

Strategies for Reaching Older Adults through Remote Legal Services Delivery

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Housekeeping

- All on mute. Use Questions function for substantive questions and for technical concerns.
- Problems getting on the webinar? Send an e-mail to NCLER@acl.hhs.gov.
- Written materials and a recording will be available at NCLER.acl.gov. See also the chat box for this web address.

About NCLER

The National Center on Law and Elder Rights (NCLER) provides the legal services and aging and disability communities with the tools and resources they need to serve older adults with the greatest economic and social needs. A centralized, one-stop shop for legal assistance, NCLER provides Legal Training, Case Consultations, and Technical Assistance on Legal Systems Development. Justice in Aging administers the NCLER through a contract with the Administration for Community Living's Administration on Aging.

About Alaska Legal Services Corporation

Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) was established in 1967 as a private, nonprofit law firm. ALSC offers free civil legal services to low income and disadvantaged people to protect their safety, their health, and promote family stability. ALSC is dedicated to bridging the statewide gap between those who need civil legal help and those who are able to get it. ALSC has an unwavering and longstanding commitment to assuring that Alaska's rural communities have access to the justice system. Through advocacy, education, collaboration and litigation ALSC empowers individuals, protects fundamental rights, strengthens communities, creates opportunities, and achieves justice.

About Public Law Center

The Public Law Center (PLC), Orange County's pro bono law firm, is committed to providing access to justice for low-income and vulnerable residents. Founded in 1981, PLC's 30 staff members work with over 1,600 Orange County lawyers, paralegals, law students, and other volunteers annually to provide free civil legal services, including: counseling, individual representation, community education, and strategic litigation and advocacy to challenge societal injustices.

About Justice in Aging

Justice in Aging is a national organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty by securing access to affordable health care, economic security, and the courts for older adults with limited resources.

Since 1972 we've focused our efforts primarily on populations that have traditionally lacked legal protection such as women, people of color, LGBT individuals, and people with limited English proficiency.

Today's Webinar

- Looking back on past year and growth
- Areas of focus as we move forward in remote legal service delivery
- Models that have helped advocates reach and serve older adults
 - We will highlight a few, but please share your successes in the Questions Box

Poll: What has helped you expand your ability to provide remote legal assistance in the past year?

- A. New technology/hardware (laptops, tablets, phones)
- B. More experience using various tools & programs
- C. Improved broadband or connectivity
- D. Gathering ideas and help from fellow advocates
- E. Other—feel free to share in the questions box!

Facing Early Issues

- **Early Focus:**
 - Equipping attorneys and staff with reliable, secure technology
 - Communicating with the public to share constantly changing information
 - Reaching individuals who were already facing social and physical isolation
- **Solutions Deployed:**
 - Dedicated phone lines
 - Websites as sources of information
 - Social media & radio
 - Engaging key partners

Remote Legal Assistance & Older Adults

- Older adults are sometimes left behind in emergency planning and tech design
- Location & access issues
 - More living in rural areas
 - More than 1 in 5 older Americans live in rural areas (Census.gov)
 - Skilled nursing facilities
 - Limitations of broadband access
 - Communication challenges

Remote Service Delivery: Moving Forward

- As we look ahead—what do we want to keep, enhance, or change?
- Expand current efforts and ensure all individuals have the opportunity to benefit from remote service delivery
- Planning for
 - Inclusion
 - Person-centered practices
 - Refining tech tools and methods

“There are opportunities even in the most difficult moments.”

— Wangari Maathai

Role of Technology

- There are opportunities to connect with older adults, but also barriers
 - Access & comfort are both factors
- Remote legal service delivery can
 - Be tech-free, low-tech, or hybrid
 - Have impact, even if you start small with simple tech
 - Incorporate trusted partners and allied professionals in design and practice

Building Knowledge: Resources

- [Remote Legal Support: A Guide for Nonprofit and Pro Bono Innovation](#)
- [AgingSafely.us](#)
 - From Pro Bono Net & Center for Elder Law & Justice
 - Information on Legal Risk Detector Tool & online legal forms to address financial exploitation
- [Legal Services Technology Assistance Project](#)
 - Website & listserv with technology training and community forums
- [National Council on Aging: COVID-19 & Technology Resources](#)
- [One Justice: Remote Legal Toolkit](#)
- [NCLER Remote Work & Outreach Resources](#)

New Resource

- [Providing Legal Services Remotely: A Guide to Available Technologies & Best Practices](#)
 - From Open Society Justice Initiative, Namati, and DLA Piper
 - Explores tech for remote work, hotline operation, online clinics, handling documents and more



Providing legal services remotely:
a guide to available technologies
and best practices



New Perimeter
OUR GLOBAL PRO BONO INITIATIVE

OPEN SOCIETY
JUSTICE INITIATIVE



Promising Practices: Hybrid Models

- Utilizing tech tools on provider side to streamline services
 - Online legal forms
 - Walk-through screening/intake tools (Legal Risk Detector (LRD) & other partner portals)
 - Supplementing phone meetings with video meeting when needed
- Examples:
 - Idaho Legal Aid Services: modifying LRD to address broadband issues
 - Colorado Legal Services: utilizes a variety of clinic model options, based on community needs and assets

Promising Practices: Outdoor Spaces

- “Window meetings” and outdoor consultations
- Drive-through legal clinics
 - Brief service
 - Gathering documents
 - Initial meetings
- Examples:
 - Oklahoma Indian Legal Services
 - Drive Thru Eviction Aid Fair



Promising Practices: Mobile Services

- Converting mobile clinics to phone-based service
- Utilizing vans or buses to bring legal assistance providers to neighborhoods
- Examples:
 - Coast to Coast Legal Aid of South Florida—Mobile Justice Squad
 - Center for Elder Law & Justice—Virtual Mobile Legal Unit



The image is a composite graphic. On the left, there is a photograph of an elderly woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue top and a pink scarf, smiling while talking on a mobile phone and holding a white coffee cup. To the right of the photo is a flyer for the Center for Elder Law & Justice. The flyer has a yellow sun icon and the text: "CENTER FOR ELDER LAW & JUSTICE", "(716) 853-3087", "elderjusticenyc.org", and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Below this, it says "The Center for Elder Law and Justice is here for our community during COVID-19." A large red banner across the middle of the flyer reads "MOBILE LEGAL UNIT". Below the banner, a yellow box contains the text: "We are now offering FREE Virtual Mobile Legal Units!". At the bottom of the flyer, it says: "Host the Mobile Legal Unit for your community members while allowing them to stay safe in the comfort of their homes. During your Virtual MLU event, attendees can call 833-444-1402 Toll Free and".

Looking Forward

“Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection.”

- Mark Twain

Focus on Equity & Inclusion

- Expanding your partners
 - Area Agencies on Aging and other senior service providers are core partners to engage
 - To reach older adults from communities of color, older adults with limited English proficiency, LGBTQ older adults—may need to expand your circle of trusted partners
 - Meaningful participation in design
- Talk to your clients & community
 - Who do they trust? How do they want to connect with you?
 - Learn More: [NCALL Increasing Access to Healing Services and Just Outcomes for Older African American Crime Survivors](#)
- Acknowledging and addressing bias in algorithms

Improving Accessibility

- Language access tools
 - Choosing options that make it easier to incorporate interpreters
 - Providing staff with the information they need to connect to interpreters when working from home
- [Add captions](#) to presentations and videos
 - [Free captioning tools](#)
- Tools for older adults with hearing impairments
 - [Johns Hopkins Checklist](#)
- Consider [accessibility factors](#) when creating documents
- [Plain language](#) & simple instructions
- In advertising events & services, make clear that these options are available

Embedding Person-Centered Practices to Build Trust

- Checking in with your client:
 - Where are they taking the call or meeting?
 - Are they alone or is someone else there with them?
 - Are they comfortable with this method of communication?
 - Who else have they been working with/what other interactions have they had with friends, family, services?
- Many communication practices are similar to those for trauma-informed lawyering
 - Learn more: [Introduction to Trauma-Informed Lawyering](#)

Evaluating Tools In Use

- Are they working for you, your clients, your partners?
- Create opportunities for feedback on delivery and access
 - Include questions about access in client surveys
- Who is connecting with you using these tools?
 - Looking at data collection thoughtfully to see who is engaging
 - Are all communities and populations accessing your services?

Share

- What are your next steps to improve remote legal service delivery this year?

Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC): Elder Law Phone Clinic

Meet the Need!



ALSC: Our Goal

- Reach older adults with limited access to legal services
- Provide legal information and possible intake for advice/representation

ALSC: Our Model

- 1 day/month, 2 attorneys for 2 hours each
- First come, first served
- Legal information + intake for advice/representation

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- Advance Planning
- Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation

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December 15: 10 AM to 2 PM

ALSC: Important Steps & Supplies

- Plan out the process
 - Staffing
 - Phone intake procedure & compliance issues
 - Appointments or first come first served?
 - Who will follow up on intakes and voicemails?
- Set up a hotline number
 - Current provider, Google voice, VOIP, other paid apps
- Create advertising and share with your community
 - Who you are trying to reach? What services do they use?
How do they get their information?

ALSC: Challenges & Opportunities

- Permission to get creative
- Start, evaluate/adjust, repeat
- How to reach older adults who have few resources and/or significant limitations?
- Technology and Compliance issues

Public Law Center (PLC): Virtual Medical Legal Partnership

PLC: Our Goal

- To continue to reach out to client referrals from our medical-legal partnerships (MLPs) remotely

PLC: Our Model

- St. Joseph MLP → 1 hour in-person legal consultations at family resource centers in South Orange County at San Juan Capistrano and Lake Forest on a weekly basis
- AIDS Legal Assistance Project (ALAP) → In-person legal consultation for referrals from HIV/AIDS clinics partnered with the Orange County Health Care Agency

PLC: Important Steps & Supplies

- Set up technology to access office computers remotely
- Set up technology to video conference with clients if needed, and to conduct case reviews
- Set up technology to use office phones remotely via app on cell phones—we used a separate free VOIP technology for a long time, but it had limitations
- Leveraged legal forms software we already had to obtain client signatures

PLC: Challenges

- Obtaining signatures on forms where clients are not comfortable with doing e-signatures
- Obtaining relevant documents from clients, like notices of action related to public benefits
- Representing clients in court and administrative hearings
- Meeting with clients dealing with domestic violence who may not be comfortable doing intake via phone or video-conferencing tech

PLC: Opportunities

- Creates an opportunity for a hybrid system going forward
 - Some clients are not able to make it to the clinic because of disabilities, but find it easier to meet face-to-face by video-conferencing technology
- Creates versatility in case an attorney or client cannot make it in person to the clinic site
- Allows for greater efficiency at the office where a hybrid system also seems to work and means less office space necessary

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Case Consultations

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