

Technology Initiative Grants

Letter of Intent to Apply for Funding

Georgia Legal Services Program
Grantee Number: 611020
TIG Number: 09351

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Category: Replication

Amount Request: \$110,000

Description of Project - Briefly describe the basic elements of the system(s), how they will be developed, how they will operate, the function they will serve within the legal services delivery system, their expected impact, a similar factors. (The impact should only be highlighted here; more details about the system's benefits should be provided below.)

Georgia Legal Services Program proposes to develop an enhanced web presence to support advocates who might deliver legal services to veterans and/or servicemembers. GLSP would create an electronic library and other electronic tools and resources that provide support for legal services and volunteer attorneys that could be replicated on a state-by-state basis or on a national basis.

There are a myriad of programs that offer a range of services from social services, legal education information, legal referrals, and more. In general, few of these programs live up to their capacity or promise to provide seamless referrals, quality, up-to-date legal information or social services referral information.

GLSP proposes to partner with one or more LSC-funded programs to create a unified approach to supporting advocates in delivering legal services to veterans and servicemembers. Under the supervision of a dedicated web content librarian and site manager, a cadre of content contributors will be developed to assemble or create content, manage the content over time to ensure its accuracy, collaborate with other national content owners, and assist in providing training and other tools to increase the skills of advocates. Web content will include in-depth legal information about the issues, such as citations/links to statutes, regulations, legal strategies, model briefs and related documents, and manuals and outlines to the extent permitted by the national perspective. Local materials will be created for replication in other jurisdictions using HotDocs and Adobe fillable PDFs.

The State Bar of Georgia and GLSP's State Bar Pro Bono Project are in the final stages of developing a statewide veterans and servicemembers legal information and referral service that will be united with this proposal. Information on the State Bar project can be found here: www.GeorgiaAdvocates.org/library. Georgia's advocacy site is based on a Probono.net template. The site hosts over 62 HotDocs and dozens of fillable PDF pleadings.

Major benefits - Describe the specific ways in which the system(s) will increase or improve services to clients and/or enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of program operations. To the extent feasible, discuss both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of these benefits.

One web portal for advocates would streamline access to the most important materials needed by advocates within a state, tend to ensure coordination among content owners, and serve as a powerful membership community for volunteer recruitment and advocacy collaboration. National and local programs will be encouraged to replicate the portal and its password-protected libraries to further disseminate their program's content. GLSP has experience with web training of

advocates that will be brought to bear on this project, including webcasting, webinars, podcasts and more. The State Bar of Georgia information and referral project for veterans and servicemembers will provide energy and additional resources and networks (including Georgia's numerous military legal services offices) for the web project. The pilot will assess the different dimensions of information and capacities related to federal laws that are the same (e.g., vets benefits) or largely the same (e.g., bankruptcy, special status-related issues) and those that are primarily state specific (e.g., family law, landlord-tenant). This pilot project will help analyze the feasibility of sustaining a national model versus a state-based model state website. Georgia currently hosts a military and veterans advocacy resource library here: www.GeorgiaAdvocates.org/GOJC.

Georgia's advocate site already is home to over 6,000 web resources and has very good user statistics. The site provides a very good environment for testing demand for, and usability of, resources and web tools. Further, Georgia's advocate site administrators are very proficient at managing content, training and other web-related tasks. In short, the veterans and military pilot would see immediate results.

Estimated costs - Start by stating the amount of funding you are seeking from the TIG program, and then give the estimated total project cost, summarizing the anticipated costs of the major components of the project. List anticipated contributions, both in-kind and monetary, of all partners involved in the project.

GLSP requests \$110,000 for this proposal: \$45,000 for dedicated staff time (1 FTE web content librarian) to survey legal information content, gather content and convert content to appropriate format for posting ; \$10,000 for project management; \$38,000 for programming costs; \$17,000 for national networking purposes, including travel, training, marketing and evaluation.

Major partners - Identify organizations that are expected to be important partners. Specify the role(s) each partner will play.

GLSP proposes to partner with one or more LSC-funded programs and one or more national programs that have experience with military and veterans legal issues. The State Bar of Georgia and the State Bar of Georgia Younger Lawyers Division support this proposal, as do the military legal services offices within Georgia. GLSP envisions continuing its partnership with ProBono.net and may explore case management systems approaches using its current CMS vendor, PS Technologies.

Innovation/Replication/Sustainability - Identify how and why the proposed project is new and innovative. Identify how and why the proposed project can significantly benefit and/or be replicated by other legal services providers and/or the community at large. Identify how the proposed project will be maintained to ensure sustainability.

A state-based volunteer support model could be replicated by a multitude of other Probono.net websites, especially so with the use of HotDocs and fillable PDF forms that could be easily adapted for other jurisdictions. A pilot project could be easily absorbed into the state advocate site and sustained into the future using our current practices.

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