

# Frequently Asked Questions: Strategies for Reaching Older Adults through Remote Legal Services

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This FAQ is a follow up to NCLER's training, Strategies for Reaching Older Adults through Remote Legal Services Delivery. The [webcast recording](#) and [slides](#) have more information.

## How can we assist older adult clients who do not know how to access or use video conferencing on their phones, tablets, or laptops?

Although a growing number of older adults have access to and are comfortable using technology, some of your clients may need additional help to use video conferencing or other online remote service programs.

For older adults who have access to technology and internet, but just need additional instruction to connect to specific programs, consider drafting detailed instructions in [plain language](#). The National Council on Aging has an [example of instructions for connecting to Zoom](#). Send the information to your client well in advance of their scheduled video meeting or hearing, and provide a phone number to get help from you or someone in your office if they run into problems. On some tablets, you can access a free app called "Easy Tablet Help for Seniors" that offers guidance on basic functionalities of the device. You can also recommend learning opportunities for ongoing education. [Senior Planet](#) has a number of courses available for older adults to learn more about technology, and even offers a hotline for older adults to call with technology questions. Your local [Area Agency on Aging](#) or public library may also have educational opportunities.

Many older adults still do not have broadband access. This digital divide especially impacts people of color and low income households.<sup>1</sup> Programs like [Lifeline](#), [EveryoneOn](#), and [others](#) have options for free or low cost internet access. Your [Area Agency on Aging](#) may have a program for device distribution and some libraries have hotspot devices available for loan.

## Are there models to provide online legal clinics that maintain privacy and the ability to pre-screen for eligibility?

If you are hosting an online legal clinic and would like to pre-screen for eligibility, consider an appointment or referral model. This would include asking potential attendees to call or email your office in advance and provide basic details about their issue to see if it will be covered by the clinic. Based on the information collected, you could then provide the registration information if eligible. If you would like to offer one-on-one consultations in addition to the group clinic training, you can also provide an individual link or phone number that the attendee can use to connect to an attorney for the consultation after the group session.

When exploring various training platforms for online clinics that distribute legal information in a group setting, look into platforms that are structured as a webinar rather than as a meeting. This structure would allow you to disable certain features so that attendees cannot see each other, see participant lists, or post private information that other attendees see. When exploring potential platforms, look for platforms with options to hide participant information and the ability to disable attendee chat functions. GotoWebinar

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<sup>1</sup> Pro Bono.Net Connecting Justice Communities. [COVID-19 Deepens a Digital Divide that has long impacted low-income, Black and Hispanic, Tribal and Rural, and older households, according to recent reports](#). August 20, 2020.

and Zoom Webinar have some of these features. This [Zoom Webinar guide](#) has helpful information on the difference between meetings and webinars.

## How can we increase participant engagement in online legal trainings and outreach while maintaining privacy?

Audience polling is a helpful way to keep your audience engaged throughout an online training and does not reveal personal information about the attendees. You can also consider using the question and answer functions to increase engagement. These features allow participants to post questions that only the panelists can see. It is helpful to have someone other than the speaker monitoring questions to screen them for personal and identifying information. The person can chat answers back to the individuals or present the questions for the speaker to answer.

Before the training starts, it is also useful to provide clear instructions to attendees on how to submit questions by describing exactly where the question box is and how it works. The speaker can remind participants throughout the training to submit questions or pose specific questions to the audience to answer.

## What would be the best way to get client documents and signatures through video conference?

There are a number of apps and e-signature tools that are available to providers to use to gather documents and signatures from clients. Cost and options vary by program, but some to explore include:

### Scanning Tools:

- Microsoft Office Lens
- ClearScanner App
- Scanner Pro App
- Adobe Scan App
- iPhone Notes App

### E-Signature Tools:

- DocuSign
- Adobe Sign
- SignNow
- HelloSign & Dropbox

## If I am trying to set up a phone-based clinic or hotline, how do I choose a phone service provider?

There are a number of cloud-based phone services that legal aid providers can explore. To determine the best fit, consider the phone clinic or hotline model that you want to implement. Different phone services have different strengths and weaknesses. If you are going to have live calling only (where callers call in on a specified day or time to reach live help), you may not need a system that has as many options for voicemail, but you may need a better options for queuing calls or callback when callers call in at the same time. If you are planning to implement a voicemail-only call back model, or a hybrid, you may have different needs, such as the ability to provide recorded information. Other factors to consider include how frequently you will host a phone clinic, how many people will be answering calls, and whether the calls will be answered by staff or volunteers. Some services to explore include Vonage, Google Voice, Talkdesk and Ring Central.

## Additional Resources

- [NCLER Remote Work & Outreach Resources](#)
- [Providing Legal Services Remotely: A Guide to Available Technologies and Best Practices](#)
- [Remote Legal Support: A Guide for Nonprofit and Pro Bono Innovation](#)
- [AgingSafely.us](#)
- [Legal Services Technology Assistance Project](#)
- [National Council on Aging: COVID-19 & Technology Resources](#)
- [One Justice: Remote Legal Toolkit](#)

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**Case consultation assistance is available for attorneys and professionals seeking more information to help older adults. Contact NCLER at [ConsultNCLER@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:ConsultNCLER@acl.hhs.gov).**

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