

Creating Effective Legal Outreach Programs

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Introduction

Legal outreach includes a wide range of programs and events that proactively reach individuals with legal needs. Community presentations, legal clinics, mobile legal options, and “office hours” at community partner locations are all examples of legal outreach programs.

Outreach is a key component of legal services delivery to older adults, and can help address priority and unmet needs in a community. Additionally, these programs provide an opportunity to foster collaborations with partners and reach older adults who would not otherwise come through your door.

Fundamental Features of Effective Legal Outreach

No single model of outreach is right for every program and every community. Effective legal outreach is based on the needs and characteristics of the region and the individuals you are serving. However, there are some features that apply to most effective outreach programs:

- Addresses priority legal needs & fills a service gap
- Involves members of the community in planning the event
- Includes collaboration with community partners (legal or non-legal)
- Held at a location that is accessible and safe for all attendees
- Reduces barriers to accessing legal assistance

Outreach to older adults should seek to reach individuals who are living in the community and those who are institutionalized. Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs may be a great partner for programs intended to reach older adults in long-term care facilities.

Outreach Preparation Worksheet

Planning effective outreach programs requires thoughtful planning and evaluation. While some events may seem like an obvious fit for your program, it is still useful to determine the logistics and the goals of the program. The worksheet on page 3 will help you determine if the program does in fact contain the fundamental features outlined above. In turn, this will aid in deciding whether it makes sense to allocate time and resources to the particular event. The following worksheet offers a framework for planning and evaluating outreach programs.

Additional Resources:

- [NCLER Issue Brief: Targeting Older Americans Act Services Without Means Testing: Meeting the Challenge](#)
- [NCLER Issue Brief: The Older Americans Act in Action: Building & Cultivating Your Elder Law Program](#)

- [Administration for Community Living: Profile of Older Americans](#)
- [Legal Services Corporation: The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans](#)
- [Legal Services Corporation: Why Location Matters: GIS for Justice](#)
- [Justice in Aging: How Legal Aid Programs Can Address the Growing Problem of Senior Poverty](#)
- [Justice in Aging: How Can Legal Services Better Meet the Needs of Low-Income LGBT Seniors?](#)

Case consultation assistance is available for attorneys and professionals seeking more information to help older adults. Contact NCLER at ConsultNCLER@acl.hhs.gov.

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Outreach Planning Worksheet

Event Name:

Date:

Who do we want to reach?

Why?

Will the Event:

- Reach geographically isolated individuals?
- Reach a focus population?
- Reach people with barriers to accessing legal assistance (resources, transportation, etc.)?

What are the legal needs/what gaps are we filling?

How do we know?

- Incoming cases or inquiries indicate a need
- Outside data
- Spoke with a community representative (list name):
- Other:

What topics will be covered?

Are pro bono attorneys needed?

- No
- Yes (how many):

Who are community partners for this event?**What is the format of the event?**

- Presentation
- Legal Clinic
- Tabling Event
- Office Hours
- Other:

Where is the event?**Considerations of event location:**

- Is it accessible?
- Is there public transportation to the location?
- Does the location have a private space to meet with individuals?
- Does our intended audience frequent this location?

How will we advertise the event?

- Flyers (how many/who will distribute):
- Social Media (where/how frequently):
- E-mail (to whom):
- Website
- Other:

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What supplies or equipment are needed?

What is the anticipated cost of the event (venue, food, etc.)?

Who from the staff will attend the event?

What is the expected time commitment for our staff?

What will success look like?