

Iowa Legal Aid Awarded National Recognition



Left to right: Don Saunders, Director, Civil Legal Services with NLADA, and Dennis Groenenboom, Executive Director of Iowa Legal Aid

Technology serving low-income lowans earns innovation acclaim

Des Moines (May 20, 2008) – The National Legal Aid and Defender Association’s (NLADA) Innovations in Equal Justice Award was recently presented to Iowa Legal Aid at the 2008 Equal Justice Conference in Minneapolis.

The award recognizes success in the application of technology toward better serving the legal needs of low-income individuals. In granting the award NLADA noted that Iowa Legal Aid has long been a leader in the development of new technologies and specifically cited several projects including; an online case management system, and a website which provides community legal education materials to both lowans in need of legal services and the volunteer attorneys statewide that assist Iowa Legal Aid in providing those services.

The website offers a ‘live chat’ feature which allows visitors to talk in real time to an Iowa Legal Aid employee who will help them navigate the website to find the information they seek.

Iowa Legal Aid is currently developing a web based ‘intake’ system that would allow low-income lowans to request help from any Internet connected computer.

‘These technological innovations allow us to extend our service to thousands of lowans who we could not otherwise assist’ noted executive director Dennis Groenenboom.

Many lowans, due to poverty, disability, or circumstance, struggle and lose their way in our legal system. Iowa Legal Aid exists to provide them access to justice. Ultimately Justice comes to mean housing families, providing safety from domestic abuse, and security for the nearly 45,000 predominately women, children, people with disabilities and elderly lowans served each year. Iowa Legal Aid serves as a safety net for thousands of low-income lowans who require legal representation to secure the basic necessities of their lives. In 2007, Iowa Legal Aid closed nearly 19,000 cases statewide.

NLADA is the nation’s leading advocate for front-line attorneys and other equal justice professionals - those who make a difference in the lives of low-income clients and their families and communities. Representing legal aid and defender programs, as well as individual advocates, NLADA is proud to be the oldest and largest national, nonprofit membership association devoting 100 percent of its resources to serving the broad equal justice community.