

**1C Developing, Maintaining and Managing an Agency-Wide
Technology-Based Legal Services Initiative**

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Erin Riker:

Thank you, everyone for joining us. My name is Erin Riker. I am the technology-based legal services attorney at the Center for Elder Law & Justice, and this is Developing, Maintaining, And Managing An Agency-Wide Technology-Based Resource Initiative. Just as a roadmap for our presentation today, we are going to do some brief introductions, an overview of the different tech-based legal services we have at CELJ, the timeline between developing each of these services individually and then bringing them together under one unit, some benefits and hurdles of centralized technology-based legal services units, and then, as you may have heard us going back and forth about, we're going to have an exercise for the group to do with some poll questions so that you can put your knowledge into action. And at the end, we will have Q&A. Christine Fecko will be monitoring the chat. So if you have questions, you can put them in there and she will read them off at the end.

Like I said, my name is Erin Riker. I'm the technology-based legal services attorney at CELJ. I manage our tech-based legal services, which include our helpline, our Mobile Legal Unit, and a couple legal screening apps that we've developed for our partners to use. I started at CELJ about five years ago, initially just to develop the helpline and then expanded into managing the technology-based legal services for all of the different platforms that we have. I was not a tech person initially. I did a few years in private practice doing commercial and banking litigation, came to CELJ to develop the helpline, and then ended up managing the rest of the tech-based legal services. You'll hear a little bit more about the story as we go on, but first, I want to have Kristen introduce herself and then we will get going.

Kristen Orr:

Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining us. My name is Kristen Orr. I am the tech paralegal at the Center for Elder Law & Justice. Prior to starting at CELJ, I worked in private practice for a little over five years, primarily doing estate planning and estate administration. I began at CELJ a little over a year ago. Last March, I was hired to work in our tech unit with Erin, developing our Senior Financial Safety Tool. I also assist with coordinating our outreach efforts in the community. Like Erin, I'm really not a tech person. This happened by accident, but like Erin said, you'll hear the story as we go on.

Erin Riker:

Okay. Let's get started with talking a little bit more about the technology-based legal services that we offer at CELJ. The first one is our senior legal advice help

line. This was our initial tech-based offering. It is a free service that provides answers over the telephone to brief legal questions, and it provides referrals to other legal resources for individuals across New York State. These other legal resources could be services from our agency, if someone's within our geographic area, or it could be services at other legal services agencies that serve people across New York State. The helpline is staffed by attorneys. They answer questions on a wide variety of non-criminal legal issues. Some of the more popular ones we get are consumer protection, health insurance, housing, and wills and estates questions. The helpline was developed initially with live-calling only option. It was developed to have people call in between 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM.

Initially, it targeted only three counties in New York State. There are counties in which CELJ did not provide physical legal services, but that we wanted to expand our reach in order to provide more legal services. During COVID, we had to expand our helpline pretty rapidly because it became quite popular as it was the service that people could access remotely. So we added a voicemail, an email, and a call-back service. So now it includes the services where if you can't reach us during our live-calling hours, which are currently between 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM, you can leave voicemails or emails, and then we will have attorneys call you back usually within three business days. This was really popular during COVID because a lot of people couldn't get through on our live-calling options, and also, a lot of people whose hours might be erratic, they might not be free in the mornings can call and leave voicemails or send us emails at any time.

The legal advice helpline uses a comprehensive legal services manual to train staffers and give advice. This manual covers the basics of a lot of non-criminal areas of law, and it allows attorneys who may not be specialists in a particular area to be able to give out legal advice to people in other areas of law. For example, if you're a tax attorney by trade and you're volunteering on our helpline, you get a consumer question, the legal services manual has an overview of the most common consumer legal questions and answers. So you can review it and answer most of the questions that come through the helpline. And then our staffers know that if it's something that's not in the manual, then that's usually a cue that it's a more complicated question and it should be referred for in-person full scope legal services.

The next legal technology-based legal service that I'm going to talk about is our Risk Detector App. If you guys were in the last session with the technology Roundup, they referenced the Risk Detector as the inspiration for some other apps. The Risk Detector has been around for a little while, and it's become pretty popular among other legal services agencies. It's a free program. It's developed again with Pro Bono Net, a Neota Logic coding platform that service providers such as hospital staff, social workers, anyone else who works with seniors, but who are not lawyers themselves, can use to screen seniors for

potential legal issues. This allows referrals to be sent for the Center for Elder Law & Justice once the assessment is complete if the consumer wants legal help. If they do want legal help or if they don't, they will get some self-help information that's generated by the app based on the answers that they provide to questions about their housing situation, their consumer credit, and their financial situations and their medical and health insurance situations.

The Risk Detector is designed for use on all sorts of different platforms, tablets, laptops, and mobile devices. It's optimized for all of them. And users can choose between standard and express screenings based on how much time they have available. And the standard evaluation takes about 20 minutes and the express can be done between five to 10. And then based on the answers that the customer gives, then the Risk Detector can provide an assessment that categorizes their risk as low or medium or high. It'll identify some specific red flag issues, and it will email a report to the Center for Elder Law & Justice for follow up if the client wants legal services, in addition to identifying their potential legal needs through the app. And at this point, I'm going to turn it over to Kristen for an overview of our Mobile Legal Unit and our Senior Financial Safety Tool.

Kristen Orr:

Thanks, Erin. So our Senior Financial Safety Tool is similar to the Risk Detector. It's a web-based tool that allows community partners or older adults to screen for potential financial exploitation. So we have partnered with Pro Bono Net and Neota Logic, Lake Shore Savings Bank, Evans Bank, and Erie County APS. So this tool was initially developed with bank employees in mind. Bank employees are often the first line of defense against financial exploitation. They might be the first to notice someone new coming into the bank with an older adult asking for money. They might notice erratic banking patterns or wiring large sums overseas all of a sudden. So with that in mind, we chose to partner with bank employees and create this tool to assist in facilitating that difficult conversation. And APS was a natural partner, Adult Protective Services. Elder abuse rarely exists in just one form. Financial exploitation can be partnered with physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. So as APS workers are interviewing their potential clients, they can use the Senior Financial Safety Tool to determine if financial exploitation is also a risk.

You can go to the next slide. So the interview is short. It only takes about five minutes, maybe less, to complete. Whereas the Risk Detector has an express and a full option, the Senior Financial Safety Tool is much quicker. There's only four sections. It asks your age and some financial information. Like, "Do you have a joint owner on your bank account? Do you receive your financial statements or does someone else?" There's a power of attorney inquiry. There is a section on scams and solicitation. So have you gotten a phone call from someone claiming to be the IRS, that sort of thing? And then how often the

individual has contact with their family and friends. So when you select an answer, additional questions may populate based on how you responded. So if the question is, "Do you have a power of attorney?" And the answer is no, that's it. That portion of the interview is complete. If the answer is yes, then we begin to ask, "How long ago did you create your power of attorney? Have you changed your agent in the last year? Did you meet with an attorney to explain the document to you?" Just things to help us identify other red flags. At the end of the application, it will generate your report detailing possible risks of financial exploitation, red flags. So if you said that you changed your agent within the last year and you didn't speak to an attorney about your POA, that will be flagged. It provides a list of resources, referrals, and best practices for managing your finances and an optional referral to the Center for Elder Law & Justice.

So this tool is specific in scope. It's meant for financial exploitation specifically, whereas the Risk Detector is an umbrella app. So referral to CELJ, we offer that, but it's certainly not required. If the older adult or the individual is interested in legal assistance, we are available, but the information, the referrals, the red flags are not contingent upon our involvement. So there is an option at the end for the individual to put in their contact information for us to reach out, but it's certainly not required. And the technology, it's the driving force, but it's not the only option. So we also have our phone option for people who maybe don't have access to safe internet. So that's why we offer the phone screenings every Tuesday. We also, for example, have a bulletin that we send out to our community partners for distribution.

Maybe someone doesn't have access to the internet. They can't take the tool themselves, but they will see our bulletins or our rack cards at a bank or at a public place and then seek assistance through that. So COVID happened and significantly derailed our plans. The initial launch for the Senior Financial Safety Tool was in March, 2020. We all know what happened there. So there was a big pivot. We pivoted to virtual trainings as opposed to in-person trainings that were planned. Zoom and breakout rooms was a big asset there. We worked with our funders. We were able to extend the grant period due to all the setbacks caused by COVID.

Our Mobile Legal Unit is sort of an office in a bag. It's a portable law office where we send attorneys and paralegals out into the community, to hard-to-reach populations, to provide brief legal services. It functions very similarly to our helpline, except it's in person. We focus on limited scope representation. So not a full case, but a legal question, if you need information on something, we'll offer a brief presentation if our host organization would like a presentation on a specific topic, and then individual legal consultations afterward with the visiting attorney. We do these in person at senior centers, at libraries, at community centers. We also offer virtual options, which is spraying out because of COVID, but we continue to offer those options today.

Virtual options can be more accessible to certain populations. So the goal of the Mobile Legal Unit is to provide education and awareness, get the word out about our agency, what we can do on issues facing the community, making people aware that we are there to help, connecting with communities and individuals.

So we have seniors who go to the senior center the same time every week. We are bringing the assistance to those trusted spaces using our relationships with our community partners, to encourage people, to seek our help and help us build relationships with clients in the community, and also identify potential legal issues facing community members that we might not be aware of. We were made aware of a scam where Spectrum was being impersonated and calling seniors and we heard multiple complaints about that at our outreach events. So it also helps us to know what issues we need to tackle. The MLU increases accessibility for clients. Our main office is in Downtown Buffalo, which is not the most accessible place for public transportation. So those who may not have access to their own transportation to get to our office, they might not have internet access to find out about us, or to look up an attorney, due to limited resources, we are out there in the community meeting people where they're at to offer these services to them.

Big focus on flexibility. There's no rigid guidelines you have to follow. Sometimes we offer presentations. If the host organization doesn't want that, then we don't have one. Sometimes we schedule consultations in advance. Sometimes we have an open office hour type policy. The flexibility is really key to making this work for different populations. And our entire agency is involved in this initiative. So we have attorneys from our housing unit staff, our elder abuse attorneys, our immigration attorneys. It's really an agency-wide effort. So once again, COVID. It was initially conceived as in person only, then went dormant in March 2020. We did schedule some virtual appearances. They were a hard sell. Zoom, Teams is not super intuitive for everyone. However, we've almost tripled our cases open from 2020 to 2021. Now that things are opening back up again, we have a focus on increasing our reach in the smaller, outlying counties and creating partnerships that extend beyond one specific event. So we might have an event at a senior center and not go back for a few months, but hope that the staff know that we are available. If issues come up in the meantime, they can always send clients our way.

Erin Riker:

Okay. Now that we have talked about each of our separate technology-based legal initiatives, we are going to talk a little bit more now about how the technology-based legal services came to be a cohesive unit at CELJ. We're going to go through the timeline for the program development, which started really with the Helpline. It was initially a standalone initiative at CELJ. It was developed, like we said before, to increase direct access to justice by providing

telephone-based brief legal services, and then referrals to other full-scope legal services for questions that couldn't be answered over the phone. It was funded initially by New York State OCA funding. We added other funding streams to increase our geographic scope and functionality. What happened was when other counties, aside from our target counties, heard about our Helpline, they wanted us to provide services in their county as well, and fortunately, they were able to provide the funding to allow us to expand to do that.

And now five years later, we are in the process of expanding our Helpline statewide. And while the Helpline was being developed, the Senior Financial Safety Tool and the Mobile Legal Unit did not exist yet at CELJ, and the Risk Detector was still in the initial design phases, headed by a paralegal in a separate unit from where the Helpline was managed as a standalone initiative. The Legal Risk Detector and the Senior Financial Safety Tool were developed independently of each other, but they were both under the CELJ Elder Abuse Unit because they both screened for various forms of elder exploitation. Be it physical, be it emotional, be it financial, they were funded by two separate DOJ grants, and they were developed pretty much one after the other. The Risk Detector was being developed when the Helpline was also being developed, and the Senior Financial Safety Tool came along a little bit later in its development, largely started after the Risk Detector was finished and already launched.

So they were developed independently of each other. They were developed in order to provide those legal screening tools and referral assistance to the partner organizations, and they existed underneath our elder abuse umbrella. The Mobile Legal Unit came out of a completely separate initiative that came out of our CELJ innovations committee initially just to aid our already existing outreach events. It was an idea that came across that, "Wouldn't it be great at outreach events if we had a printer so we could provide credit reports?" Or, "Wouldn't it be great at outreach events, if we had a laptop and internet access available so that we could assist people with different types of issues?" And at that point, we had also converted to Legal Server at CELJ to do our file management system. So that gave us the ability to open new cases anywhere with internet access, without having to use a pen and paper.

So that came together as the law office in a bag that Kristen was talking about, and it was housed in our Outreach Unit. It later became part of our Elder Abuse Unit because we needed additional funding to operate the Mobile Legal Unit. And at that time, the Senior Financial Safety Tool initiative was also being developed. We spoke to our grant funders about the Senior Financial Safety Tool initiative, and we told them that, "We have this MLU, it's a great resource. We'd love to be able to offer Senior Financial Safety Tool screenings at Mobile Legal Unit events." And they were very receptive to the idea of the MLU getting

tied to the Senior Financial Safety Tool initiative for funding purposes, and those two projects coming together as one larger initiative.

The Technology-Based Legal Services Unit came together a little bit organically. The initiative began, like we said, under our Elder Abuse Unit due to the similarity of the Risk Detector and the Senior Financial Safety Tool. They're both legal screening apps and they're both designed for use by partners in order to identify legal problems when they're small and then refer them back to CELJ for legal assistance when these problems are small enough to be handled easily and before they get too big for the client to be able to handle. And that grew to include the Mobile Legal Unit due to our tying MLU funding to the Senior Financial Safety Tool funding stream, and that's a great example of talking to your grant funders, letting them know that you have additional ideas outside of your initial proposal and getting their input so that you can expand your programs and provide more and better services underneath the grants that you're working with.

And the addition of the Helpline Unit to these and the formalization of our Legal Services Unit initially happened due two staff turnover. The attorney who was managing the Risk Detector, Senior Financial Safety Tool and Mobile Legal Unit left CELJ, and we were hiring for a new attorney. At that point, it was just called the tech attorney to supervise these programs. And then the idea was put forward that I was already supervising the management and expansion of the Helpline. So I could supervise the management and expansion of these programs as well. The consolidation and the growth of the tech-based legal services was greatly accelerated by the COVID pandemic response. I believe it was January 2020 when we decided to bring all of these programs underneath the one umbrella with me supervising the Helpline and the additional three platforms under the Elder Abuse Unit, and then March of 2020 happened and we all know what happened.

Everyone needed remote services, everyone needed mobile services. Everyone needed things that they could do without being in person, and that gave rise to rapid growth in our tech-based legal services. The Technology-Based Legal Services Unit, in order to run these four distinct programs cohesively as one unit and one larger initiative, it required a lot of knowledge of conditions across several funding streams. As we talked about these, different initiatives were funded by several different county, state, and federal grants. It improved our overall agency coordination with grant funders, though, to manage these programs under one unit, because the complexity of the programs funded by multiple funding streams was a lot easier to manage by one person than by four. We could talk with our grant funders about the MLU, for instance, getting that under the Senior Financial Safety Tool umbrella. We could then share resources across these different projects.

One thing we found is that the Legal Services Manual that was developed under the Helpline initiative was really useful at the Mobile Legal Unit appearances

when people wanted brief in-person legal consultations. Some of those ended up functioning pretty much like a Helpline call, just in person. And it developed strong project management skills in our agency, in addition to our traditional legal services. The initiative really helped centralize the project management process across the agency. One of the things I noticed after these initiatives came together was that the project management and project development and design, for all of the programs, began to increase in quality. There were ideas that had been used in the development of Senior Financial Safety Tool that could also be used to track development and expansion of the Helpline. There were design ideas from Mobile Legal Unit that we could use to design other technology initiatives.

It just really... The more we brought things together, the more it made sense that having one cohesive technology-based legal services initiative did our agency a lot more good than having all of these tech-based brief legal services options housed under separate units at CELJ. And I'm going to turn it back over to Kristen now. She's going to talk about some of the benefits and obstacles to overcome for managing our tech projects as one unit. After that, we have the hypothetical. It should be in the chat as a file, but if it's not, or for anyone who can't for any reason download that, we do have it on slides. We'll read it off to you and then once you've had some time to digest that, we will start our poll questions for our opportunity for you to put your knowledge from this presentation into action.

Christine Fecko:

Erin, I'm just going to jump in and say that I apologize for the technical difficulties, but we do have the hypothetical now as a Google Doc and there is a link to it in the chat if people want to pull it up on another screen and take a look. I think we're running a little behind schedule. So we're going to have to go through this next part a little quickly. Thanks.

Kristen Orr:

Okay. Thanks, Christine. Thanks, Erin. So benefits of managing tech projects as one unit, Erin touched on these already. Familiarity with project management and replication processes. So for example, we took inspiration for the Senior Financial Safety Tool, from the Legal Risk Detector. They function very similarly. They look very similar. So using your existing materials and tools as inspiration for future projects. Sharing resources, so for example, we had a lot of technology that we were using at various outreach events before COVID. Then COVID hit. We were not able to use that technology out in the community because we could not be out in the community. We were working from home. So we were able to distribute that technology to staff working at home. Still utilizing technology just a different distribution of resources. Now that we're back in person, we use the technology that we use at the MLU for home visits,

hospital visits, that sort of thing, using the Legal Risk Detector and the Senior Financial Safety Tool at the MLU to offer additional screening there.

And then it certainly made training much easier. Like we said, Legal Risk Detector and Senior Financial Safety Tool, it's easy to train staff on those at the same time. They get trained on the tools while they're learning about outreach in general, and we also use this time to train on the actual technology we use. So our Jetpack for mobile internet, our mobile printer, how to use the surface, how to connect the printers to the laptop, that sort of thing. Okay. Next slide. So there are benefits and there are also of course, obstacles. Utilizing resources received from our different funders, Erin touched on this. Talk to your funders. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't. So, for example, with the MLU, we were able to fund our Mobile Legal Unit using our Senior Financial Safety Tool grant, so long as we offered the Senior Financial Safety Tool screenings, which we continued to do.

We asked our grant funder about that. She said that was great. On the opposite side, we designed a magnet, a handout for scam awareness. We wanted to fund that under a grant. We were told that we couldn't use that specific funding for handouts or promotional materials, but we could use it for informational flyer handouts. So even though we were told no, we were still given additional options on how to best utilize our funding. So we certainly can't stress enough to talk to your funders and ask questions. Think about adjusting your projects to fit the parameters. So the MLU, like we said, we offer those screenings. We can fund it under the Senior Financial Safety Tool. A separate, but equally important obstacle, lack of tech buy-in by staff members and the agency and staff members being resistant to change. Erin and I both disclosed that we were not tech people before we started.

You have to acknowledge that there's different levels of comfortability. Some people did not grow up with technology, with computers. We encourage you to ask questions and accept feedback and criticism. So we wanted to use laptops for the MLU. We heard from some people that they are more comfortable with a surface tablet. I personally am not super comfortable with those, but why shouldn't we utilize as much technology as possible? We encourage training, one-on-one training. So people are comfortable asking questions on how this tech works. So while it may be a hard sell for some of your agencies at the beginning, we certainly would encourage you to open up those channels of communication, just start asking questions. Okay.

And I think we can move on to our hypothetical now. So Erin, would you like me to read it? Should I? You are muted, but I will go ahead and start reading the hypothetical. Like Christine said, it's also available in the chat as a Google Doc. So our hypothetical. "Best Ever Legal Services Agency or BELSA, provides free legal services to indigent people in the areas of housing, consumer protection and collections, simple estate planning and substitute decision making like wills, powers of attorney, healthcare proxies, and assistance with simple tax

filing. The agency also regularly schedules clinics to assist individuals in identifying public assistance programs for which they may be eligible, and then directing them to the appropriate government agency. BELSA is funded primarily by a state-level grant, renewed each year, which provides the bulk of the agency's operating expenses. BELSA also has some private donations earmarked for certain programs and a small, non-LSC federal grant.

In the protection unit, clients frequently complain of other legal issues that have arisen due to lack of funds from high debt and scam victimization. However, this unit is severely understaffed, meaning the attorneys and paralegals are unable to devote time and energy into properly identifying and triaging these other legal issues. The Consumer Unit is funded by BELSA's state grant. The Tax Filing Unit has a tax travel bag containing an internet Jetpack, tablet computer, and mobile printer. This allows the tax unit to use home visits to complete tax returns and file them electronically. The Tax Filing Unit is funded by a federal grant that is ending in one year with no option for renewal.

The Housing Unit and the Estate Planning, Substituted Decision Making Units have each developed their own app that is used by intake paralegals to screen clients and identify their legal issues within that unit's realm of expertise. The Housing Unit is funded by BELSA's state grant. The Estate Planning, Substituted Decision-Making Unit is funded by private donor. For the public assistance clinics, the government agencies administering these benefits all have online applications, but lack of equipment in the public assistance clinic unit prevents them from completing online applications at the clinics. The public assistance clinic is funded by a private donor."

Erin Riker:

Okay. We are going to ask that they launch our first poll question, and we'll give you guys a little bit of time to answer that. Hopefully, as you've been digesting the information, you have been thinking about some issue spotting that's popping up for how you would manage these all as a technology-based legal services unit. Okay. And our poll question is "Which resources could be useful for other units? The screening apps, the tax travel back, the community presence, or all of the above?"

Okay. I'm seeing a lot of responses come in. We're just going to give like a few more seconds. Okay. And 90% of you gave "all of the above." That is correct. What we wanted people to learn from this question was that each one of these units being managed or being run separately within the organization has things that the other one needs. And having a cohesive technology based legal services initiative would allow the agency to identify these needs and also identify which resources could be more useful to which units. I'm going to ask the tech people to launch our second poll question, which is "How could the housing and substituted decision-making screening apps be most useful to other units?" Just a few more seconds for a response.

Okay. I see they're pretty well distributed. "Developing screening apps for each unit," "Developing one master app that screens for every issue," and "Training staff on the apps currently in use." These are all correct, but what we wanted to help you guys identify here is that there are multiple solutions based on your agency's funding and based on your tech abilities. If you have the funding to develop one master app that screens for every legal issue, that would be fantastic. Some units might have individual funding to develop their own screening apps and some units might not. So that situation would be good or that solution would be good for that situation. And if you are not really in a position to be developing any new tech right now, you can at least train staff from other units on the apps currently in use to make their jobs a little bit easier. And now I'm going to ask to launch the third, and this is going to be the final poll question, because we're running a little bit short on time. "How could the tax travel bag be most useful to other units?"

Christine Fecko:

While we're waiting for that poll to finish, I'll just again say if you have any questions, you can drop that in the chat. I only have one question so far, Erin.

Erin Riker:

Okay. It looks like some of you had that "Public assistance clinics could file online reports." Some of you said that "Other units could do home visits" and some said that "Unit supervisors could use it for training purposes with tech averse personnel." Again, these are all correct. They are just meant to illustrate the different kinds of things you can do with your technology legal services unit, based on what situation you're in. The public assistance clinics could file the online reports. As we said in the hypothetical, they were unable to do that, despite the fact that all of these service agencies had online applications, because they didn't have internet access at their public assistance clinics. Using the tax bag, it would be pretty easy to do that.

Other units could also do home visits. This could help get more services out to more people. And we actually do this in CELJ. We use the Mobile Legal Unit for training purposes with personnel that are a little bit less familiar with technology and we will use it to help train people on using a different tech products, such as the mobile printer and the laptop or tablet computers, the Jetpack, just to get them a little bit more familiar with technology in a setting that they're really comfortable with because they know us, they're in our office, and we're their colleagues. And we can use that equipment to help them get a little bit more familiar with technology before they need to use it. And at this point, I am going to ask Christine to send us some questions and Kristen and I will answer them as best we can.

Christine Fecko:

Great. The first question I have is someone wanted to know about the cost, both in terms of the development of the Helpline and also for the ongoing annual cost for maintaining the Helpline.

Erin Riker:

Well, the cost for maintaining it, it's fairly small in that we maintain a toll-free number and we run the Helpline right now through our existing phone system. As we're looking to expand, we are looking at a cost to transition to a call center backbone, which has run us... We've gotten quotes in the 20 to \$30,000 range to transition to that. We are also looking at taking that manual that we talked about and putting that into an online searchable format. Right now, it's a PDF document which works fine for 11 counties that we serve, but would be a little bit cumbersome to use that to have resources and differences in the law for all over New York State. So we are getting programming quotes to expand that as part of our statewide expansion, and that's running about 15 to \$20,000 in the quotes we've gotten so far. So the bulk of the costs in that are going to be in setup and in expansion, when you realize that you need more bandwidth and when you need to expand your resources to then meet the needs of your program serving a wider geographic area.

Christine Fecko:

We have one other question and about two minutes left. The question is, how has your pivot to technology-based legal services impacted your view of access to legal services generally?

Erin Riker:

I'm going to let Kristen take that one and then I have some things that I can add, but Kristen, since you do more of the Mobile Legal Unit outreach, then I think you'd have a really interesting perspective on that.

Kristen Orr:

So I think that the more that I'm going out into the community with our Mobile Legal Unit being around technology, I would say it's certainly not as accessible as I thought. There are things that clients bring up that I never thought of. We only have one minute left. We talk a lot about the digital divide, and I think sometimes it's hard for us to really recognize what that means for our clients. It could be people not even having, maybe not safe, internet access, but no cell phone, no way to contact us. We have clients who need to walk to a friend's house to use their phone to call us and ask a question. So I think that technology can be great for bringing it out into the community, bringing our internet out, letting people access their credit report, which they might not be able to do otherwise. But I think that the more that we talk about what tech can do, we need to also discuss the limits that it provides.

Christine Fecko:

I think we're going to have to leave it there, but I want to just thank our panelists and thank everyone for joining us. We really appreciate your time and hope you enjoy the rest of the conference. Thanks very much.

Kristen Orr:

Thank you.

Erin Riker:

Thanks, everyone.