

Matters Service Report
Guidelines for
Data Collection and Reporting
Revised October, 2002

- Summary of revisions reflected in this update (October 2002) Page 1
 - Reporting on services provided to *individuals* (e.g., referrals, materials, pro se kits) as a normal part of the intake and service delivery process Page 1
 - Reporting on services provided *in group settings or events* (e.g., workshops, presentations, clinics)..... Page 3
 - Reporting on services *provided to the low-income community as a whole* (e.g., Web-based services) Page 5
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Summary of revisions incorporated in this update (October 2002):

- a. Brochures and newsletter articles -- "*Measured*" versus "*estimated*" clarified Page 6
- b. Legal education and pro se materials posted on web sites and kiosks -- Unit to be counted changed to page "*visits*" (formerly page "*hits*") Page 7
- c. Web-related matters -- Guidelines added for deciding whether to report as "*Community Legal Education*" versus "*Pro Se Assistance*"..... Page 7
- d. Legal education articles published in newspapers -- Under "*Community Legal Education*" Page 8
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1. Data collection on “matters” handled for individuals

Several kinds of non-case “matters” are performed for individuals who have applied for legal assistance to a legal services program or hotline. These include the following:

- **Referral** of an applicant or hotline caller to other agencies or sources of assistance;
- **Provision of legal education materials** in lieu of further legal assistance, e.g., printed brochures, videos, CD-ROMs ;
- **Provision of pro se assistance materials**, e.g., self-help divorce kits, pro se forms, instructions on how to proceed in Small Claims court;
- **Help desk at court.**

The overall approach we are proposing is to create a list of “Matters Codes” to track non-case “matter” categories. All LSC grantees are familiar with the LSC Legal Problem Codes ranging from 1-99. We have created the LSC Matters Codes ranging from 101-159. This will allow programs to collect information on matters in individual cases by providing this one additional field to their case management system (CMS). With minor modifications, these CMS systems or forms can be used to collect and tabulate data on completed non-case “matters.”

Using Matters Codes

Currently LSC uses legal program codes for areas of law reported on the CSR reports. The new LSC system to report Matters has six different types of Matters: Community Legal Education, Pro Se Assistance, Referred, Outreach, Indirect Service, and Other. These six areas are divided into different areas, called Models.

To help you keep track of the matters you perform, we have developed Matters Codes, similar to the legal problem codes with which you are familiar. Below is a list of the codes:

LSC Matters Codes	
Community Legal Education	
Presentations to community groups	101
Legal education brochures	102
Legal education materials posted on web sites	103
Newsletter articles addressing Legal Ed topics	104
Video legal education materials	105
Newspaper articles published	106
Radio spots aired	107
Television spots aired	108
Other CLE	109
Pro Se Assistance	
Workshops or Clinics	111

Help desk at court	112
Self-help printed materials (e.g. divorce kits)	113
Self-help materials posted on web site	114
Self-help materials posted on kiosks	115
Other Pro Se assistance	119
Referrals	
Referred to other provider of civil legal services to low-income people	121
Referred to private bar	122
Referred to provider of human or social services	123
Referred to other source of assistance	129
Outreach	
Informational notices published in print media	131
TV spots or PSAs	132
Radio spots or PSAs	133
Newsletters – external to program	134
Referral agreements with other agencies	135
“How to reach us” pages on web sites	136
Other Outreach	139
Indirect Services	
Legal education for lay service providers	141
Collaborative service delivery models	142
Other indirect services	149
Other Matters	
Mediation/alternative dispute resolution services	151
Other Matters, none of the above	159

This approach allows you to record the information needed to report to LSC with only minor modifications to your case management systems. These include:

- Addition of a field to record the Matters Code, with a drop-down list of the codes.
- Modification of *queries* to select cases with “Matters Codes” from “closed cases”
- Development of *reports* to summarize the matters data by type of matter. (Additional reports can be developed to tabulate the data in various ways for local use — e.g., cross-tabulations of “referral” categories by legal problem.)
- Appropriate *re-labeling of input screens* to make the distinction between “Closed Cases” and “Completed Matters” clear to the intake staff or advocates who are

entering the data.

- Properly train the staff to use both the Matters Code and the Legal Problem Code to record matters. Since matters must be reported both by totals for Models and for Case Type, both numbers are needed. This is why you may not simply add the Matters Codes to the Legal Problem Codes.
- Add two new Legal Problem Codes to your current list. These two codes will be used with referrals. They are 97-Other Problems (non-legal) and 98-Criminal referrals

2. Data collection on “matters” handled in group settings

These types of matters include the following:

- **Legal education workshops and presentations**
- **Pro se clinics and workshops**
- **Legal education for lay service providers**

Three types of information are required:

- Numbers of people who directly receive the services;
- Narrative overview of the services provided; and
- Vignettes, or “good stories” that can be used to illustrate the results and benefits that are achieved as a result of these services.

Situation (1): Small numbers of events. If your program does not offer a large number of these kinds of events each year, this information can be collected very simply. The staff members responsible for these services can usually draft the narrative information readily from notes or memory. The numbers can be estimated by consulting the calendar and writing down all the community presentations made during the year along with an estimate of the number of people who attended.

Situation (2): Large numbers of events. You will need to have a tracking system in place if you have an ambitious community legal education or pro se assistance program. This system need not be complex or burdensome. For example, the person responsible for reporting can ask the people who make presentations or conduct workshops to provide brief reports, using a simple form provided for this purpose.

This report would capture the following information about each event:

- Date of the event, title and name of the person completing the report;
- Type of event (community legal education, pro se assistance, etc.)
- Number of participants
- Brief narrative (2-3 sentences) describing the event.
- “Good story” — If the event had especially good results or had an especially compelling impact on participants, the presenter can include a brief vignette in her report.

These reports can be kept in a “reporting” file and used to tabulate the numbers of “matters” completed report at the time the matters report is due.

In many instances, procedures are already in place that can be tapped into for capturing the required information. For example, many pro se clinic projects keep sign-up sheets or attendance logs capturing data on the number of people attending each session. All that is needed is a way of summarizing this information for the annual “matters” report.

Some case management systems already have provisions for collecting this information.

Kemp’s Clients, for example, has an “Other Services” input screen for capturing information on community legal education workshops, pro se clinics or other events that meet the definition of “matters.” With minor modifications, this system will work for collecting the information needed to report your matters to LSC. We have worked with Kemps Caseworks so that they will have information on how to make these changes available on their web site.

Also, we have worked with the *Western New York Law Center* to be sure they have time to modify their *TIME* system so that it can capture the information as well.

These kinds of provisions can be added to most database management programs without extensive programming. Grantees should consult the people responsible for maintaining their case management systems to see what would be involved in adding this capacity.

Preparations for collecting this information. These consist of three steps:

- Establishing who is responsible for keeping track of this information,
- Setting up a simple procedure for ensuring the numbers and narratives are recorded and fed to the person who prepares the end-of-the-year report, and
- Checking from time to time, including running trial reports, to make sure that the data are being captured and that suitable reports can be tabulated at the time they are needed.

3. Data collection on “matters” representing services provided to the low-income population as a whole

These kinds of matters include the following:

- a) Legal education brochures distributed in client waiting rooms or to local agencies
- b) Legal education materials or self-help materials (e.g., forms) posted on *web sites* or *web kiosks*
- c) Legal education materials published in *newsletters*
- d) Legal education articles published in *newspapers*
- e) Video legal education materials, TV and radio spots and PSAs

Items a-c require measures and estimates of the total numbers of people directly receiving these services and narrative descriptions and “good story” vignettes illustrating the results and benefits of these services on the low-income community. Items d and e are not susceptible to good measurement of numbers reached and are treated differently, as discussed below.

a. Legal education brochures. We acknowledge that numbers regarding people who receive community legal education information from brochures will be somewhat uncertain. Still, it is useful to know whether the scale of this service is on the order of 500 people annually, 5,000 people, or 50,000 people. Without some numerical information it is difficult for a stakeholder to appreciate how significant this category is in the overall legal education effort of a program.

Measured versus estimated. In the Matters Service Report form, we ask for separate “Measured” and “Estimated” counts of people reached. Based on our review of the initial data submitted by grantees and follow-up conversations with LSP people, we are providing the following guidelines with respect to legal education brochures. “Measured” and “Estimated” should be broken out along the lines of *whether or not the program has direct control over the distribution and count brochures*. Following are some examples:

Measured:

1. Brochures that are distributed by the program in response to enquiries from the public.
2. Brochures that are picked up at one of the program’s offices by visitors to the office.
3. Brochures handed out at a community legal education meeting.

Estimated:

1. Brochures dropped off in bulk for distribution at the local Bar Association, Law School Clinics or other community service organizations, in the event no one there counts them and/or returns the extras.
2. Brochures left on tables at community legal education events and not collected afterward or counted.

Program personnel should use their own discretion when counting brochures as “measured” or “estimated,” using the above examples as guidelines. The principal distinction is the degree of control one has in ensuring that the brochure actually got into the hands of an interested citizen. In those cases it can be counted as “Measured.” Less certain conveyances can be counted in “Estimated.”

Retroactive adjustment of "measured" versus "estimated" data for 2002 services. It is requested that you retroactively adjust your “measured” and “estimated” brochure counts for the year 2002 using the above described guidelines. If the method used for counting will not allow you to do so, please begin counting with the new system as soon as possible, and include a note in your narrative report as to when the change in counting method took effect.

b. Legal education materials or self-help materials posted on web sites or web kiosks. This is another topic for which order-of-magnitude estimates are useful but expectations of precision kept modest—"Page views" is a useful measure available to your web master from software mounted on your program's web server or Internet hosting service. Scores of statistics are available from these services, but the one that currently seems to make the most sense is the number of “page views” on pages containing the types of information defined as “matters” -- community legal education materials, pro se assistance materials or outreach (“how to reach us”) information.

The focus on "page views" rather than "page hits" is a change from 2001. After getting input from LS web masters across the country, we have decided that only page *views* should be reported, not hits, for the following reason. One page may contain many elements, such as graphics and audio clips. Hits would report each of these elements as a separate number. If we give a client a brochure, we would not count how many pictures it contained, and we want to report web activity in the same manner. So we want this activity to be reported by pages viewed, this being the actual page being requested by the viewer, not its individual elements.

If the reporting software you have for your web site is not able to report activity in this manner, you should NOT report any numbers for web site activities, but be sure to point out that you do have a web site in the narrative portions of the matters report.

Retroactive adjustment of web activity to reflect page "views," not "hits." It is requested that you retroactively adjust your web activity counts for the year 2002 using the page "views," not "hits." It was not our intention to change the rules in the middle of the period. However, our research indicated that most programs were already reporting page views, not hits. Further, our research indicated that most reporting software stores this information for at least twelve months, which means that if page *view* numbers are available to you, they are available to you for all of calendar year 2002.

Deciding whether to report web-related matters as "Community Legal Education" versus reporting them as "Pro Se Assistance." That decision is up to the discretion of the program. For some kinds of matters this is easy, such as forms that web users can fill in to file with the court ("pro se assistance matters"). For other materials, the distinction is not always clear. A

page explaining a tenant's rights might be requested by the viewer for general information before signing a lease ("community legal education") or used for preparation for a pro se defense of an eviction ("pro se assistance"). You will not know for what purpose users are viewing the materials. In designating which it is, all you can do is to use your best judgment based on the content of the page.

Statistical tabulations of page views can be compiled and printed out monthly or quarterly. These can be tabulated by the webmaster to cover a year's time when the annual "matters" report is due.

c. Legal education materials published in newsletters. As with brochures, order-of-magnitude estimates of the numbers of newsletter articles and similar legal education materials will provide useful indications of the scale of this service to the low income community.

One newsletter equals one matter. Regardless of how many articles are contained in a newsletter, the entire newsletter in the hands of one person equals one matter. This guideline is adopted for uniformity of reporting among grantees.

Measured versus estimated. Counts of "newsletter" matters should follow the above guidelines for brochures: count as "Measured" those whose distribution can be controlled by the program and counted directly; count as "Estimated" the newsletters that are distributed by third parties (for example, dropped off at a community center and not collected later).

d. Legal education articles published in newspapers. We are including a discussion of this topic here to remedy some confusion that arose in 2001 regarding newsletter and newspaper articles. The two types of matters should be treated differently in reporting for 2002 forward.

Newsletter articles. See section "c" above for guidelines on reporting this type of matter. "Newsletters" refers to program newsletters or other newsletters over which the program has control of distribution and therefore can produce counts (or reliable estimates) of the numbers of newsletters distributed.

Newspaper articles. "Newspapers" refers to general print media over which the LSP does not have control of distribution -- for example, a community newspaper. Because the LSP does not control distribution, it is difficult to break circulation data (which is generally available) down into reliable counts or the number of people *in our target audience* (i.e., low income people or helping agencies that serve low income people) likely to have seen and read the legal education articles. **Articles whose contents contain community legal education emphasis can be counted under CLE. Articles which are outreach vehicles only can be noted in the non-numeric Outreach section.** Articles in newspapers, PSA TV spots and PSA radio spots do not lend themselves to a good count of numbers of persons served because of questions of targeting (how much of the reading, listening or viewing audience is eligible clients) and because, even if they are reading the newspaper or listening/viewing the station, they often will not read, view or listen to the legal education item. Therefore, we count only the number of articles/spots and not the number of persons.

e. Video legal education materials, TV and radio spots and PSAs. As with newspaper articles, outreach-oriented materials broadcast on TV and radio should be considered as *outreach*. Community Legal Education articles and spots should be counted under CLE. Please count each time a video or radio spot airs as one matter. In 2001, some programs tried to estimate the audience and counted the aggregate as Matters. The data was deemed too unreliable to be meaningful. Report the actual count of each airing for 2002. Counting each airing as one Matter will give an accurate count for video and radio spots. All of these media efforts for Community Legal Education are to be reported in the **NEW FORM 1C**.

For further information or technical assistance

Should you have any questions about the reporting of web site activity, or any other questions on matters reporting, please send your inquiries to resultsproject@lsc.gov.

**Table 1:
Checklist of Preparation Steps for “Matters” Data Collection**

	Goals	Detailed Steps
1. Initial preparations	Map out the preparations needed and who should be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Matters Service Report instruments. • Flag the matters that are relevant to your program. • Identify the staff person(s) who potentially could track and/or provide this information. • Give briefing to other staff explaining the purpose of matters reporting and the implications of data collection for the Matters Service Report.
2. Design and plan	Create an approach for collecting / tracking data for each type of matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review each type of matter with the person(s) responsible for reporting on it. • Develop an approach for collecting/tracking the data – e.g., modify existing logs/forms, create new forms, integrate into case management system, create estimating procedure to be used at reporting time, etc.. • Flag problems (if any) where further information or help is needed – e.g., definitions of data items, help in drafting supplemental forms. • Outline training needed to prepare staff for their role in matters reporting. • Follow up as needed to resolve problems and finish the plan.
3. Prepare materials & execute plan	Ensure that all necessary forms, instructions, codes, etc. are available to staff who must collect the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials and distribute to appropriate people. • Execute changes in computerized case management software if needed
4. Train staff	Ensure that all staff who have a role in matters reporting have the information and materials they need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have meeting(s) with all staff involved; distribute forms & materials; answer questions; flag issues where further information is needed. • Follow up to answer remaining questions
5. Execute data collection	Integrate matters data collection seamlessly into program’s service delivery operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get data collection underway. • Flag problems and questions; resolve them through discussion internally in program and/or technical assistance from LSC. • Keep track of lessons learned, innovations developed, issues requiring changes in the approach, etc..