



LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Office of Program Performance

FINAL

PROGRAM QUALITY REPORT

FOR

Legal Aid Society

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Team Members:

Tillie Lacayo, Program Counsel, LSC (Team Leader)

Tim Watson, Program Counsel, LSC

Nancy Glickman, OPP Temporary Employee

Carolyn Worrell, OPP Temporary Employee

Legal Aid Society
Draft Program Quality Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Legal Services Corporation's (LSC) Office of Program Performance (OPP) conducted a program quality visit to the Legal Aid Society (LAS) from November 14 – 18, 2011. The team members on the visit were Tillie Lacayo (Team Leader and Program Counsel, Office of Program Performance), Tim Watson (Program Counsel, Office of Program Performance), Nancy Glickman (OPP Temporary Employee) and Carolyn Worrell (OPP Temporary Employee.)

Program quality visits are designed to ensure that LSC grantees provide the highest quality legal services to eligible clients. In conducting its assessment, the team carefully reviewed the documents LSC has received from the program, including its LSC grant application for 2011 funding, its renewal application for 2012, case service reports (CSRs) and other service reports (OSRs) from 2009 - 2011, numerous documents the program submitted in advance of the visit, and survey responses of LAS staff who participated in an anonymous Internet survey conducted by LSC.

The team visited the program's office in Louisville, Kentucky. In addition to speaking with LAS staff members, the team met or had telephone conversations with a number of LAS board members, judges, members of the private bar who participate in LAS' PAI effort, state justice community partners and representatives of community organizations and agencies that partner with the program.

In performing its evaluation of a grantee's delivery system, OPP relies on the LSC Act and regulations, LSC Performance Criteria, LSC Program Letters, and the ABA Standards for the Provision of Civil Legal Aid. This report is organized according to the four Performance Areas of the LSC Performance Criteria that cover the following: (1) identification of the most pressing legal needs and targeting resources to address those needs; (2) engagement with the low-income community and access of the community to legal services; (3) legal representation; and (4) effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

LAS' service area is a mix of urban and rural, composed of the Louisville metropolitan area (Jefferson County) and 14 proximate, and largely rural, counties. The program's office is located in Louisville. At the time of the visit the program's HIV/AIDS Project was located in a satellite office in a multi-service complex that contains other organizations providing assistance to the HIV/AIDS population, but plans were underway to relocate the Project to the main office. The program's nursing home ombudsman works out of an office in Elizabethtown, in Hardin County.

LAS provides a full range of services to a diverse rural and urban population. American Community Survey¹ data reflect that LAS' service area has 203,645 persons living in poverty. The program has a delivery system consisting of limited services, pro se assistance, and full representation. At the time of the LSC visit LAS had a total staff of 46 employees, including 21 attorneys, 14 paralegals, and 11 other staff.

The program is divided into the following units or projects – some of which consist of a single advocate – the Community Development Unit, the Consumer Unit, the Family Law Unit, the Government Benefits Unit, the HIV/AIDS Legal Project, the Housing Unit, the Intake/Brief Services Unit, the Nursing Home Ombudsman, the Rural Unit, the Team Child Program, and the Volunteer Lawyers Program.

LAS' total budget in 2011 was over \$4.2 million, including a grant of \$1,300,522 from the Legal Services Corporation. Non-LSC funding totaled \$2,665,359, or 32.8% of the program's total revenue. As a consequence of recent budget cuts that took effect this year, the program's 2012 LSC grant has been reduced by \$193,172 to a total of \$1,107,350.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Legal Aid Society is led by a capable and conscientious executive director who has maintained a steady course for the program through challenging economic times. He became the director in 2005 after the program's previous director, who had served in that capacity since the early 1970's, retired. He has taken the program in a new direction, which has emphasized expanding the ways in which legal services may be provided and utilizing emerging technologies to increase access for the client-eligible community. He has also expanded the program's funding base and emphasized forging state, regional and local partnerships with numerous entities including organizations, agencies, educational institutions, health care providers, bar associations, and the courts.

LAS' board of directors is engaged, well-informed, aware of the issues facing the program, and fully committed to the program's mission. The executive director and board have an excellent working relationship. The board, through its finance committee, appears to exercise effective financial oversight of the program.

The program periodically conducts a comprehensive assessment of the most pressing legal needs within its service area, the most recent having occurred during 2010. The 2010 needs assessment was followed by strategic planning covering the five-year period from 2011 through 2015. Both the board of directors and program staff actively participated in the planning process, which resulted in a written strategic work plan with measurable goals and objectives and targeted completion dates for tasks encompassed by the plan. The program's units and projects also participate in planning and each complete a work plan, which

¹ The American Community Survey (ACS) is a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ACS has replaced the U.S. Decennial Census as the principle mechanism for generating social, demographic, economic and related data about the U.S. population. Among ACS language data collected is the proportion of people aged 5 and over who speak a language other than English at home. ACS data are based on a rolling survey of some 3 million household addresses conducted over the course of each year. There are three sets of ACS data: one-year, three-year, and five-year. The most recent five-year ACS data set is for 2006-2010.

considers the unit's or project's funding, priorities, and case and other service goals for the upcoming year.

Intake for the program is coordinated through the LAS' Intake/Brief Services Unit (IBS). The IBS is staffed by an experienced supervising attorney and four paralegals. Call volume is a challenge and callers sometimes experience long wait-times. The supervising attorney, though quite capable, seems over-extended due to a high caseload that leaves him with less time for some management tasks related to the IBS.

The program has a dedicated, skilled and competent staff that provides high quality legal services to their clients. The program's advocacy director has over 21 years of experience as an attorney and has been with the program for over 11 of those years. LAS's corps of advocates have varying levels of experience but overall possess the necessary skills, expertise, and commitment to provide quality representation to the clients they serve. Through its advocacy, LAS seeks to benefit both the individual client and the broader client community.

LAS has a strong and productive PAI program that provides varied opportunities for members of the private bar to participate.

LAS provides a variety of other services to the low-income community, including offering community legal education and clinics in several substantive law areas. The program has been the recipient of several LSC Technology Initiative Grants (TIG). Through implementation of the TIGs, LAS has led the effort, together with the courts, to develop and provide uniform forms for pro se litigants in divorce cases.

LAS' fundraising during these leaner economic times has been commendable. The program has an energetic and talented resource development staff that has obtained new sources of funding and handled the grant writing/reporting and public relations aspects of resource development and maintenance ably and skillfully.

The program is an active participant in regional, statewide and national efforts to improve access to justice. Its executive director was selected by his peers to represent the four LSC-funded programs on the Kentucky Access to Justice Commission.

PERFORMANCE AREA ONE. Effectiveness in identifying the most pressing civil legal needs of low-income people in the service area and targeting resources to address those needs.

Criteria 1 and 2. Periodic comprehensive assessment and ongoing consideration of legal needs; setting goals and objectives, developing strategies, and allocating resources to meet the needs.

Finding 1: LAS's most recent comprehensive assessment of the most pressing legal needs of the poor in its service area was completed in 2010 and overlapped with the program's strategic planning process.

LAS's most recent comprehensive legal needs assessment was completed in 2010. The needs assessment was conducted during the same year as the program's strategic planning - begun in March of 2010 - and informed the planning process. Conducting the needs assessment in conjunction with strategic planning promoted greater efficiency of resources and allowed the latter process to benefit more fully from the former.

The needs assessment process and information collection methods were varied and included the following: review of published data and studies; dissemination of written surveys to client-eligible persons, government and non-profit social service providers, members of the bench and bar, elected officials, and LAS staff and board members; participation in individual interviews and focus groups; and utilization of GIS mapping tools. The GIS maps compared the geographical distribution of people living in poverty in the program's service area to the areas where LAS' clients live. The GIS maps were produced by the Network Center for Community Change using data from the 2005 – 2009 American Community Survey five-year estimates. The maps also indicated the areas affected most severely by the foreclosure crisis. As part of the planning process the program generated statistical snapshots for each county it serves that included the number and percentage of persons living in poverty, and the percentage of elderly poor, disabled, and residents of homes where a language other than English is spoken. The snapshots provided a per-county basis of comparison for the LAS case service statistics.

LAS board members who are on the service area's Multi-County Clients' Council assisted in the needs assessment process by convening client community meetings and soliciting survey responses from those in attendance.

The program appears to have engaged in a thorough and comprehensive needs assessment. The process employed a variety of methods for collecting information and provided the opportunity for input from staff, members of the board of directors, client-eligible persons, and a variety of LAS constituencies, partner organizations and agencies.

Finding 2: The program's priorities are sufficiently broad to reflect the legal needs of the clients in its service area.

The program's priorities, adopted by the board of directors in January of 2011, include the following: support for families (dissolution of marriage, custody, visitation, and grandparent caretaker issues); preserving the home (evictions, wrongful denials of public and subsidized housing admissions and erroneous applications of policies regarding income and tenancy, foreclosures, utilities services cases, and affordable housing); maintaining economic stability (K-TAP², Food Stamps, SSI/SSD, unemployment compensation, consumer, bankruptcy, income tax, child support and child support modification, and removal of barriers to employment); safety, stability, and health (protection against domestic violence, Medicare, Medicaid, life planning documents, affordable and appropriate health care, insurance disputes, nursing home admissions and involuntary discharges); and populations with special

² K-TAP, or the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program, provides a short-term cash benefit to families with children under the age of 18 (or under the age of 19, if they are full-time secondary school students). Most adults who receive K-TAP must participate in a work activity.

vulnerabilities (non-profit groups serving clients in distressed neighborhoods, veterans of military service, senior citizens, children, persons with HIV/AIDS, persons with limited English proficiency, persons who are institutionalized and LSC-eligible, and undocumented victims of domestic violence or human trafficking).

Finding 3: The program adjusts its priorities to address emerging needs in the client community and seeks funding to address those needs.

LAS makes adjustments to its priorities between formal legal needs assessments in order to respond to emerging needs of the client community. Some examples of how the program has responded to emerging needs are the establishment of a foreclosure conciliation program to encourage banks and homeowners to meet prior to foreclosure to explore alternatives, establishment of the Kentucky Corps of Advocates for Veterans, establishment of a medical-legal partnership, advocacy to address school-system discipline disparities, and the addition of expungements of criminal records and child support modifications to the program priorities.

LAS also seeks out new sources of funding to address emerging needs, such as funding from LSC's TIG to address the needs of veterans and from the Louisville Metro Government and the Kentucky Housing Corporation to address foreclosures.

LAS' board of directors reviews the program's priorities annually and makes modifications as warranted.

Criteria 3 and 4. Implementation of goals, evaluation, and adjustment.

Finding 4: LAS has a strategic plan covering the five-year period from 2011 - 2015 that was developed by a joint board-staff committee. The plan contains measurable objectives, status updates, assigned areas of responsibility, and target dates for completion of goals.

LAS engaged in strategic planning during 2010 culminating in a detailed written plan, called Strategic Directions 2011-2015. The planning process had significant and extensive board and staff participation.

The process was facilitated by a consultant and conducted by a committee comprised of board members and staff. All program staff was given the opportunity to provide input during one of four sessions. In addition, nineteen one-on-one and group stakeholder interviews were held. An LAS client board member who is president of the regional client's council convened focus groups with client-eligible persons in attendance. The Board of Directors as a whole provided input during its August 9, 2010 meeting.

The program's strategic plan established the following goals for LAS: to pursue program and funding partnerships; to engage in more preventive education programs and help people represent themselves in appropriate areas; to grow unrestricted funds that will cover the indirect administrative costs associated with providing services; to effectively inform the

public about the Legal Aid Society and its services; to provide a strong infrastructure that will enhance services and ensure success; and to improve LAS' information technology infrastructure. A work plan was developed for each strategic directive, with objectives, targeted completion dates, persons responsible, result measures, and status updates.

Each unit and project at LAS completes a work plan that considers - among other things - the unit's funding, priorities, and case and other service goals for the upcoming year.

The program, overall, engages in thoughtful and detailed planning.

Finding 5: LAS has conducted internal evaluations in select areas of service delivery.

The program has conducted internal self-evaluations in select areas of service delivery to assess the degree to which it is effectively reaching and serving the client community. For example, both intake and PAI at LAS were the subjects of internal reviews, resulting in changes to both (intake restructuring and supervision by a managing attorney and PAI expansion into assisted pro se).

Client satisfaction surveys are disseminated to clients who receive extended representation upon the completion of their cases. Because of the large volume of requests for assistance, the IBS surveys a random selection – 30% to 40% - of the unit's cases.

PERFORMANCE AREA TWO. Effectiveness in engaging and serving the low-income population throughout the service area.

Criterion 1. Dignity and Sensitivity.

Finding 6: LAS carries out program operations in ways that reflect sensitivity to their clients. The program understands the importance of language access for the limited English proficient populations it serves, but has limited bilingual staffing at present.

Onsite interviews with LAS staff reflected their commitment to the clients they serve. Staff spoke of understanding clients' frustrations and wanting to make them feel at ease in intimidating situations. The delivery system and program operations reflect an overall concern for and sensitivity to clients' circumstances. The program's Intake Manual contains a chapter on non-discrimination and sensitivity to clients that addresses physical and language barriers to access.

The program has a policy for serving limited English proficient persons that addresses the areas recommended by LSC's program letter on serving LEP populations. Staff are familiar with Language Line for telephone interpretation and indicate that they use it as needed.

The program currently has one person on staff (a paralegal) who is fluent in Spanish. The managing attorney of the program's Intake/Brief Services Unit also speaks Spanish, but states that he relies on an interpreter for telephone interpretation. The executive director

stated – and the LSC staffing reports from previous years reflect – that in the past there have been more bilingual staff at LAS.

The LEP population in the LAS service area has increased substantially over the past ten years. The 2006 – 2010 American Community Survey showed an over 60% increase in the number of linguistically isolated households in the state of Kentucky – from 11,704 to 18,856 – since the 2000 Census was conducted. LAS’ county snapshots prepared during its 2010 needs assessment reflect a significant percentage of households in Hardin, Shelby, and Jefferson counties where a language other than English is spoken.³

RECOMMENDATION II.1.6.1⁴ It is recommended that as funding becomes available and when hiring new staff, the program direct recruitment efforts toward persons who are bilingual in Spanish, particularly for its Intake/Brief Services Unit.

Criterion 2 and 3. Engagement with and access and utilization by the low-income population.

Finding 7: LAS effectively engages the low-income population and has a variety of projects and clinics that have enhanced client access to legal services.

LAS effectively engages the low-income population. The program has been responsive to community needs and works closely with a variety of community groups and entities. LAS is actively involved in outreach to the client community in Jefferson County, including presentations at senior centers, schools, shelters for the homeless and victims of domestic violence, neighborhood association meetings, fire stations, and re-entry support groups.

LAS’ delivery approach emphasizes the maximization of access to clients by employing a variety of methods to reach out and provide legal assistance to poor persons within the service area. Some examples of how the program has enhanced client access to services include the following:

- The Foreclosure Project identified tax lien foreclosures (where the government sold the property to a private investor who then sought to foreclose) as an emerging issue. Using students to assist them, Project advocates actively searched tax records and conducted educational outreach to heavily affected areas;

³ 7.8% in Hardin County, 5.6% in Shelby County, and 5.5% in Jefferson County. The data were taken from the 2009 ACS.

⁴ Recommendations in this report will have a Roman Numeral to identify the Performance Area, followed by three numbers identifying, respectively, the Criterion addressed by the recommendation, the number of the finding and a number designating whether it is the first, second, third, etc., recommendation under that finding. For example, III.2.14.3 designates Performance Area III, Criterion 2, finding 14, and third recommendation under finding 14. There are two levels of recommendations in this report: Tier One and Tier Two. Recommendations that are indicated with an asterisk are Tier One recommendations and are seen as having a greater impact on program quality and/or program performance. In its next Application or Renewal, the program will be asked to report on its implementation of Tier One recommendations.

- The Domestic Violence Advocacy Program (DVAP) assists hundreds of DV clients by conducting intake at the Jefferson County Courthouse Hall of Justice and then placing cases with pro bono attorneys, who receive training from members of the Program's Family Law Unit;
- LAS, in collaboration with the courts, has developed divorce packets and court forms for use throughout the service area and the state by pro se litigants;
- The Kentucky Corps of Advocates for Veterans (KCAV) provides free, high-quality legal representation to low-income veterans, and partners with other organizations to ensure comprehensive solutions to the problems veterans face. KCAV also offers on-line intake for veterans;
- The Doctors and Lawyers for Kids Medical-Legal Partnership with the University of Louisville's Pediatrics, Kosair Children's Hospital, and the Louisville Bar Association, discussed under Findings 16 and 24, below, is one of the program's newer initiatives and was begun in September of 2011;
- The program routinely conducts outreach in Jefferson County, including daily attendance at housing court and visits to homeless shelters;
- LAS conducts a variety of community education events, including regularly held clinics in the areas of foreclosure, small claims, bankruptcy, consumer law, divorce, grandparents as caregivers, tax, veterans affairs, and expungements. The clinics have a strong presence in Jefferson County;
- The program has a website with automated forms for child support, access to the Legal Aid Network of Kentucky's video library on popular legal subjects, a handbook for renters in Jefferson County who are affected by foreclosure, a Tenants' Rights Manual for Louisville, and the program's newsletter.

Apart from the aforementioned extensive efforts, a disparity exists between Jefferson County outreach and outreach to the other counties within the service area. In addition, and though program advocates' outreach efforts include the LEP community within Jefferson County, the program conducts limited to no outreach to LEP populations outside of Jefferson County. The program is aware of the disparity between urban Jefferson County and the more rural counties within the service area and is seeking ways to address this. For example, a key objective in the program's Strategic Directions plan is to "[i]ncrease and target outreach to the rural counties through clinics, trainings, and opportunities at community events". An innovative idea mentioned in the strategic plan is the consideration of a "mobile clinic" or van that could be used for community events and create a visible reminder of LAS' presence. A specific project in the Strategic Directions work plan includes canvassing service providers in rural counties to develop a menu of clinic offerings that would meet the needs of the local client community and providing tailored informational clinics in four rural counties.

Recommendation II.3.7.1: The program should replicate its outreach efforts beyond Jefferson County and throughout other counties in the service area, in accordance with the objectives of its 2011 – 2015 strategic plan. As part of this process it is recommended that the program include presentations to limited English proficient groups in counties that have significant linguistically isolated populations, such as Shelby and Hardin Counties.

Finding 8: Intake at LAS is centralized and primarily conducted by telephone, through the program's Intake/Brief Services Unit. Wait times for callers to the IBS can be long, sometimes necessitating call-backs.

Intake is coordinated through the program's Intake/Brief Services Unit. Most intake conducted by the IBS is by telephone. Walk-ins comprise roughly 15-20% of new intake. At the time of the visit, the IBS was staffed by an experienced supervising attorney and four paralegals. The Unit had been staffed with five paralegals. It is unclear if, due to funding cuts, the vacant position will be filled. All brief service work is approved by the managing attorney of the IBS. Advice provided is spot-checked by the managing attorney's review of notes in the Case Management System (CMS). LAS' phone system has automated call distribution (ACD) and call waiting. The managing attorney does not appear to regularly generate statistical reports (such as the number of calls per day and week, the number of dropped calls, wait times, and the number of intake calls per advocate and the time spent on each) to review the overall function of the IBS. Noteworthy is that the managing attorney of the IBS has one of the highest caseloads in the program, as reflected by the open case lists submitted to LSC.⁵ A large percentage of his cases appear to be in court.

Intake is conducted on Monday through Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and on Thursday from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM through four incoming lines. Morning hours prior to 10:00 AM and Fridays are used by IBS staff for brief service work and call-backs. At the time of the LSC visit, the program's HIV/AIDS Project was in the process of planning its move from a separate location to the main office of LAS. The Project will maintain its own telephone number after relocation, but intake for the Project will be conducted by the IBS.

The IBS Unit is located on the first floor of the building that houses LAS and is physically isolated from the rest of the program. To reach the Unit from the main floor of LAS requires taking the elevator and traversing three locked doors and a long, closed corridor.

The program has an intake manual that addresses – among other areas – general eligibility for services and intake procedures, financial eligibility, client confidentiality, citizenship and alien eligibility, changes in eligibility status, screening for case acceptance by unit or practice area, additional factors to be considered in accepting and opening cases, nondiscrimination, sensitivity to client needs, accepting or rejecting cases, providing brief services, closing cases, and handling complaints against the program or an advocate. The substantive law units of LAS provide the IBS with case acceptance guidelines tailored to the priorities and case handling capacity of each unit. Units meet weekly to discuss new cases and case acceptance.

Call volume is a challenge for the IBS. Callers sometimes experience wait times of twenty minutes or longer. Applicants for services have the option of receiving a call-back; however the phone system does not provide a periodic reminder to the callers of their ability to opt-out

⁵ In advance of each Program Quality Visit LSC asks the program for an open case list for each advocate. While the open case lists are, in essence, pictures the advocates' individual cases on a given day, they nonetheless can provide useful information concerning the number and types of cases handled by individual attorneys and paralegals and the forums in which they practice.

of the queue or get information concerning their progress in the queue or other information. Due to the volume of calls the call-back list sometimes approaches 60 service applicants and some calls cannot be returned until Monday of the following week.

LAS has an on-line application process for clients who are veterans, developed through a TIG from LSC. Apart from this, on-line intake is not available to applicants for services. Twenty-five applicants for assistance utilized the veterans' on-line intake process during 2010 and forty-seven used the process during 2011.

RECOMMENDATION II.3.8.1: The program should consider relocating the IBS, to better integrate it into the rest of the program and promote the IBS' operation as part of a unified law firm.

RECOMMENDATION II.3.8.2* The managing attorney for the IBS should regularly review statistical reports that indicate the overall function and productivity of the telephone intake system and staff. His caseload – size and composition - should be reduced to allow him to devote sufficient time to his management responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION II.3.8.3: The program should take steps to ensure that those seeking legal services through the IBS do not have excessive wait times. Also, the ACD system should be modified so that callers in queue get a periodic reminder of the options to opt out of the queue and leave a call-back number.

RECOMMENDATION II.3.8.4: The program may wish to replicate the successful practices of its veterans project's on-line intake, or look at on-line intake at other LSC-funded programs, such as North Dakota Legal Services, that have had good results in the development of their own on-line intake systems.

PERFORMANCE AREA THREE. Effectiveness of legal representation and other program activities intended to benefit the low-income population in the service area.

Criterion 1. Legal Representation.

Finding 9: LAS has a dedicated, skilled and competent staff that provides high quality legal services to their clients. The program has experienced turnover in advocacy staff over the past two years.

The program has a dedicated, skilled and competent staff that provides high quality legal services to their clients. LAS advocates have been the recipients of awards from the Kentucky Bar Association (Outstanding Young Lawyer), the Louisville Bar Association (Outstanding Public Service Lawyer and Family Law Practitioner of the Year), and the Women Lawyer's Association (Outstanding Woman Lawyer). In 2011 LAS' Long-Term Care Ombudsman was honored as the Kentucky Ombudsman of the Year, for her service in the Lincoln Trail District where she helped thousands of residents in long-term care facilities address issues related to quality of care and residents' rights.

The program currently has a mix of experienced, mid-level, and new attorneys, with eight attorneys having over 20 years of experience, eight having between 10 and 20 years and five having under 5 years of experience. The program has had some turnover among advocates over the past couple of years, for varying reasons.

The program and its work are well respected by the judiciary and social service community throughout the service area as well as by legal services partners throughout the state. Advocates appear in myriad forums including state district, circuit, and appellate courts and in federal courts. The program also provides administrative representation before various governmental agencies including the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the Kentucky Public Service Commission, the Social Security Administration, the Veterans Administration, and the U.S. Department of Education.

The writing samples submitted to LSC in advance of the visit generally reflected quality work in varied legal forums. There is no formal mechanism within the program for review of written work. Some writings could have benefited from a secondary review.

Recommendation III.1.9.1* The program should establish a protocol for review of written work, taking into consideration the case handler's level of experience and the complexity of the written product.

Finding 10: LAS, through its advocacy, seeks to benefit both the individual client and the client community and achieves many positive results for clients.

Through its advocacy the program seeks to benefit both individual clients and the broader client community.

For example, in 2009 the program convened a meeting of stakeholders (judges, housing advocates, lenders' attorneys, and members of the private bar) in the area of foreclosure to discuss creating a program that would require lenders to meet with homeowners prior to a foreclosure sale to help avert home loss. With the assistance of members of the private bar who volunteered their time, the program instituted a Foreclosure Conciliation Project.

In the area of domestic violence, the program submitted an amicus brief to the Kentucky Supreme Court on the issue of whether a family court lost subject matter jurisdiction to hear a domestic violence case fourteen days after the issuance of an emergency protective order. The petitioner in the case had been granted an emergency protective order by the Family Court. The respondent had requested a continuance and after it was granted challenged the validity of the domestic violence order later entered by the court, arguing that the court had been divested of jurisdiction when the DVO hearing had not been held within fourteen days of the issuance of the emergency order. The Kentucky Court of Appeals ruled in the respondent's favor and LAS, joined by the three LSC-funded programs in the state, filed an amicus brief. If left in place the ruling would impact the rights of both petitioners and respondents in similar cases to seek continuances due to illness, the need to find legal representation, or the unavailability of material witnesses.

The program has also represented organizational clients to achieve benefits for the client community as a whole. LAS represented a network of non-profit organizations that intervened in a public utilities case to challenge a local utilities company's request to the Kentucky Public Service Commission for gas and electric rate increases. The program's advocacy resulted in a favorable outcome for the low-income customers of the company, including an extension of the home energy assistance program to 2015, an increase in the length of the company's charitable commitment from 10 to 15 years, and an agreement by the company to meet and work-through additional concerns of low-income customers.

LAS' Team Child Project is co-counseling with three other child advocacy programs in an administrative complaint filed on behalf of six children with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights challenging disciplinary policies and practices that disparately impact African-American and disabled students.

The program's litigation docket contains numerous cases that are a testament to the benefits of LAS' vigilance in seeking to preserve the legal rights of the poor, whether by staying off the execution of a garnishment order for a single mother of two in a bankruptcy case; helping a veteran with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder secure payment of over \$10,000 in medical expenses; helping an Army reservist who served in Afghanistan have his seniority reinstated which had been lost as a result of his deployment; helping grandparents obtain custody of their granddaughter, who had been abused by her parents; negotiating mortgage modifications for persons at the brink of losing their homes; or helping an elderly woman with a disabled spouse retain her Section 8 housing benefits.

Finding 11: LAS is a productive program that handles many cases on behalf of poor persons. The vast majority of the cases closed by the program are from Jefferson County.

The total LAS cases closed per 10,000 poor people has been above the national average for the past four years. During 2010 the program closed 290 cases per 10,000 poor, compared to the national median of 284 and the national average of 262. The percentage of extended representation cases closed per 10,000 has also been above the national average for the past four years. In 2010 the program closed 101 extended cases per 10,000 poor persons, compared with the national median of 61 and the national average of 57.⁶ In 2009 the figures were 67 extended service cases closed by LAS per 10,000, in comparison to the national median of 57 and the national average of 54.

During 2010 roughly 88% of the closed cases were from Jefferson County, which has approximately 65% of the service area's poverty population. The program is aware of this disparity⁷ and is considering ways to remedy it.

⁶ Approximately 35% of the total cases closed by LAS during 2010 in the extended representation categories were in the "domestic abuse" category.

⁷ The statistical charts produced by the program during its 2010 needs assessment contain figures for each county within the service area that highlight the percentage of all LAS cases accepted from the county during 2010.

Recommendation III.1.11.1: The program should continue to track the extent to which its enhanced outreach efforts in the outlying counties increase the amount of legal representation provided to clients in those counties. The program should keep and regularly assess statistics on the number of advice and counsel, limited services, and extended service cases accepted for legal representation in each county of the service area.

Finding 12: The program's substantive law units and projects tend to operate separately, with minimal interaction.

The program's units and projects operate separately, with minimal interaction beyond individual case referrals or occasional consultations. With the exception of the Rural Unit and HIV/AIDS Project advocates, who are generalists, program attorneys and paralegals operate as specialists in their substantive law areas of practice. A number of staff interviewed during the LSC visit were not fully aware of the work being done in some of the other units. In a few instances, separate units were working on related issues without the benefit of collaboration. Many staff, in both individual interviews and in the on-line Survey Monkey survey conducted by LSC in advance of the visit, expressed the belief that cross-training would enhance their practice.

Recommendation III.1.12.1: The program should establish a mechanism for providing cross-training among the various units with the goal of enhancing collaboration, issue spotting, skills development, case coverage, and staff retention.

Finding 13: LAS has appropriate legal work management and supervision systems in place to ensure that representation of clients is appropriate and effective. The advocacy director's administrative responsibilities are limiting the time he has available to devote to coordination of litigation program-wide and development of systemic strategies.

The day-to-day supervision of the program's legal work is conducted by LAS' managing and senior supervising attorneys. The advocacy director is responsible for oversight of the program's legal work, review of training needs/requests, supervision of managing attorneys, maintenance of the program's litigation docket, and a variety of other administrative functions, including production of case reports for ongoing and potential funding sources. Recently, he also assumed responsibility for supervision of the Housing Unit advocates. His non-advocacy administrative duties appear to limit significantly his ability to devote time to traditional director of advocacy responsibilities, most notably coordinating litigation program-wide and developing systemic strategies.

The program has a detailed advocacy manual that covers case handling procedures, from initial eligibility to appeals. The manual does not appear to address new attorney orientation and training. Program supervision guidelines provide for quarterly case reviews, closed case reviews, and more recently - annual evaluations. There is some variance among supervisors in the extent to which regular case reviews for the advocates they supervise are conducted. Advocacy staff generally commented favorably upon the accessibility and open door policies of their supervisors. Advocates' caseloads, for the most part, appear within appropriate

numerical limits, given their composition, and address a range of substantive legal areas within program priorities.

Performance evaluations have been conducted within the past year for most advocates, with some staff having undergone evaluations fairly recently and others anticipating evaluations in the near future.

Recommendation III.1.13.1*: It is recommended that the program relieve the advocacy director of administrative functions that do not ordinarily fall within the ambit of his position, so that he may devote more time to coordination of the program's legal work. LAS should also consider having a managing attorney for the Housing Unit. The program, through its advocacy director, should seek additional ways to employ strategically its limited legal resources so as to achieve systemic results.

Finding 14: LAS makes sufficient training opportunities available to its advocates, though budgetary concerns have made attendance at out-of-state trainings more infrequent. The program does not have an orientation and training plan for new advocates or advocates changing substantive law areas or units.

The program makes sufficient training opportunities available to advocates, though attendance at out-of-state trainings has been limited of late, due to budgetary concerns. During times when funding was more abundant, the program would send advocates to major national trainings, such as those sponsored by the National Consumer Law Center, Management Information Exchange, the National Institute of Trial Advocacy, and the National Association of Social Security Claims Representative trainings. Most recent national trainings have been limited to those that are included in the funding for specific grants. Most staff attended the Kentucky Access to Justice Foundation (KYATJF)⁸ statewide legal service conference held in 2011 and attend local and bar association trainings in the substantive law areas in which they practice. Support staff are provided skills trainings locally and via webinars. The advocacy director reviews and approves all training for advocates and the executive director reviews and approves trainings for other staff.

There appears to be no orientation or substantive/skills training plan for new advocates or those who transfer into a new unit.

Recommendation III.1.14.1: The program should establish an orientation and training plan for attorneys who are new to LAS or to a unit. The training should include both substantive and skills components, followed by a period of close supervision.

Criterion 2. Private Attorney Involvement

Finding 15: LAS has a strong and productive Private Attorney Involvement program.

⁸ The KYATJF is a statewide support center that provides poverty law and related trainings for legal services attorneys and members of the private bar in areas of law that affect low-income Kentuckians.

LAS has a strong PAI component, called the Volunteer Lawyer Program (VLP). VLP supervision and oversight is provided by one of the program's senior attorneys, who devotes part of her time to the VLP and part to the program's Community Development Unit. She has been serving in this capacity since April of 2011. Though she appears quite capable of carrying out her dual responsibilities, at the time of the OPP visit she had not yet received training in the areas of supervision or pro bono. Staffing of the VLP also includes two paralegals, one of whom is part-time.

The VLP provides a variety of ways for attorneys to participate in LAS' PAI efforts, including the following:

- Direct representation in individual cases in the areas of consumer, family law, housing, real property, non-profit corporation law, and expungements, among others;
- Participation in clinics in the areas of assisted pro se divorce, small claims, domestic violence, low-income tax, veterans, and expungements, among others;
- Participation in one or more special programs and projects of the VLP, such as the Domestic Violence Advocacy Program;
- LAS' apprentice program (mentors new attorneys and allows them to gain valuable in-court experience);
- The Child Custody Pro Bono Representation Project (a partnership between the Jefferson County Family Courts, the Children's Law Center and the Legal Aid Society to provide pro bono representation to children from low-income families in custody proceedings);
- The Kentucky Corps of Advocates for Veterans Program, through veterans' legal clinics.⁹

The program has a PAI plan, developed by the Executive Director, in consultation with bar association representatives, board members, and judges. The VLP has a manual, forms and form letters used for recruitment, case placement, case oversight, and case closure. Staff periodically monitor progress of placed cases and communicate regularly with pro bono attorneys throughout the course of representation.

The VLP employs appropriate recognition activities for its volunteer attorneys. During Pro Bono Week the program honored several pro bono attorneys and a multi-state law firm with offices in Jefferson County at the Louisville Bar Association's Pro Bono breakfast.

The program's closed PAI cases for 2010 reflect a county distribution similar to that of its staff cases, with 87% being from Jefferson County and the remainder from the other counties

⁹ Seventy veterans were assisted by thirty volunteer attorneys at the first two clinics, held last year. Since some clients had multiple issues, a total of 80 cases were opened after the clinics. Of the 80, 55 involved extended representation, 17 involved advice and counsel and 8 involved brief services.

in the service area. Both the PAI closed cases per 10,000 poor persons and the extended PAI closed cases per 10,000 poor persons exceeded the national average for 2010.¹⁰

Despite its undeniable strengths, including strong support throughout Jefferson County, LAS' VLP has struggled over the past year. As mentioned to LSC by the program in its statement of challenges, some of the VLP's traditional work has had to be re-distributed to other units at LAS. For example, the pro bono attorneys who volunteer to help clients obtain protective orders are recruited, trained and mentored by Family Unit Staff and bankruptcy cases are placed with private attorneys by a paralegal in the program's Consumer Unit. Given the reduction in LAS' budget for 2012, the VLP will be challenged to continue its level of offerings and services without reducing the program's work in core areas of legal representation.

Recommendation III.2.15.1: The program should ensure that the attorney who is supervising the VLP receives training in the appropriate areas.

Recommendation III.2.15.2: Though PAI resources are often more numerous in an urban area, the program should seek ways to address the disparity between PAI participation in cases within Jefferson County and outside of Jefferson County.

Criteria 3 and 4. Other program services and activities on behalf of the client eligible population.

Finding 16: LAS engages in a variety of other services and activities on behalf of the client community.

In addition to its advocacy, LAS engages in many other activities and services of benefit to the client community. These include community legal education for clients as well as partner organizations and agencies, pro se assistance, legal clinics, involvement in state and local bar associations and with the local law school, and participation in social service and community activities designed to help the low-income population.

The program has a Self-Help Center (SHC), located on the first floor of the building that houses LAS that is open from 8:30 AM to noon four days a week. It is staffed part-time by IBS unit staff. The SHC appears to be underutilized. About 50% of the SHC inquiries – by staff estimates – later become cases handled by LAS. The CMS does not have a field at present that indicates whether a request for services originated in the SHC.

The program has received TIGs from LSC for a variety of purposes, including the following: to develop on-line pro se divorce forms, on-line document assembly content, a centralized on-line resource for veterans to access information and legal assistance, and an automated application for disability compensation from the Veterans Administration; to increase access

¹⁰ In 2010 the program closed 62 PAI cases per 10,000 poor persons versus the national median of 23 and the national average of 31 and 28 extended PAI cases per 10,000 poor persons versus the national median of 9 and the national average of 11.

to on-line legal aid self-help centers and referral resources through activities targeted to public law libraries; and to create a legal access tool using mobile technologies, to be used by medical-legal partners to screen low-income patients for current and potential legal problems.

LAS has also partnered with the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville to establish a student law clinic in space leased from the program. Typically eight to ten third-year law students a semester work on cases referred to the clinic by the program in the areas of landlord-tenant and domestic violence. The director of the clinic states that a number of LAS attorneys serve as resources for the students and expressed interest in expanding the clinic to other areas of law handled by the program.

Recommendation III.3.16.1: The program should explore creating a field in its CMS that will indicate if a case originated at the SHC.

Recommendation III.3.16.2: The program should explore ways to promote greater use of the SHC, including the possibility of PAI participation in the SHC.

PERFORMANCE AREA FOUR. Effectiveness of governance, leadership and administration.

Criterion 1. Board Governance.

Finding 17: LAS has an excellent board of directors that is well-informed and actively supports and promotes the program and its work. The board is involved in all major policy decisions and exercises appropriate oversight of the program and its activities.

The LAS board of directors has thirty-three members. It meets every other month, with the exception of June and July. The board's standing committees include the Executive Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee, the Recruitment and Nominating Committee, and the Office Space Committee. Board members also participate on a fundraising committee that includes persons from outside of LAS. Board members were actively involved on the board-staff strategic planning committee and now participate in the committee to oversee the strategic plan's implementation. The board receives copies of written materials, such as the agenda, minutes of the most recent board meeting, the executive director's report, funding updates, and financial statements – including year-to-date revenues and expenditures – about a week in advance of the board meeting.

Individual members bring different strengths to the board. For example, one of the newer board members is Humana, Inc.'s senior vice-president and general counsel; another specializes in employment and labor law, another is the director of a multi-county clients' council and an armed services veteran, another is working towards a degree in social work, and yet another has extensive experience advising clients on electronic documents data management. The board is appropriately diverse and attorney members are representative of the various geographical areas served by the program. The board has a good balance of members who have served for many years and members who are new to the board.

Board members receive orientation from the executive director and the current board chair at the beginning of their tenure. Board members also meet yearly with the auditor, who provides refresher training on financial statements. There has been no recent board training.

Interviews reflect that board members are deeply committed to the program and its mission. The board effectively promotes and expands the reach and influence of the program within the bar, with the judiciary and in the client community. The board is involved in major policy decisions, while leaving day-to-day management of program operations to LAS management staff.

The board exercises appropriate financial oversight of the program, primarily through its budget and finance committee. The budget and finance committee meets on average six times a year, reviews and recommends approval of the annual budget, receives and reviews monthly financial statements, reviews periodic adjustments to the budget throughout the year, and selects and meets with the program's independent auditor to review the program's annual audit.

The board evaluates the executive director annually. Interviews with the board chair and other board members reflect that board is pleased with how the executive director has carried out his responsibilities.

Recommendation IV.1.17.1: Given that there has been no recent formal board training, the program should consider providing board training in select areas of need, including training for client board members.

Finding 18: Board members participate in LAS' fundraising endeavors. Attorney board members support the program's pro bono effort by volunteering their time and encouraging members of their firms to do the same.

The board assists in the program's resource development efforts in various ways. Members of the board make financial contributions to the program and play prominent leadership roles in the program's annual campaign. Board members also help identify possible donation sources and accompany the executive director on "hat in hand" visits to potential donors. Many board members participate in the program's "Heroes of Justice" PAI initiative by making a commitment to donate \$500 per year to the program for three years.

Board members have assisted the program's pro bono efforts by giving of their own time and encouraging members of their firms and other fellow attorneys to volunteer their time pro bono to the Legal Aid Society. Board members have also assisted in other ways, such as through participation in the program's needs assessment process and helping to secure the relocation of the law school clinic to LAS' offices.

Criterion 2. Leadership.

Finding 19: The executive director maintains high visibility in the local community. He is steering the program ably and maintaining a steady course for LAS during difficult economic times.

The executive director of LAS has served in that capacity since 2005. Prior to becoming the executive director, he was associate director of LAS for five years. The executive director is well-regarded throughout the community served by LAS. He is also highly regarded by members of the bench and bar and by legal services partner organizations within the service area and throughout the state. The executive director has an outstanding working relationship with the board of directors and is generally viewed by staff as a valued resource and an excellent attorney.

The executive director maintains high visibility in the local community as part of his efforts to promote LAS and its good work. His establishment of numerous collaborative relationships within the community and throughout Jefferson County provides strong support for the program's fundraising endeavors and the program as a whole.

The executive director is steering the program ably and maintaining a steady course during difficult economic times. He has moved LAS in a direction that is different from that of his predecessor and has focused on increased collaborations with partner organizations and agencies, including the bench and bar; increased visibility within the community and statewide; greater use of technology to deliver legal services and increase access to services for the poor; and enhanced resource development.

Criterion 3. Overall Management and Administration.

Finding 20: LAS has an effective management structure and an experienced management and administrative staff.

LAS has an effective management structure, experienced management and administrative staff, and processes and systems that are sufficient to ensure compliance with funder requirements and state and federal laws. The program's core administrative managers are the executive director, the advocacy director, the controller, the Information Technology manager, and the human resources director. The program devotes appropriate resources to management and administration.

The program has a "Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan", which was revised in July of 2011.

Finding 21: The program devotes appropriate resources to establish and maintain its technological infrastructure.

The Program's technology is well-within LSC requirements of the baseline technologies for legal services programs. Staff have sufficient technology resources to support their work,

including research tools, a case management system, and program applications. The program uses Kemps for case management.

LAS has an Information Technology manager who is capable and competent. She supplements the program's technology support through a contract LAS has with an outside vendor. Improving LAS' information technology infrastructure is a key goal of LAS' strategic plan for 2011 – 2015.

Remote access is not available to staff and off-site work is hampered – particularly in the rural counties - by a shortage of lap tops.

Staff expressed mixed views concerning program technology and how helpful it is to them. Frustration due to down-time when machines break down was not uncommon. However, technology is not always used efficiently or to its full capacity by all staff. For example, use of the CMS by managing attorneys to oversee legal work of the advocates they supervise is not uniform. Some advocates do not save their work to the shared drives, which leaves the work vulnerable to loss. The program lacks naming conventions and file-saving protocols.

As mentioned under Performance Area Three, Criteria 3 and 4, above, LAS has been the recipient of several TIGs from LSC, some of which have been successfully completed and some of which are ongoing.

Recommendation IV.3.21.1: The program should provide training for its managers on use of the case management system for management and supervision of staff. Managing attorneys should make a regular practice of utilizing the CMS as a tool to assist them in the supervision of program advocates.

Recommendation IV.3.21.2: The program should consider purchasing laptops for use by advocates when working in remote parts of the service area.

Recommendation IV.3.21.3: Advocates should be strongly cautioned by management against using their work stations drives for document storage.

Recommendation IV.3.21.4: LSC suggests that the program develop naming conventions and file-saving protocols and conduct training for staff in their use.

Criterion 4. Financial Administration.

Finding 22: The program has sufficient capable and trained staff dedicated to financial administration.¹¹

The program appears to have sufficient capable and trained staff dedicated to financial administration. LAS has a Fiscal/Accounting Manual with detailed written policies and

¹¹ This visit was conducted by the Office of Program Performance (OPP) for the purposes set forth in the Introduction. OPP findings and recommendations under this criterion are limited to staffing, organization, and general functions. Assessment of fiscal operations is conducted by other offices at LSC.

procedures concerning financial operations. The policies and procedures appear to be followed by LAS. The program engages in solid budget planning and projects likely revenue and expenses for a three-year period. Annual program audits have not revealed any major problems. Where issues have been identified, the program has addressed them promptly. The program develops monthly financial statements that are closely reviewed by the board budget and finance committee.

Criterion 5. Human Resources Administration.

Finding 23: The program's human resources functions are carried out by the director of human resources.

The human resource functions are carried out by the director of human resources, who is responsible for a variety of activities including administering LAS' employee benefits programs. The program provides an excellent benefits package for its employees to help retain experienced staff, including contributing 18% of an employee's salary to the Kentucky state employees' pension program and participating in a "Cadillac" health care plan.

The starting salary for attorneys at LAS is \$44,150. Staff at LAS has received raises during each of the past three years.

The team heard numerous concerns expressed, during on-site interviews, about the human resources department. This situation presents the program with significant challenges that affect morale - and possibly staff retention.

Recommendation IV.5.23.1*: It is strongly recommended that the executive director address the staff concerns about the HR department in a manner that will ensure quality HR assistance to staff and the program.

Criterion 6. Internal communication.

Finding 24: The program has systems and procedures for ensuring regular communication among staff and between staff and management; however, staff morale is low and better communication could improve morale within the program.

The program has systems and procedures for ensuring regular communication among staff and between staff and management. Internal communication within LAS occurs through a variety of means including weekly unit meetings, monthly office meetings, e-mail, and a program newsletter. At the time of the LSC visit the executive director was providing staff with periodic updates concerning changes in funding.

Despite the regular communication that was occurring at LAS at the time of the visit, a good number of staff persons interviewed remarked that staff morale at LAS was low. Several reasons were mentioned as either causing or contributing to low morale including staff departures in recent years, ever-increasing workload demands, inequitable work distribution among staff and concomitant low-productivity by some staff, and personnel issues that

persist without being addressed. Some staff felt that they could not approach management about their concerns or that if they did, the issues would not be addressed. Others indicated that management had been made aware of the issues but that nothing seems to have changed.

LAS is cognizant of the difficulties it faces due to staff and funding loss. In the Statement of Challenges submitted to LSC in advance of the visit, the program acknowledged that “[a]s staff has left [the program] for other career opportunities, the work these individuals were performing on certain grants has been assumed by other staff members.” The program further recognized that “[i]n some cases, this has been in addition to ongoing workloads [and that] this has caused overload, stress, and frustration.”

Though low morale is not uncommon during times of decreased funding and staff loss, it should be addressed regardless of the cause, as it can have the effect of diverting energy that would otherwise go toward serving clients into far less productive activity.

Recommendation IV.6.24.1*: The program should address the significant morale issues that exist at LAS. The program needs to work on improving communications between upper level management and staff at the program. In addition, the program is encouraged to seek ways to ameliorate staff stress and work overload.

Criterion 7. Resource Development.

Finding 25: The program has an excellent resource development, public relations, and grant writing staff that is capable, well-trained and effective. LAS has successfully expanded its funding base and has sought and obtained funding from diverse sources.

LAS has an excellent resource development, grant-writing and communications staff that is talented, energetic, and committed to the program’s mission. LAS’ current director of development and communications and the program’s development associate have been with the program since 2007.

One of the development and communications director’s responsibilities is to plan and coordinate the program’s Annual Campaign. The Campaign raised \$245,000 during 2010 and more during the previous year. The Annual Campaign is chaired by a non-board member who is typically either the general counsel of a corporation, a managing partner of a large law firm, or a prominent business leader. The 2011 campaign focused on lapsed donors, in addition to firm gifts.

The law firm of Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs has been funding a full-time attorney position at LAS through its Wyatt Fellowship, since 2004.

LAS sponsors the Brush, Bottle and Barrel of the Bluegrass fundraiser, a preview party for the Triangle Art Fair held in late April of every year. This year’s event netted \$45,000 for the program.

LAS has successfully partnered with other organizations to obtain funding to address emerging needs and the needs of special populations. Examples include the Collaborative Advocacy for Safety and Empowerment Project to address the needs of unmarried domestic violence victims, the Foreclosure Conciliation Project, and a grant to address the growing need for legal assistance with child support modification.

The program uses Facebook and Twitter, in addition to its website to support and enhance its fundraising efforts.

LAS' overall funding has increased by over \$1.6 million since 2005. Though funding increased slightly in 2011, it is expected to decrease by close to \$500,000 during 2012. The LSC grant accounts for roughly one-third of the program's annual revenue, with the balance coming from state and local governments, United Ways, foundations, filing fee receipts, and charitable donations. Much of the additional non-LSC funding needed to sustain the program in hard economic times and obtained by LAS in recent years has been directed toward special projects or the legal needs of a specific client population. Because these specialized grants rarely include a funding component for administrative costs, general funding (such as the LSC grant) is often used for this purpose.

Criterion 8. Coherent and comprehensive delivery structure.

(This section is covered throughout this report.)

Criterion 9. Participation in an integrated legal services delivery system.

Finding 26: LAS works effectively with its regional and state partners to foster an integrated legal services delivery system.

The program provides prominent leadership in the legal services community in Kentucky and participates in statewide efforts to provide low-income persons with equal access to a full range of civil legal assistance in all forums. LAS's executive director is the legal services programs' chosen representative on the Kentucky Access to Justice Commission. The program also makes a financial contribution – together with the other legal services programs in the state – to the Kentucky Access to Justice Foundation, which provides a variety of support services to the state's legal services programs.

Attorneys at LAS provide leadership and participation on statewide substantive law task forces - including consumer, family, housing, and government benefits. One of the program's Housing Unit attorneys co-chairs the state housing law task force. Advocates are also on listservs in their areas of expertise, including some national listservs, such as the National Association of Consumer Law Advocates, the National Consumer Law Center, and the National Association of Social Security Claims Representatives listservs. The program's innovative approach to assisting veterans has been shared with other legal service programs. LAS participates with other state, local, and regional stakeholders in efforts to increase legal services resources through legislative advocacy and collaborations with state and local bar associations, law firms and law schools.

The Legal Aid Society has partnered with the University of Louisville Pediatrics, Kosiar Children's Hospital and the Louisville Bar Association to create a Medical-Legal Partnership.

Staff at LAS have led the effort with the courts in Kentucky to develop and provide uniform forms for pro se litigants in divorce cases. Staff members serve on influential committees of the Louisville Bar Association and the Kentucky Bar Association. LAS staff members have shared their expertise in various aspects of poverty law by providing training to the state and local bar associations, volunteer attorneys, special judicial committees/taskforces, agencies and community organizations.

The program is an active participant in the statewide website initiatives.