

Project Background

In 2004 Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA), Iowa Legal Aid (ILA), and Pro Bono Net (PBN) received an LSC Technology Initiative Grant (LSC TIG) to support the LiveHelp Pilot Project, which allows MontanaLawHelp.org and IowaLegalAid.org Web site visitors to ask remotely-located Web Site Specialists for help finding online legal information and resources. Through an online chat, the Specialists are able to immediately direct the Web site visitors to appropriate legal information, and in the case of IowaLegalAid.org, help users complete an intake online. LiveHelp is currently being expanded in several areas.

Current Status

LiveHelp was launched in June 2006 on MontanaLawHelp.org and IowaLegalAid.org. Implemented with LivePerson Pro software (<http://www.liveperson.com>), the feature currently allows Web site visitors to click a button, connect with a Specialist, and ask for information about a legal problem. The Specialist then provides the visitor with a link to the appropriate information or escorts the visitor to relevant resources on the site. (If a Specialist is unavailable, the visitor can choose to leave a message and receive the information in an e-mail.) LiveHelp is staffed by VISTA volunteers, paralegals, interns, staff attorneys, other willing staff members, and in some cases volunteers.

With implementation support from PBN, LiveHelp has since launched on five other sites:

- LawHelp.org/LA
- GeorgiaAdvocates.org
- ArkansasLegalServices.org
- LawHelpMN.org
- TexasLawHelp.org

The Georgia project is the first LiveHelp initiative to serve advocate site users; the Arkansas project is the first cross-platform LiveHelp initiative; and the Texas project is the first deployment of LiveHelp in a disaster response context (Hurricane Ike) using volunteer attorneys as navigators.

Upcoming Innovations and Replication

With support of TIG funding, MLSA and PBN are collaborating on a pilot project to integrate LiveHelp with document assembly in Montana, and Pro Bono Net is building capacity to support additional LiveHelp replication projects. LiveHelp projects are under development for 2009 for LawHelp.org/NY and the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund of Kentucky. In addition, the TexasLawHelp.org LiveHelp project will expand to include a court access component.

Want to know more?

If you'd like to learn more about this project or see a demonstration, contact:

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