LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
Technology Initiative Grant Program
Advocate Web Site Evaluation System

ADVOCATE WEBSITE SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS

The Advocate Website Survey seeks information from advocates of LSC-funded programs and other legal services providers about the visibility and usefulness of the website. It can be especially useful by identifying ways the website can be improved. We estimate that advocates will require 10-15 minutes to complete the survey.

This instrument is a modified version of an instrument developed by the Management and Information Exchange (MIE) Technology Evaluation Project (TEP). LSC has modified the TEP instrument by adding five questions and slightly revising the wording of others. We encourage grantees to refer to the TEP informational materials because they provide valuable guidance and information.[1]

As noted in the general instructions and guidelines for using the LSC evaluation instruments, LSC seeks to compile aggregate data that provide a clear picture of the effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses of TIG-funded websites across the country. To accomplish this, LSC must obtain data that are generated and reported as consistently as possible. Consequently, grantees must adhere to the same standards in producing and submitting this information.

Methodology for Using the Community Provider Survey to Generate Data

In their use of the Advocate Website Survey to obtain data, grantees should:

1. Modify the interview instrument *only* to add questions. Questions required by LSC should not be modified or deleted. Also, grantees should include on the reporting form only the data generated by the LSC required-questions.
2. Disseminate hard copies of the surveys by U.S. mail, email or personal delivery.
3. Disseminate surveys to a diverse sample of program staff and providers (including Pro Bono attorneys) serving major segments of the client population (such as rural and urban populations and different racial, ethnic, language, or national origin groups). As noted below, these samples should meet *practical* rather than *scientific* standards of representativeness.
4. Ensure that at least 15 completed survey responses are received.

---

[1] See http://www.lstech.org/TIG/eval/eval_docs/Advocate%20Website%20Advocate%20Survey.doc

5. Seek to ensure that survey responses are received from a "representative" sample of advocates serving major segments of the client population (such as rural and urban populations and different racial, ethnic, language, or national origin groups).

Providing Respondents with Necessary Information about the Survey and Increasing the Response Rate

The TEP instructional commentary about this issue provides valuable guidance for maximizing community providers' knowledge of and responses to this survey. Fundamental steps identified by TEP that can help achieve these goals include the following (note: some of these may be unnecessary with program staff):

1. Calling or emailing ahead of time informing respondents of the survey and asking them to participate.
2. Sending the survey with a brief cover letter or email message that:
   a) explains the purpose and use of the survey,
   b) asks respondents for their valuable assistance,
   c) ensures their confidentiality (if you will not be asking for names),
   d) emphasizes how important their response is to the success of the survey and your work, and
   e) asks respondents to answer the open-ended questions or areas provided for additional details, explaining that this will enable you to improve the website to best meet their needs and the needs of their constituents.
3. Having this letter signed by the president of the bar association or other known luminary, *if* the grantee thinks this will be beneficial.
4. Enclosing a self addressed stamped envelope (if needed).
5. Give respondents the option of faxing a response or giving answers by phone
6. Sending out a second copy after a set time period
7. Offering to send brief survey results so respondents know that their information will be used

Sampling

Grantees should disseminate and obtain responses from diverse sample of community providers. LSC is *not* requiring grantees to develop scientifically valid samples. The costs of constructing scientific samples are much beyond the means of nearly all grantees. Rather, LSC expects grantees to develop *strategic samples that yield practical validity*. Such samples should reflect grantees' most diligent, thoughtful efforts to disseminate survey materials and obtain survey results from groups that together are roughly representative of the programs' client populations in terms of criteria such as race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, rural-urban-suburban, literacy and English language proficiency.

LSC staff are well aware that these samples can only approximate the composition of community providers. At the same time, however, if grantees rigorously and conscientiously construct and obtain information from such practical samples, the data generated can yield helpful insights into a particular website's strengths, weaknesses and areas for further improvement. Thus, even if the data produced from such samples cannot meet the requisite criteria for scientific reliability, they nonetheless can provide program managers with valuable practical knowledge with which to assess system design and operations and make appropriate adjustments.

Limits of the Data

The value and reliability these survey data will have inherent shortcomings, especially the lack of depth (which is characteristic of all surveys) and limited reliability (because of the sample's inadequate representativeness). These shortcomings can be *partially* mitigated if (1) respondents answer the open-ended responses and elaborate on other responses, and (2) programs successfully obtain responses from advocates and community providers whose constituents are reasonably (if not scientifically) representative of programs' client populations.

Compiling the Data and Submitting It to LSC

Grantees should submit disaggregated data from all of the surveys using the on-line reporting system. Grantees should submit the data from each survey on a separate report form. That is, if the grantee receives ten completed surveys, it should complete ten separate report forms. Each form should include all of the data contained on the corresponding completed survey instrument.

These disaggregated data will enable LSC to identify national trends and patterns that would not be possible if each grantee provided only aggregated data. For example, the disaggregated will allow us to identify the assessments of staff of domestic violence shelters (or other groups). If each grantee provides only aggregated data, LSC will not be able to identify the assessments of any group of providers.

TIG staff believe that obtaining and analyzing disaggregated data will be beneficial in two major ways. First, it will enable LSC to identify trends and obtain additional findings that will highlight best practices or areas for improvement. This could influence future technical assistance or other grant making strategies. Second, the data obtained could enhance the funding strategies of LSC and state justice partners.

Please note that grantees should **not** report to LSC the names of the providers who submitted responses. Their names should be **confidential**.

For questions or additional information, please contact Bristow Hardin, LSC, Office of Program Performance, 202-295-1553, hardinb@lsc.gov.