

LSC Annual TIG Conference

Austin, TX

Welcome Remarks

January 17, 2007

I am pleased to welcome all of you to the 7th annual Legal Services Corporation Technology Initiative Grants conference - the only technology conference created just for you - the technologists of the legal services community! This year is our biggest event ever and the first time the TIG conference has sold out. In addition to the 31 current year TIG recipients required to attend the conference, we have 58 additional techies, lawyers, and executive directors in attendance. If you add in the LSC staff and presenters here at the conference you have 136 total attendees – a 60 percent increase over last year. We may have to move the conference next year to a larger facility to accommodate what we hope is continued interest and participation in our conference!

To those of you who are representing recipients of new 2006 TIG grants, congratulations on submitting excellent proposals that were selected for funding from among very stiff competition. The LSC grant reflects our investment in your success. Please call on our TIG staff or any of us if there is anything we can do to help. To those of you whose programs are paying for you to come to this conference, we appreciate your continuing dedication to our joint TIG

collaboration, which you show by your willingness to work and learn and share your experiences with us this week. I hope and fully expect that your investment of time and resources will be richly rewarded. I offer a special welcome and thanks to those of you who are participating as trainers. In past years, you and other trainers who preceded you have made these conferences most helpful and rewarding. I hope this year's conference will prove to be as educational (and enjoyable) as past conferences and that you will leave energized and inspired.

I want to take a moment to welcome those of you attending the first ever Lawyer Track at the TIG conference. Thank you for helping us launch a new addition to the conference and I hope you find the sessions very useful. Let us know what you think – we will need your input to determine if the Lawyer Track should be a permanent addition to the conference.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce Magali Khalkho (Ma'gali), our newest TIG staff member who joined us just a few weeks ago. Magali will take on the grant coordinator responsibilities of the TIG program and will be working with grantees on grant reporting as well as applying for new grants in the coming year. Please welcome Magali into our community and I trust you will be working with her soon.

Speaking of the coming year, we have already started the planning process for the next grant competition. The Request for Proposals for the Letters of Intent will be updated in February 2007 and we anticipate publishing an RFP by the end of February/beginning of March, with a tentative deadline for submitting a Letter of Intent scheduled for April 6, 2007.

In 2006, LSC received a \$1.2 million appropriation from Congress for TIG. LSC for the first time partnered with the State Justice Institute and secured contributions of over \$300,000 for TIG awards, for a total of just over \$1.5 million. The SJI funds were used as matching grants for projects that engaged local courts in *pro se* solutions. In the overall grant cycle, LSC received 65 Letters of Intent and invited 47 proposals to complete full applications. Only 43 invitees submitted applications and out of that pool TIG funded 31 grants for \$1,589,360, broadly categorized in the following manner:

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| Intake | \$24,850 |
| Technical Assistance | \$139,576 |
| Web Sites | \$625,500 |
| Pro Se | \$799,434 |

Note that this year there was no funding for grants classified specifically as infrastructure. Based on input gathered at prior year's conferences, LSC has focused on sustaining national projects, supporting our website initiatives, while also funding innovation grants where possible. Therefore, no funding in infrastructure was in response to field input as well as a result of limited funding.

We continue to be impressed each year with the increasing quality of the applications submitted by you and your programs and we expect to again face the difficult prospect of selecting just a few ideas out of so many creative and innovative proposed solutions.

Examples of TIG Grants Awarded in 2006

To highlight just a few of the grants we funded in 2006:

We awarded a grant to Indiana Legal Services to develop a comprehensive Spanish language portal using HotDocs® that will allow users to complete interviews in Spanish, but print an English version of the forms that can be submitted to the court.

A grant to Legal Aid and Defender Association in Detroit will develop resources in Arabic on the Michigan statewide web site to help Arab-Americans, including videos explaining how to access the courts.

The immense size of Alaska makes it challenging to reach low-income individuals in remote rural areas. For 15 years, Alaska Legal Services attorneys have taught a nine-hour class offering substantive and procedural instruction for pro se litigants in contested divorce or custody cases. ALSC is developing a

prototype CD/DVD-based interactive guide that incorporates the class material, instructions, and forms. This is in response to the Alaska Court System's request for ALSC's assistance in helping pro se litigants become better-versed in the areas of hearing and trial preparation. ALSC will also partner with the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to develop and add material on domestic violence to the electronic family law guide.

Support for the development of technological expertise within the legal services community continues with the 2006 round. Grants to fund expert circuit riders, continued funding for the Legal Services National Technology Assistance Project, and the fostering of peer-to-peer networks between experienced technologists and new members of the community ensure the spread of knowledge and expertise, shared "lessons learned", and the establishment and implementation of best practices.

Examples of TIG Projects that are Replicable

One of our strategies in the TIG program has been to leverage our limited funding by doing projects that can be replicated around the country at a reduced cost. The existing network of statewide web sites is an example of successfully leveraging a standard product – the two website templates – to contain ongoing development costs. In 2006 we created a grant category specifically focused on funding proposals that were replications of existing TIG projects.

From within that grant category, North Penn Legal Services was awarded a grant based on replicating the court channel from New York Law Help for Pennsylvania. The Legal Services of Alabama was awarded funding to pilot a video conferencing project based on the successful Montana Legal Services' project. Georgia Legal Services will be using TIG funding to replicate the LiveHelp project piloted by Montana Legal Services and Iowa Legal Aid. Georgia Legal Services will also partner with Montana and Iowa to adapt LiveHelp to provide support to pro bono attorneys using the pro bono section of their statewide web site.

Several sessions at this conference will be discussing and demonstrating document automation using HotDocs and the A2J Author software. Both HotDocs and the A2J software allow programs to build on document assembly work done in other states by sharing forms and other development work already completed. While each form is unique and may vary from state to state or even within a state, many forms share a number of common elements. Recognizing this, the Center for Arkansas Legal Services, Montana Legal Services, and Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma successfully proposed to adapt document assembly forms created in other states for local use.

Another example of successful replication is the I-CAN! Earned Income Tax Credit project. Using techniques learned from Montana Legal Services very successful effort and by developing additional strategies of their own, the Legal Services of South Central Michigan went from returning just over \$100,000 for tax year 2004 to over \$1 million for tax year 2005. Steve Gray, who is here running the Cyber Café, was the lead person in Michigan on the Earned Income Tax Credit project. We encourage you to talk with him to learn how you can use this product to help the working poor in your state.

All of these products were developed using TIG funds and are free to any program. Nonetheless, we still find that not all programs embrace these tools. We want to hear from you what we at LSC can do to work with your program's leadership to see these projects become a priority. I urge each of you to spend some time thinking about what it would take to get your program to learn about and to fully embrace these kinds of tools and others as we continue to identify and fund other innovations and integrate them into daily practice. Talk with any of us here at the conference, or once your return home, and let us know what more we can be doing to see that all the tools the technology community develops get fully utilized.

Evaluation

This past year, LSC staff completed its first year-long comprehensive review of the projects TIG has funded since its inception in 2000 in order to identify the extent to which and ways that TIG has increased the client community's access to the justice system; and to identify the extent to which and ways the program has enabled LSC grantees to service their clients more effectively and efficiently. We are in the midst of completing an executive summary, an overview of the evaluation report and the report itself, which we plan to complete and share with you this spring. If you have questions about the evaluation process, please contact a member of the TIG evaluation team: Dr. Bristow Hardin or Taylor Healy. We appreciate very much the assistance so many of you provided to ensure the evaluation is as objective, thorough and useful as possible.

LSC staff also continued to refine the TIG grant evaluation system in 2006. In particular, we have revised the evaluation plan and evaluation report forms for non-web site projects and have also revised the narrative report forms for the second and third web site grants.

Announcements

A few announcements of upcoming plans for the new year. In an effort to develop a strategic vision for LSC's technology investments as stated in our strategic directions, TIG is in looking to develop a Technology Advisory Committee to be in place the second half of 2007. We welcome your suggestions as to potential members and as to the possible elements of a strategic vision for our technology investments. This committee will be comprised primarily of members of the technology community within legal services. Other members of the Committee might include staff of technology companies, our partner organizations, and other funders. LSC is in the preliminary stages of thinking about how this Committee might help us determine our future direction with regard to technology use within the legal services community and we will be looking to this group for guidance in the weeks ahead.

LSC is also very excited to announce a new development—that LSC is a recipient of a Google Grant to participate in the Google Ads program. Through the Google Ads program, LSC will create an ad campaign for each of our program's statewide websites. The Ad Campaign will provide a four-line ad, specific to each state (or protectorate) that will display on the right hand side of the Google search results pages whenever specific keywords and search terms are used. LSC will be working with members of our community and Google to identify and select the most relevant search terms.

This program will benefit our clients by directing them to relevant online local legal information and resources about our programs based on their legal needs. LSC hopes to have the ad campaigns in place and functioning before the end of the first quarter of 2007 and we will keep you posted on our progress. Google has also agreed to have a representative serve on our Technology Advisory Group.

Commitment and Funding Challenge

The effective use of technology has been one of the most important tools LSC has used to increase access to legal advice and information. Technology has also significantly changed how the legal services community functions. And since the beginning of the Technology Initiative Grants program in 2000, LSC has used these grants for projects that have improved grantees' effectiveness and efficiency in providing high quality legal services. As I have said in many other settings, the TIG program has been an essential tool and effective model for expanding access to justice.

For FY 2007, the House of Representatives voted to increase LSC's total funding by \$12 million from FY 2006, for a total of \$338.8 million. The Senate Appropriations Committee recommended a \$32 million increase, for a total of \$358.5 million. For TIG funding the House approved approximately the same

amount as last year or \$1.239 million. The Senate Appropriations Committee recommended a higher number for TIG funding - \$2.97 million for FY07. The current continuing resolution that expires on February 15th holds LSC's FY07 funding at the FY06 level. There is a likelihood that the continuing resolution will be extended through the end of 2007, but we are trying to persuade the appropriators to make an exception for LSC at the higher levels.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to reaffirm LSC's commitment to the TIG program and to securing an increase in TIG funding. The LSC Board has again requested \$5 million dollars in the 2008 Budget Request to Congress and LSC will be working hard to persuade Congress to support the TIG program. LSC will transmit its budget to Congress the week of January 30, 2007. Soon after, we will begin meeting with members of Congress and their staff to persuade them of the need for the increase. I will again ask you for help in documenting the success of the TIG program. We need your success stories about TIG. Some we know about, for example: the millions returned to low-income individuals through the Earned Income Credit program, the increase in brief services provided to clients with new intake systems, the pro se individuals who got help using a document assembly system. But we need more and we need them now. While the statistical information provided through the TIG evaluations we require have been critical to quantifying the scope and breadth of the work we do, we need stories of individuals to help inspire Congress. We need this information to help Congress identify with each constituent helped, and

to personalize what technology has been able to achieve. Tell us an anecdote, they are all helpful in telling our story to Congress. Talk to any of TIG staff or email them after the conference. Information from the front lines is critical to our success in increasing TIG funding; it really won't happen without you.

Conclusion

This conference is an excellent opportunity for us to advance our efforts to use technology to expand access to the justice system and to high quality legal information and advice. During these three days, we will be able to share our ideas about how to improve the TIG program, receive professional training on different IT products, and to hear stories from the field that demonstrate how technology is helping reach clients that we would otherwise not have been able to assist. I am sure that as a result of this gathering we will improve our use of technology to expand access to justice and perhaps come up with new ideas for the even more effective use of technology to make our programs most efficient in their delivery of high quality legal services.

I would like to especially thank the LSC TIG staff who have worked diligently to put this conference together. I want to thank Joyce Raby, Glenn Rawdon, Bristow Hardin, Taylor Healey, and Mike Genz for their dedicated and creative work on TIG generally and for organizing this conference in particular.

Thank you all for participating in the conference and for your efforts in developing creative and new ways to use technology to provide greater access to justice for low-income Americans. I look forward to continuing our important and exciting work together.