

ABA \ NLADA 2005 Equal Justice Conference

Getting Your Money's Worth From Your Case Management System

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SESSION DESCRIPTION:

A good case management system can help you do a lot more than count cases. Unfortunately, much of the information about these systems -- and much of the national discussion about them as well -- relates mainly to the needs of full-representation legal services programs. In this session, we will focus specifically on how hotlines and pro bono programs can use their CMS to improve the quality and efficiency of services both to clients and to volunteers. Come prepared to have a participatory discussion.

1. Using your CMS to support your pro bono project
 - a. Pine Tree Legal VLP and Hotline
 - a. Statewide
 - b. Office locations
 - b. PTLA's CMS
 - c. Document assembly for clients and attorneys
 - d. Case referral, tracking and follow up
 - e. Strategic analysis of case data
 - a. Analyzing your case load
 - b. Planning strategically for your project
 - f. Implementation
 - a. Who does what
 - b. Issues to watch for
 - g. Maximizing CMS/ where we're headed with our system
 - a. Interfacing with the web and e-mail
 - b. Making the system more user friendly
 - c. Integration with outreach programs

2. CMS and Hotlines: Quality results, affordable costs

- a. Legal Aid Line of Western Ohio
 - i. ABLE, LAWO
 - ii. Toledo Bar Association Pro Bono, Greater Dayton VLP
 - iii. Rural Pro Bono panels
 - iv. 32 counties
 - v. Provides centralized intake, legal advice, brief service

- b. Our CMS:
 - i. Web-based
 - 1. complete client intake applications
 - 2. track on-going cases
 - 3. match expertise to client need regardless of geography
 - ii. PHP & MySQL “open source” software

- c. Case management features used by the Hotline:
 - i. Password protected log in
 - ii. Common tasks accessible on home screen
 - iii. New client intake link
 - iv. Checks for existing files
 - v. Easily opens multiple cases
 - vi. Instant real-time conflict-checking
 - vii. Allows additional clients, opposing parties, household members
 - viii. Checks financial eligibility
 - ix. Provides document assembly letters/ integrates topic materials
 - x. Has built-in time-keeping
 - xi. Easily searchable database
 - xii. Simplified reporting

- d. Advantages of the CMS for the hotline
 - i. Teamwork
 - ii. Management of work flow
 - 1. Monitors case loads, intake levels, assignment of duties
 - 2. Adjusts intake, assignment of caseloads
 - iii. Staff development
 - 1. Internal work group info sharing
 - 2. statewide task force updates
 - 3. CLE and FAQ integration
 - 4. Linked to LexisNexis account
 - 5. Training
 - iv. Case and community information access
 - 1. Built-in questions, forms, logic trees
 - 2. Resources manual on-line
 - 3. Website and agency links

- v. Community partnerships and collaboration
 - 1. Discerning trends
 - 2. Custom queries
 - 3. Case reviews
 - 4. External input
 - 5. Systemic advocacy
- vi. Funding development
 - 1. Improved data = improved credibility for proposals
 - 2. Ability to target sub-segments of the client community
 - 3. Customized tracking for funder reports

e. Implementation – how do you actually get this done?

3. Break into small groups.

- a. Choose an issue regarding a pro bono program or hotline. How can CMS help improve or address this?
- b. Who should be involved in the development and implementation? What are the roles of various staff and management?
- c. How will you allocate resources to develop this tool?
- d. What partnerships can you use to help in the development?
- e. How will you actually use the tool?

4. Wrap-up

- a. What tools might be most useful?
- b. How to address implementation
- c. How to set priorities
- d. Getting the right people involved
- e. How might these tools and ideas be shared nationally?

Materials distributed and web sites:

1. CMS Study by Colleen Cotter and Julia Gordon, also available at <http://www.lstech.org>
2. “Getting your money’s worth out of your CMS” by Julia Gordon and Colleen Cotter.
Reprinted with permission from the MIE Journal.
3. Pro bono thank you letter – PTLA
4. Year End Charts 2004 - PTLA
5. <http://www.lstech.org>
6. <http://www.lstech.org/ntap/trainings/modules/HR105> - NTAP training materials for
hotline scripts, document assembly
7. <http://www.lri.lsc.gov>
8. <http://lists.lstech.org/index.html/info/legalhotlines> - to subscribe to Legal Hotlines email
list
9. <http://www.legalhotlines.org/>