

ABA / NLADA 2010 Equal Justice Conference
Assessing the Capacity of the Legal Services System in Your State

Presenters

David Godfrey, ABA Commission on Law and Aging

godfreyd@staff.abanet.org

Dorene A. Kuffer, New Mexico Legal Aid

dorenek@nmlegalaid.org

Karen Buck, SeniorLAW Center

kbuck@seniorlawcenter.org

Brief Description:

In order to maximize capacity of the legal service providers in the state, assess ability to meet the needs of the community, and identify overlaps and gaps, programs must work together to analyze the services available in their state and adapt the services to community needs. Three programs working in states with differing legal provider environments and at different stages of the legal capacity assessment process discuss their experiences in planning the assessment, identifying participants, collecting data, and interpreting and sharing results.

Topical Outline:

- I. Definition and Overview of Capacity Assessment Process (Karen 5 Minutes)
 - a. Difference between system capacity assessment and legal needs study
 - b. Why capacity assessment is vital part of the equation
 - c. Roadmap of our session and speakers (different stages of assessments, different states, introductions)

- II. Pennsylvania System Capacity Experience (15)
 - a. Legal Resources for Older Pennsylvanians
 - b. Challenges of diverse state with fragmented delivery systems
 - c. Findings and anticipated impact: Disparity, Legislation, Funding
 - d. Lessons learned and moving forward

- III. New Mexico System Capacity Experience (15)
 - a. ATJ Committee
 - i. Mandate from State Plan
 - ii. What we focused on
 - iii. Operation of committee
 - b. Collection of data – differing viewpoints
 - c. Focus on rural capacity
 - d. Draft report
 - e. What are we going to do with the report?

- IV. Kentucky System Capacity Experience (DG 15)
 - a. Reinventing the wheel – developing survey instruments
Thanks to Iowa and Virginia
 - b. Study design –
 - What did I want to learn?
 - Why did I want to know it?
 - What did I intend to do with it?
 - b. Data collection
 - Kindness
 - It helps to have leverage
 - c. Data analysis
 - d. Reporting
 - e. Regrets – I have a few
 - Due dates
 - Promises made and kept
 - f. Moving forward and next steps
- V. Round Table Discussion and Questions (30 Minutes David will moderate)
 - a. Defining the purpose of assessment (legal needs vs. capacity)
 - b. What entities should be included in the assessment
 - c. Data collection and analysis
 - d. What to do with the data – effective reporting
 - e. Obstacles to legal systems capacity assessment
 - f. Tips on conducting assessment
- VI. Closing Points - Dorene (5-10 Minutes).
 - a. Why do this?
 - b. What we've learned
 - c. Offer for help

Notes:

Bibliography & Website Links:

Kentucky Legal Systems Capacity Final Report, 2008 – Access to Justice Foundation
www.legalhotlines.org/reports.php#needs

SeniorLAW Center, Philadelphia, PA www.seniorlawcenter.org

Assessing Current Capacity of an Older Americans Act Legal Services Delivery System by *Natalie Thomas*
www.legalhotlines.org/dir_listing/legal_services/