

Remote Legal Support Guide

Project Profile: Colorado Legal Services



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Organizational Overview

Colorado Legal Services (CLS) is a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income Coloradans and seniors seeking civil legal assistance. CLS was founded in 1925 and has been providing legal help to those in need ever since.

Project Process and Tools

CLS used grants from the Legal Services Corporation through the Pro Bono Innovation Fund (PBIF) to create, evolve, and evaluate five clinic models that seek to increase legal resources available to low-income rural communities in Colorado. In order to do this, these clinics must effectively use technology, metro-based volunteer attorneys, and local partnerships.

CLS's original service delivery models were developed by asset mapping, a community-based program development process that resulted in clinics using multiple types of technology. A phone-based system already guaranteed continued services during the pandemic. But with COVID shutting down libraries and similar public resources, CLS had to address the lack of brick and mortar hosting sites. Of their five clinics, two clinics serving a collective eight counties had to temporarily shut down, and one clinic had to shift from videoconferencing to phone communication to stay open. The Call4All clinic, a phone-based clinic serving 39 out of 64 counties, immediately expanded its service area to include counties impacted by the closed clinics. Impressively, the original Call4All counties never experienced a downturn in service during the pandemic. The "5th JD Clinic" became the "NW Clinic" and pivoted from videoconferencing to phones, which allowed it to grow its service area from four to 15 counties.

Working with Pro Bonos

CLS didn't want to lose the pro bono volunteers it had fostered for its clinics. Because of the pandemic, CLS created a new volunteer program for the pro bonos to provide individual family law phone consultations. Some pro bono volunteers left during the pandemic, but CLS successfully retained most of them.

CLS recommends multi-tiered support for volunteers. This includes creating and distributing materials upfront, such as legal summaries and handbooks; and maintaining virtual availability during clinics to answer questions from volunteers, as a safety net and real time volunteer support.

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