

PROJECT PLAN

COORDINATED INTAKE & REFERRAL

PRESENTED TO THE DC BAR FOUNDATION | DECEMBER 2020

Introduction

In collaboration with the District's legal services community, the DC Bar Foundation has developed a project plan for the implementation of a coordinated intake and referral program (the "program" or CIR). The need to connect District residents with legal services was highlighted in the D.C. Access to Justice Commission's 2019 report.

"Individuals seeking legal services may find themselves making contact with several legal services providers and undergoing multiple intake processes in various locations before securing assistance, or worse, learning that no assistance is available to them. Even providers offering referrals struggle at times to know where to send individuals seeking services at any given moment. This creates a disincentive for seeking legal assistance. The District's legal services community and other relevant stakeholders should pursue approaches to improve the experience of referral and intake through coordination and integration among our large ecosystem of providers and community stakeholders." (page 154)

In August 2020, the DC Bar Foundation contracted with a consultant, Joseph Schieffer, who has experience in implementing large scale legal services technology projects to facilitate the research and coordination for the development of the plan. In order to develop the plan, Joseph met with 30 members of our community, including legal services providers, social services providers and key people in the DC access to justice community. These conversations explored previous efforts the Foundation has funded to improve coordination in 2007 and 2020, as well as successful efforts that currently exist in the areas of debt collection, eviction defense, family law, and victim recovery.

The project plan provides a foundation and starting point for how a coordinated intake and referral program could be implemented in DC. We encourage you to read the project plan and consider how we can work together to implement coordinated intake and referral in DC.



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1. Project Scope

This defines what will be included in the project.

The scope of the project includes:

- Establishing governance and staffing for operating the program
- Collaborating with stakeholders to develop the program
- Developing the technology and operational infrastructure for the program
- Launching the program and performing outreach about the program
- Sustainability and operations of the program
- Evaluation of the program

Governance

The community will need to decide how the program will be governed. Based on experiences with past projects and discussions with DC community members, we recommend the following for consideration:

- A DC-based organization that does not provide direct legal services hosts and staffs the program.
- An advisory committee is created with representatives from legal services organizations, social services providers, client-eligible people, and key stakeholders. The Advisory Committee will provide direction to the CIR staff. Committee members serve one year terms. Committee meetings are held monthly.

Staffing

The program needs two full-time staff members to develop and manage the program for the first year: one program manager and one program coordinator. We anticipate that there will be additional staff needed as the program grows. The staffed roles are responsible for working with stakeholders to develop and implement the program.

We recommend that the staffed roles not be tasked with the operations of the program. We suggest that a contractor with expertise in technology and logistics handle the day-to-day operations of handling calls, coordinating with callers and legal services

providers to place cases, maintaining and improving the technology, and operating the overall CIR system. This will allow the staffed positions to focus on collaborating with stakeholders to improve the program and perform outreach.

Program Development

The CIR staff will develop the program in collaboration with the CIR Advisory Committee, a broad group of stakeholders and the technology/operations contractor. The overarching goal of the CIR program is to develop a point of entry for people seeking legal help that will connect them to an organization that can serve them. The collaborative team will be responsible for how this goal is achieved.

The CIR has been conceptualized with these key elements:

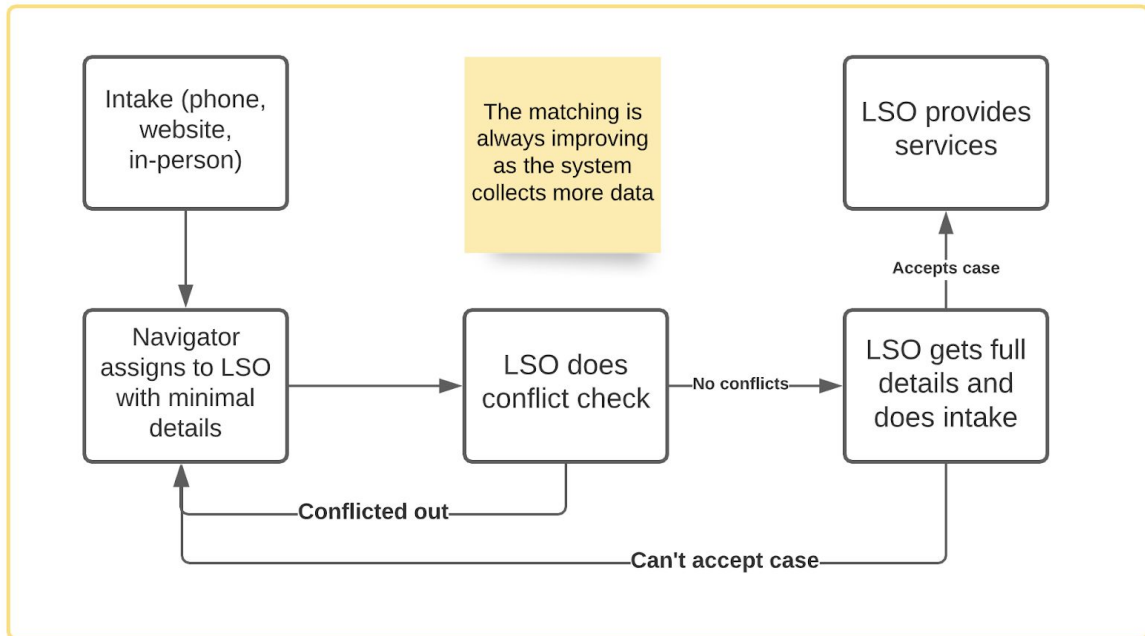
- The CIR will not provide legal advice. Providing legal advice could create a large base of prior clients, which could lead to an increasing number of matters that will be conflicted out because the opposing party has received assistance.
- The CIR will be managed by an organization that does not provide direct services to avoid concerns of cherry-picking cases as well as other ethics concerns.
- The CIR will complement existing intake procedures at legal services organizations.

We anticipate the following program components:

- A single phone number that people can call to get legal help
- A website in which people can apply online
- A form that can be placed on any website, such as LawHelp.org/DC, for people to apply online to the CIR
- A technology/operations contractor that handles the intakes and system to connect the person to legal services organizations (see flowchart below)

Coordinated Intake and Referral Flowchart

LSO = legal services organization



2. Project Budget

This outlines costs to develop and maintain the program.

Consultant Costs

- \$2,500 per month during the development and implementation of the program (18 months).
- The consultant should have previous experience with developing similar programs in other jurisdictions.

Staff Salary and Benefits Costs

- \$100,000 per year for a Program Manager.
- \$75,000 per year for a Program Coordinator.
- More staff may be needed as the program grows.

Technology/Operations Development Costs

- \$125,000 for the development of the technology and operational processes. This includes collaborating with the CIR staff to set up profiles and permissions for legal aid staff using the program.
- \$350,000 annually to operate the technology and the program. This estimate is based on having one manager at a cost of \$80,000 per year, four navigators at a cost of \$55,000 per navigator per year, and technology maintenance and updates to cost \$50,000 per year.

Outreach Costs

- \$25,000 for marketing and outreach during the initial launch of the program. This includes physical advertising (i.e., bus stops), digital advertising, and public events.
- \$50,000 per year for ongoing marketing and outreach. This includes physical advertising (i.e., bus stops), digital advertising, and public events.

Total Costs

- Assuming one year of work to develop and launch the program, it will cost \$413,750 to develop the program.
- We estimate that it will cost \$575,000 per year to operate the program. The annual cost could be more or less depending on the volume of intakes.

	Program Development					Launch		
	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Total	Annual Costs
Consultant	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$45,000	\$0
Two FTEs		\$43,750	\$43,750	\$43,750	\$43,750	\$43,750	\$218,750	\$175,000
Technology				\$20,833	\$20,833	\$20,833	\$62,500	\$50,000
Operations				\$20,833	\$20,833	\$20,833	\$62,500	\$300,000
Outreach						\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000
Total	\$7,500	\$51,250	\$51,250	\$92,917	\$92,917	\$117,917	\$413,750	\$575,000

3. Project Schedule

This provides a starting point for discussing a timeline for implementing the program.

Q1 2021 (January - March 2021)

- Discuss the project with stakeholders
- Seek funding for the project

Q2 2021 (April - June 2021)

- Establish Advisory Committee
- Hire full-time program manager and program coordinator

Q3 2021 (July - September 2021)

- Work with legal services providers to develop criteria and procedures for referring cases to them
- Contract with technology/operations vendor

Q4 2021 (October - December 2021)

- Develop the technology and processes to operate the program
- Prepare plans for pilots to test the system

Q1 2022 (January - March 2022)

- Continue developing the technology and process of the program
- Perform pilots to test technology and processes
- Develop plans for launch and outreach

Q2 2022 (April - June 2022)

- Launch the system and perform outreach about the program
- Work with stakeholders on improvements to the program

4. Assumptions, Dependencies, Challenges and Opportunities

This outlines key concepts in the development of the project plan.

Assumptions

The project plan is based on these assumptions. If these assumptions are changed, the project plan needs to be reevaluated.

- The CIR will not provide legal advice. Providing legal advice could create a large base of prior clients, which could lead to an increasing number of matters that will be conflicted out because the opposing party has received assistance.
- The CIR will be operated by an organization that does not provide direct services. Operating in this manner removes several complexities related to conflicts of interest and ethics.

Dependencies

The project plan is dependent on these items in order for the project to succeed.

- Participation and collaboration from legal services organizations.
- Staffing for the program. The program will not work as a technology-only solution.
- Adequate funding for the development and ongoing operation of the program.

Challenges

These challenges need to be addressed and overcome during the development of the program.

- Mitigate potential impacts to the type and number of cases that legal services organizations receive.
- Address confidentiality of client information and how information is collected and shared.
- Ensure that the CIR doesn't result in a program that primarily helps people who are able to use technology; the people who most need legal help may not be able to use the CIR program without assistance.
- Create a standardized process for intake and referral that works across programs.

- Develop procedures for when a person applies through the CIR program and directly with legal services organizations.
- Implement language access for non-English speakers.
- Ensure that outreach about the CIR is clear on what it is. The program could easily be misinterpreted as providing legal services. The messaging about the program will need to be tested with client-eligible people.
- Ensure that there is adequate staffing for the program and operation of the system so that it doesn't become a bottleneck to people getting services.

Opportunities

These are elements of the program that could be beneficial to the overall legal aid delivery system.

- Aggregated and anonymized data can be shared with providers to be used for systemic approaches and advocacy.
- Integrating the work of the CIR with existing coordinated intake projects could lead to synergies and efficiencies. See Appendix C for current projects that involve coordinated intake between DC legal services organizations
- The CIR has the potential to reduce the amount of time that legal services organizations spend handling calls from people they can't serve.
- The CIR has the potential to reduce the overall amount of calls in the legal aid system by providing a program that will connect people with an organization that can serve them on the first call.

5. Technology Considerations

An overview of the technology aspects of the projects.

Technology required for the project:

- **Website.** For people to apply online for services and to host information about the CIR program for legal services organizations.
- **Contact center software.** The contact center is the configuration layer of an integrated phone system and also handles metrics and reporting.
- **VoIP phone system.** This will allow people to work remotely as part of an integrated phone system. The phone system will be integrated with the contact center software.
- **Web application.** The web application will handle the intakes, processes and communications of placing cases with legal services organizations. The web application will be integrated with the phone system, contact center software and the website.
- **A form that can be placed on any website,** with an embed code, for people to apply online to the CIR. Court websites, LawHelp.org/DC, and legal services organizations can place the form on their website.

These technologies will need continuous maintenance and improvements in order to optimize how they function together to create a great user experience.

Technology that would be nice to have:

- Integration between the CIR web application and legal services organizations' case management systems. For example, if an organization accepted a case, the information would be populated into their case management system. Without the integration with case management systems, intake staff at legal services organizations will need to copy/paste the information from the web application into their case management system.
- For organizations that have hotlines that provide brief advice, the ability to do warm transfers from the CIR to those hotlines. The work to do this is more procedural than technical.

6. Project Stakeholders

This articulates the groups and organizations that have an interest in the project or could be impacted by the project.

People in need of legal services. The program will be developed and operated with participation from people in need of legal services. The development of this plan utilized reports that included input from DC residents, including The Community Listening Project and the D.C. Access to Justice Commission 2019 report.

Legal services organizations. The program will be steered by an Advisory Committee that will include representation from legal services organizations. Eleven legal services organizations provided input in the development of this project plan.

Social services organizations. The program will have regular collaboration with social services organizations. Leadership from Martha's Table and Bread for the City contributed to this plan and provided key insights into how to reach people that need legal services.

D.C. Courts. The program will seek the involvement of the D.C. Courts in developing and implementing the CIR. During the interviews with legal services organizations in the development of this plan, it was mentioned that the Courts have expressed interest for some time in a coordinated intake and referral program.

Access to justice ecosystem organizations. The program will collaborate with other organizations working on access to justice initiatives. Leadership from the DC Access to Justice Commission, the DC Bar Foundation, the DC Consortium of Legal Services Providers, and the Washington Council of Lawyers contributed to the development of this plan.

7. Success Criteria

These are the north stars of the project and define what we aim to achieve.

Improve awareness and accessibility of legal services. Reach and serve people that aren't aware of legal services or are overwhelmed trying to navigate legal services providers.

Develop pathways to legal services by those who need them most. We must be intentional about developing a program that serves all people, not just the people that have the ability to seek out legal aid and use technology.

Reduce client bounce. Provide a point of entry for people seeking legal help that will connect them with an organization that can serve them.

Provide a trauma-informed solution. The CIR will handle the process of placing cases with legal services organizations that can accept them so that the person seeking legal help doesn't have to tell their story multiple times in the application process.

Complement existing intake procedures. Collaborate with legal services organizations to develop efficient processes for referring people to their organizations and for them to refer people that they can't serve to the CIR.

Additional success criteria will be defined as the program is developed. A professional evaluator will develop metrics and methods to evaluate the efficacy of the program.

Appendix A

Organizations and people that were interviewed for the development of the project plan.

Bread for the City

- George Jones, Chief Executive Officer
- Su Sie Ju, Legal Clinic Director

Children's Law Center

- Judith Sandalow, Executive Director

Community Technology Alliance

- Javier Celodon, Operations Director

DC Access to Justice Commission

- Nancy Drane, Executive Director
- Tara Veazey

DC Affordable Law Firm

- Gabby Mulnick Majewski, Executive Director

DC Bar Foundation

- J. Daryl Byler, Director of Development and Communications
- Kirra Jarratt, Chief Executive Officer
- Mark Johnson-Lewis, Evaluation and Impact Manager
- Phil Horton, Board Member

DC Bar Pro Bono Center

- Gabriella Lewis-White, Managing Attorney
- Lise Adams, Assistant Director
- Rebecca K. Troth, Executive Director
- Reece Flexner, Managing Attorney

DC Consortium of Legal Services Providers

- Karen A. Newton Cole, Co-Chair

DC Office of Administrative Hearings

- Hon. Sharon E. Goodie

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia

- Chinh Q. Le, Legal Director
- Eric Angel, Executive Director
- Heather Latino, Deputy Legal Director

Legal Counsel for the Elderly

- Rhonda Cunningham Holmes, Executive Director

Martha's Table

- Kim R. Ford, President & CEO

Neighborhood Legal Services Program

- Lori Leibowitz, Managing Attorney

Network for Victim Recovery of DC

- Bridgette Stumpf, Executive Director
- Colleen Gallopin, Director of Partnerships and Collaboration

NPC Research

- Kelly Jarvis, Director of Research in Community Health

Tzedek DC

- Ariel Levinson-Waldman, Founding President and Director-Counsel

Washington Council of Lawyers

- Nancy Lopez, Executive Director

Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

- Jonathan Smith, Executive Director

Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless

- Patty Fugere, Executive Director

Appendix B

Resources utilized in the development of the project plan.

- Approaches to Coordinated Intake via LSC Technology Innovation Grants 2017-2019
- Delivering Justice: Addressing Civil Legal Needs in the District of Columbia (2019)
- DC Bar Foundation Strategic Framework (launched September 2019)
- DC Community Resource Information Exchange: Phase One Report (2020)
- DC Justice for All Proposal (2019)
- DC Victim Legal Assistance Network - Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan (2016)
- Guide for Developing a Victim Legal Assistance Network (2014)
- NPC Civil Legal Counsel Projects Program (CLCPP) Biannual Report
Reporting Period: July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019
- Planning Grant for Legal Services Call Center - Mid-Year Report (2007)
- The Community Listening Project (2016)

Appendix C

Current projects that involve coordinated intake between DC legal services organizations.

Debt Collection Hotline

Legal services organizations involved: DC Bar Pro Bono Center, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Neighborhood Legal Services Program, Tzedek DC.

Family Law Assistance Network (FLAN)

Legal services organizations involved: DC Affordable Law Firm, DC Bar Pro Bono Center, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia.

Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network (LTLAN)

Legal services organizations involved: Bread for the City, DC Bar Pro Bono Center, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Neighborhood Legal Services Program, Rising for Justice.

Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Legal Action Network (OLAN)

Legal services organizations involved: Bread for the City, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless.

Victims Legal Network of DC (VLNDC)

Legal services organizations involved: Advocates for Justice and Education, Amara Legal Center, Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center, Ayuda, Bread for the City, Break the Cycle, Central American Resource Center, Children's Law Center, Christian Legal Aid of the District of Columbia, DC Affordable Law Firm, DC Bar Pro Bono Center, DC Volunteer Lawyers Project, Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project, First Shift Justice Project, Georgetown University Health Justice Alliance, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Neighborhood Legal Services Program, Network for Victim Recovery of DC, Rising for Justice, Tahirih Justice Center, The Safe Sisters Circle, Tzedek DC, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, Whitman-Walker Health.

Note: there are other coordinated intake projects underway that we did not have enough details about to include in the list.

Appendix D

Stakeholder interview questions

1. Were you involved in past efforts to develop coordinated intake and referral? If so, can you describe the project and lessons learned?
2. What coordinated intake projects is your organization currently involved in? Would you share about your experience?
3. How do people find your services? For organizations that don't provide legal services, how do people you serve find legal help?
4. How do you make referrals to other organizations?
5. What do you see as barriers to people accessing services?
6. How can we better connect people to legal help?
7. What outcomes would be most important to you in a coordinated intake and referral project?
8. What are your thoughts and ideas about coordinated intake and referral?
9. What are your thoughts about staffing and governance of a coordinated intake and referral program?
10. What other organizations should we talk to?