center (ARC) Maintenance Protocol is simpler in that all submissions to the ARC library for posting must be approved by one of the four Advocacy Coordinators who rotate responsibility.

- ◆ Thirdly, you must incorporate the websites into new staff orientation, staff trainings, Access to Justice Conferences, etc so that the community is continuously reminded of its existence. Our monthly email update sent to over 600 individuals, agencies, organizations and libraries is an easy way to let the community know what is new, updated or translated. Marketing materials are included in statewide conference packets and the URL for the LawHelp site is printed on the back of all NJP business cards along with the CLEAR hotline number.
  
- ◆ Finally, funds for content development and marketing materials should be included as a line item in any grant the program submits.