

# Single Point of Entry: Online Coordination, Triage & Intake

NYS Civil Legal Aid Technology Conference  
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**Agenda**

- 1 LSC Summit Report and Single Point of Entry
- 2 Where are we in New York?
- 3 Online Triage and Intake Projects
  - a Western New York
  - b New York City
  - c Lawyering in the Digital Age

## **LSC's Summit on the Use of Technology to Expand Access to Justice**

<http://tig.lsc.gov/resources/grantee-resources/report-summit-use-technology-expand-access-justice>

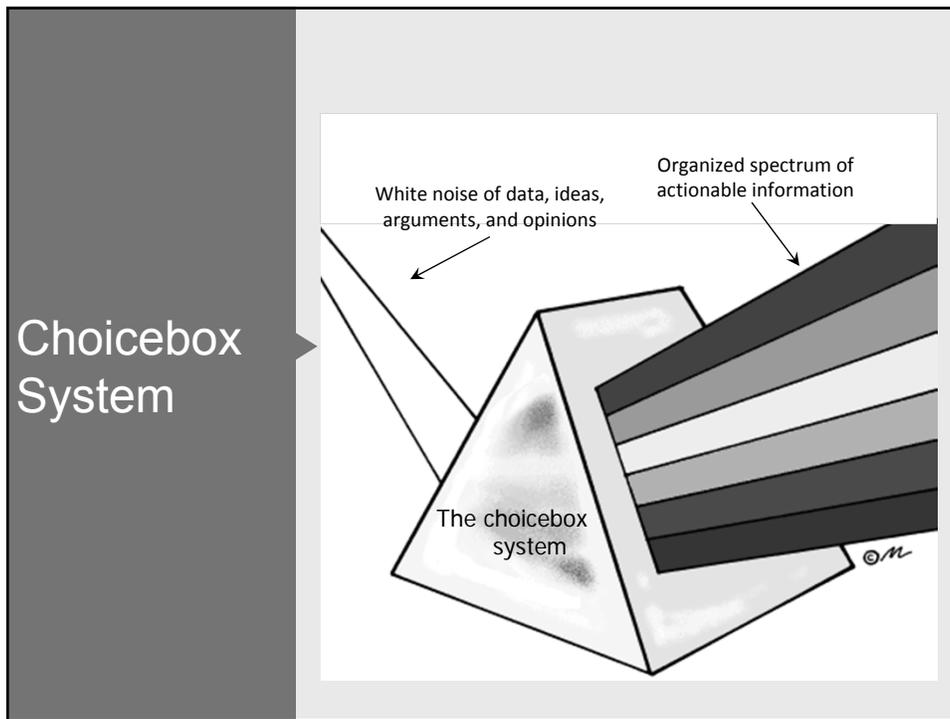
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## Summit Mission

“explore the potential of technology to move the United States toward providing some form of effective assistance to 100% of persons otherwise unable to afford an attorney for dealing with essential civil legal needs”

## Prioritization Process

- The first session of the Summit identified:
  - Twenty-six objectives
  - Fifty technology activities
- Employed a new methodology - Choiceboxing



- Strategy
- Transform the way in which existing resources are used to meet the civil legal needs of poor people by:
- Practicing at top of license
  - Increasing the involvement of the private bar
  - Empowering Self-Help
  - Remote service delivery
  - Employing technology to achieve these goals

## Integrated Service Delivery

- Creating automated forms and other documents to support self-help and limited scope legal representation.
- Taking advantage of mobile technologies to reach more persons more effectively.
- Applying business process/analysis to all access-to-justice activities to make them as efficient as practicable.
- Developing “expert systems” to assist lawyers and other services providers.
- Creating in each state a unified “legal portal” using an automated triage process to direct persons to the most appropriate form of legal assistance and to guide them through the process.

## Portal Concept

- It is an online point of entry to the legal system truly designed around the needs of potential litigants.
- It would aggregate and consolidate in a consistent way the self-help resources available in a particular jurisdiction.
- It would provide an intuitive structure and process for litigants to:
  - 1) decide whether or not to take their case to court and/or fight a case against them
  - 2) determine what kinds of assistance are most appropriate for them, and
  - 3) locate the assistance they need.

<p><b>Prerequisites for Portals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good partnerships among the courts, legal services providers, and the private bar</li><li>• Well-developed self-help resources including automated court forms, court based self-help centers, website information, and instructional videos</li><li>• A good lawyer referral program, strong pro bono attorney panels, and a mature unbundled practice</li><li>• Online intake for the legal aid program(s)</li><li>• Databases with the technical ability to share information easily</li><li>• Receptive judges who are trained on how to work with SRLs</li><li>• Cultural commitment to a portal based on litigant needs</li><li>• A commitment to sustain the portal after the pilot</li></ul>
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**THE TASK FORCE TO EXPAND  
ACCESS TO CIVIL LEGAL  
SERVICES IN NEW YORK**

**Technology Working Group**

Use of Online Intake Tools by Civil Legal Aid Providers:  
An Update to the 2013 Technology Survey  
Prepared by Deborah Wright & Christine Fecko (July 2015)

## Updating Process

- Reviewed 2013 Survey for online intake
- Follow-up with 15 providers
- General & specific written questions  
Overview    Mechanics    Collaboration
- Little interviewing

## Online Intake

1. High Volume Hotlines - 4
2. Website Email - 6
3. Substantive Online Intake - 3



## High Volume Hotlines

1. Single point of entry
2. Standardize scripts
3. Typically integrated with CMS

- The Bronx Defenders
- City Bar Justice Center
- The Legal Aid Society
- Legal Services-NYC

## Website Email

1. Link on website triggers intake email
2. Simple, open ended inquiry
3. Scheduled follow-up via phone
4. Typically no CMS integration

- City Bar Justice Center
- The Family Center (<30/mo)
- Her Justice

- LASMNY (<90/mo)
- Pace Women's Justice Ctr
- Rural Law Center (30%)

## Online Intake

1. Recent, low volume < 200/month
2. Initial collaboration
3. Identifies legal issue, screens eligibility
4. Refers to LawHelp, NYSBA Referral Service
5. Follow up intake via phone
6. Highly customized, high maintenance, buy-in

LawNY

LSHV  
Monroe County

VLSP of

## Online Triage & Intake Projects

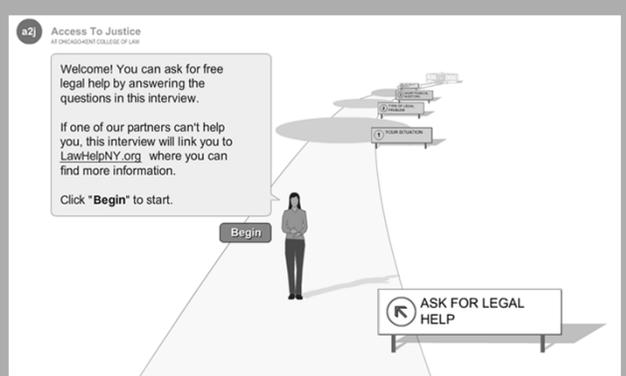
LawNY

Western New York  
Clinic

New York City

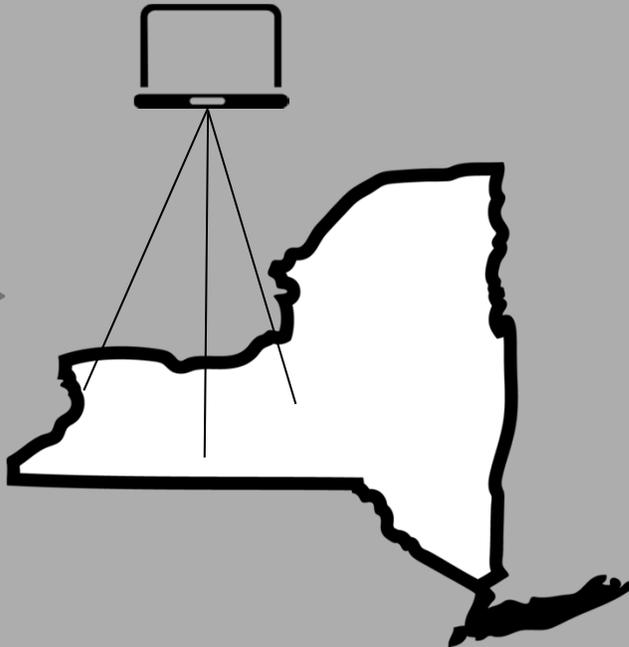
Law School

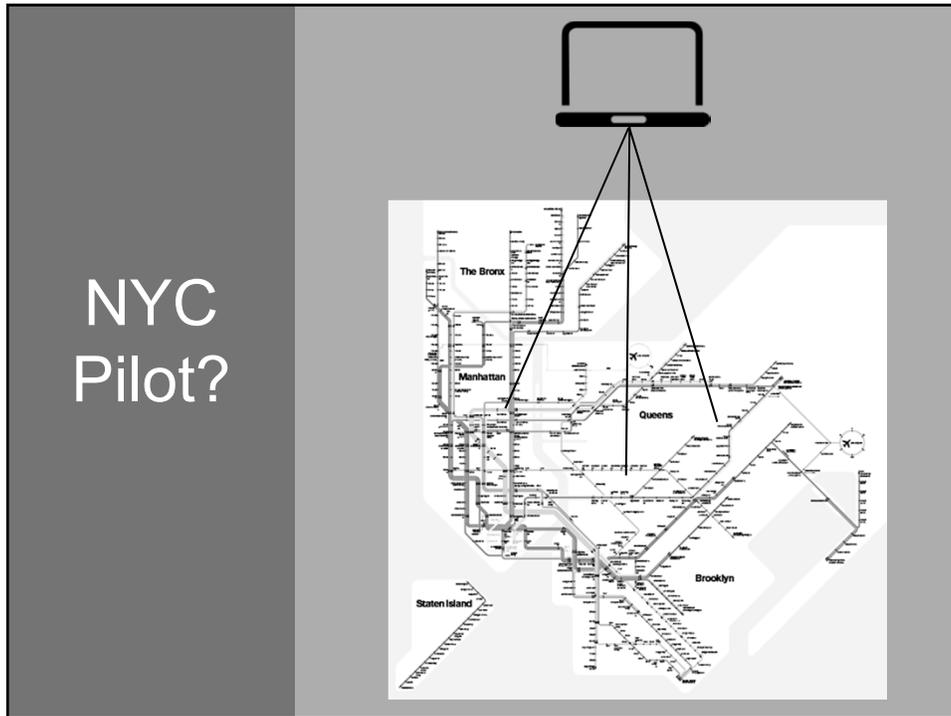
## LawNY Online Triage



- LSC TIG Funded
  - LawNY
  - Legal Services of the Hudson Valley
  - Volunteer Legal Services Project

## Western New York Pilot?





## Clinic Project: Intake module for the Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance website



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## Lawyering in the Digital Age

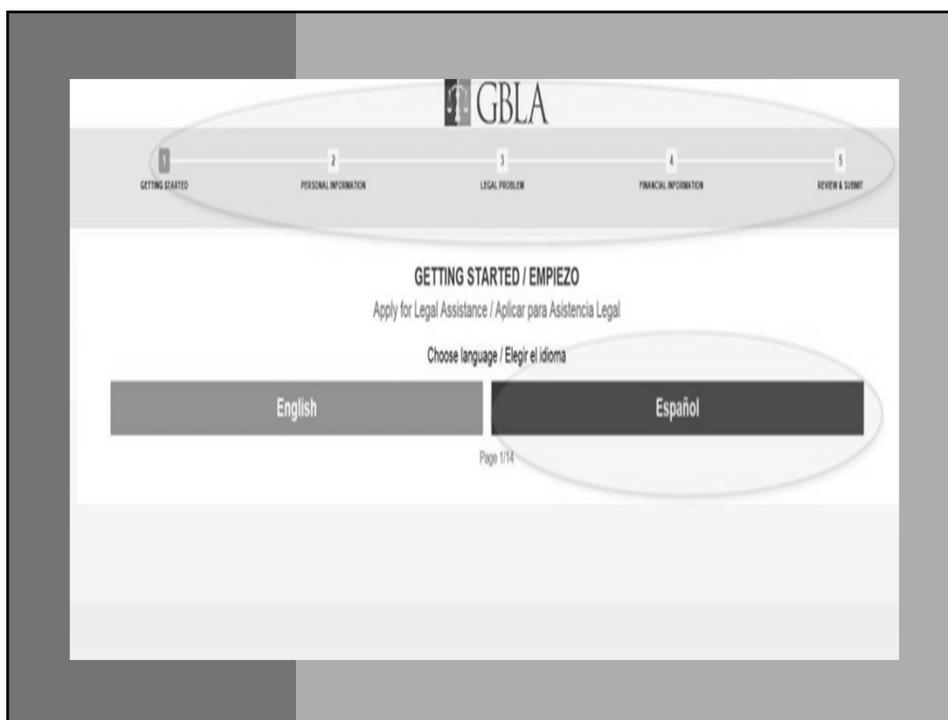
- Clinic has had 6 to 8 student fieldwork projects for the past 15 years (30 semesters)
- Student (Xavier Sanchez) who took LDA Clinic in Spring 2014 working as staff attorney at GBLA asked LDA Clinic for help with online intake
- Team of 2 students (Dan Desatnik/Wanjie Ren) during Spring 2015 semester with Conrad Johnson as supervisor and technical support from Brian Donnelly

## Goals

- Looked at other online intake systems – chose to write own version – using PHP- my sql
- Three Major Goals:
  - Simplicity (5 steps)
  - English and Spanish
  - Work well with cell phones

## Technical Background

- Full web site was being developed in WordPress by consultants to GBLA
- WordPress is an “open source” platform
- Students created the online intake form in JQuery and Javascript
- Integrated mysql database with the WordPress database



The screenshot shows the 'GETTING STARTED' page of the Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance (GBLA) website. At the top, there is a progress bar with five steps: 1. GETTING STARTED, 2. PERSONAL INFORMATION, 3. LEGAL PROBLEM, 4. FINANCIAL INFORMATION, and 5. REVIEW & SUBMIT. The GBLA logo is centered at the top. Below the progress bar, the page title is 'GETTING STARTED' with the subtitle 'Eligibility'. A paragraph states: 'Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance, Inc. (GBLA) offers free legal services in civil law matters to low-income persons and senior citizens residing in its service area within Kern County, California.' Below this, a prompt asks the user to 'Please enter your Zip Code to see if you are in our coverage area:'. A text input field contains the zip code '93304'. A dark grey banner below the input field reads 'Success! GBLA provides services to residents in your area.' At the bottom of the form area, there are two buttons: 'Back' and 'Apply Now'. The page number 'Page 2/14' is centered below the buttons. At the very bottom of the page, there are links for 'Send Form', 'Terms & Conditions', and 'Privacy Policy'.

The screenshot shows the 'LEGAL PROBLEM' page of the GBLA website. The progress bar at the top is the same as in the previous screenshot, with step 3, 'LEGAL PROBLEM', highlighted. The GBLA logo is centered at the top. Below the progress bar, the page title is 'LEGAL PROBLEM' with the subtitle 'GBLA Services'. A paragraph states: 'We regularly handle landlord-tenant issues, assisting non-parents gain legal custody of children in their care, obtaining domestic violence/elder abuse restraining orders, and problems that affect other basic needs like education and health.' Below this, another paragraph states: 'Unfortunately due to limited resources, the following civil legal problems are not areas GBLA will assist with: divorce, personal injury (workers' compensation, premise liability, etc.), bankruptcy, adoptions, and guardianship of incompetent adults. This list is not inclusive.' At the bottom of the form area, there are two buttons: 'Back' and 'Next'. The page number 'Page 5/14' is centered below the buttons.

GBLA

1 GETTING STARTED 2 PERSONAL INFORMATION 3 LEGAL PROBLEM 4 FINANCIAL INFORMATION 5 REVIEW & SUBMIT

**LEGAL PROBLEM**  
GBLA Services

Does your matter involve any of the following? Please check all that apply:

- Elderly care and nursing homes
- Health/health care (such as insurance policy, medical debt, etc.)
- Housing
- Domestic violence
- Guardianship
- Education law/school discipline
- Other

Back Next

Page 6/14

GBLA

1 GETTING STARTED 2 PERSONAL INFORMATION 3 LEGAL PROBLEM 4 FINANCIAL INFORMATION 5 REVIEW & SUBMIT

**LEGAL PROBLEM**  
GBLA Services

Does your matter involve any of the following? Please check all that apply:

- Elderly care and nursing homes
- Health/health care (such as insurance policy, medical debt, etc.)
- Housing
  - I am homeless
  - I am a veteran
  - Housing discrimination
  - Housing repairs and maintenance service
  - Eviction
- Domestic violence
- Guardianship
- Education law/school discipline
- Other

Back Next

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[Reset Form](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

GBLA

1 GETTING STARTED 2 PERSONAL INFORMATION 3 LEGAL PROBLEM 4 FINANCIAL INFORMATION 5 REVIEW & SUBMIT

### LEGAL PROBLEM

GBLA Services

Does your matter involve any of the following? Please check all that apply:

- Elderly care and nursing homes
- Health/health care (such as insurance policy, medical debt, etc.)
- Housing
  - I am homeless
  - I am a veteran
  - Housing discrimination
  - Housing repairs and maintenance service
- Eviction
  - I have received a 30/60/90 day notice of eviction
  - I have received a 3 day notice to pay or quit
- Domestic violence
- Guardianship
- Education law/school discipline
- Other

Back Next

Page 6/14

[Read Form](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

GBLA

1 GETTING STARTED 2 PERSONAL INFORMATION 3 LEGAL PROBLEM 4 FINANCIAL INFORMATION 5 REVIEW & SUBMIT

### LEGAL PROBLEM

Tell us about your problem.

\* Please briefly describe your legal issue(s) in 300 words or less. We will keep your matter confidential.

Back Next

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[Read Form](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

The screenshot shows a web form titled "GBLA" with a progress bar at the top indicating five steps: 1. GETTING STARTED, 2. PERSONAL INFORMATION, 3. LEGAL PROBLEM (current step), 4. FINANCIAL INFORMATION, and 5. REVIEW & SUBMIT. The main content area contains the following text and form fields:

Please provide the names of any people, organizations, or businesses with whom you have a dispute in this matter. We ask you for this information to identify any potential conflicts of interest. As lawyers, we must avoid conflicts of interest that arise from talking with both parties of a dispute.

If there are no adverse parties, please check the box "My matter does not involve any adverse party," and skip this step by selecting "Next" below.

My matter does not involve any adverse party

**Adverse Party 1:**

Big Landlord

Oak Street

**Adverse Party 2:**

Name

Address

Description/Comments

At the bottom of the form, there are links for "Reset Form", "Terms & Conditions", and "Privacy Policy".

The screenshot shows the "FINANCIAL INFORMATION" step of the GBLA process. The progress bar at the top shows steps 1 through 5, with step 4, "FINANCIAL INFORMATION", highlighted as the current step. The content area includes:

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**  
Required Material

We are going to ask you some questions about who lives in your household and about your financial situation. We ask these questions to see if you qualify for our services since some of our programs have financial restrictions. Please make sure that you have the following information:

- Your assets
- Your monthly household income and its sources
- Your expenses

At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "Back" and "Next".

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At the very bottom, there are links for "Reset Form", "Terms & Conditions", and "Privacy Policy".

**GBLA**

GETTING STARTED | PERSONAL INFORMATION | LEGAL PROBLEM | FINANCIAL INFORMATION | REVIEW & SUBMIT

### FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Household Monthly Expenses

Please answer the following questions to the best of your abilities. If you are unsure of the exact amount, please provide an estimate or your best guess.

**HOUSEHOLD MONTHLY EXPENSES:**

Mortgage: \$

Rent: \$

Medical Bills: \$

Utilities: \$

Miscellaneous: \$  x

Total Expenses: \$

[Back](#) [Next](#)

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**GBLA**

GETTING STARTED | PERSONAL INFORMATION | LEGAL PROBLEM | FINANCIAL INFORMATION | REVIEW & SUBMIT

### REVIEW & SUBMIT

Please review your application carefully. Press "Back" at the bottom of the page to edit your responses. When you are done, press "Submit" to send your information to GBLA.

#### Personal Information

Preferred Language:	English
First Name:	Brian
Last Name:	DEMO purposes in the LDA CLINIC
E-mail Address:	donnelly@law.columbia.edu
Date of Birth:	03/17/1999
Phone:	212.854.3198
Address:	Demo Street
City:	Bakersfield
State:	CA
Zip Code:	93304

#### Legal Problem

Legal Issues:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing</li> <li>Eviction</li> <li>I have received a 3 day notice to pay or quit</li> </ul>
Description:	This is a demo problem
Adverse Party 1:	Big Landlord Oak Street
Adverse Party 2:	
Adverse Party 3:	

[Reset Form](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

