



# **LEADERSHIP & TECHNOLOGY**

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*TWO YEARS AFTER*



## **Panelists**

- Sally Curran, Executive Director  
*Volunteer Lawyers Project of CNY, Inc., Syracuse NY*
- Sienna Fontaine, Legal Director/General Counsel  
*Make the Road NY, Brooklyn NY*
- Adriene Holder, Attorney-in-Charge  
*The Legal Aid Society – Civil Practice, New York NY*
- Karen Nicolson, CEO  
*Center for Elder Law and Justice, Buffalo NY*

## **Moderator**

Lillian Moy, Executive Director  
*Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, Albany NY*

**Your favorite tech tool, two years after? (limit to three words; separate by \_)**

# Is there one tech tool that recreates the water cooler?

Teams Chat

Communicator App

Text Chain

Conference Call

Zoom Call

Salesforce Chat

Other (Put tool in Chat)

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# What percentage of your staff is working remotely, at least sometimes?

25%

**A**

50%

**B**

75%

**C**

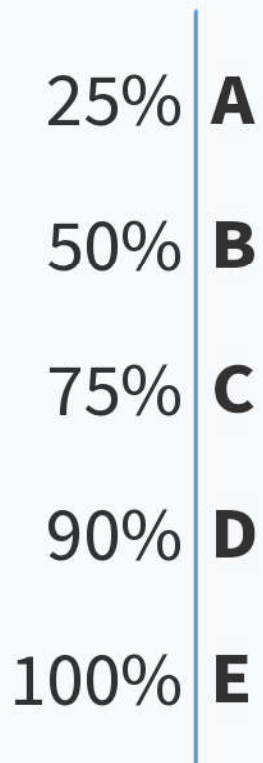
90%

**D**

100%

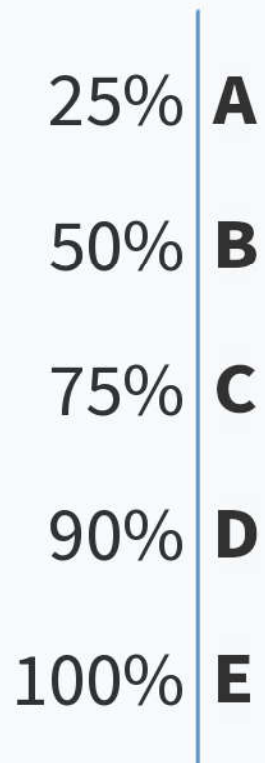
**E**

# What percentage of your staff is working remotely, at least sometimes?





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# Use of Designated Teams Sharepoint Site for External Collaboration

The screenshot displays a SharePoint site for 'ImmigrationLegal'. The left navigation pane includes Home, Documents, Immigration Legal Plan, Teams, Recycle bin, and Edit. The main content area features an 'Immigration Legal Planner' with a 'To do' list and a 'Links to Client Sharepoint Sites' section.

**Immigration Legal Planner**

Filter (0) | Group by Bucket

**To do** | Add new bucket

- Add task
- Long term resource library
  - RT
  - GS
  - KA
- Continue outreach to interpreters/interpretation companies
  - LS
  - SV

Completed tasks 9

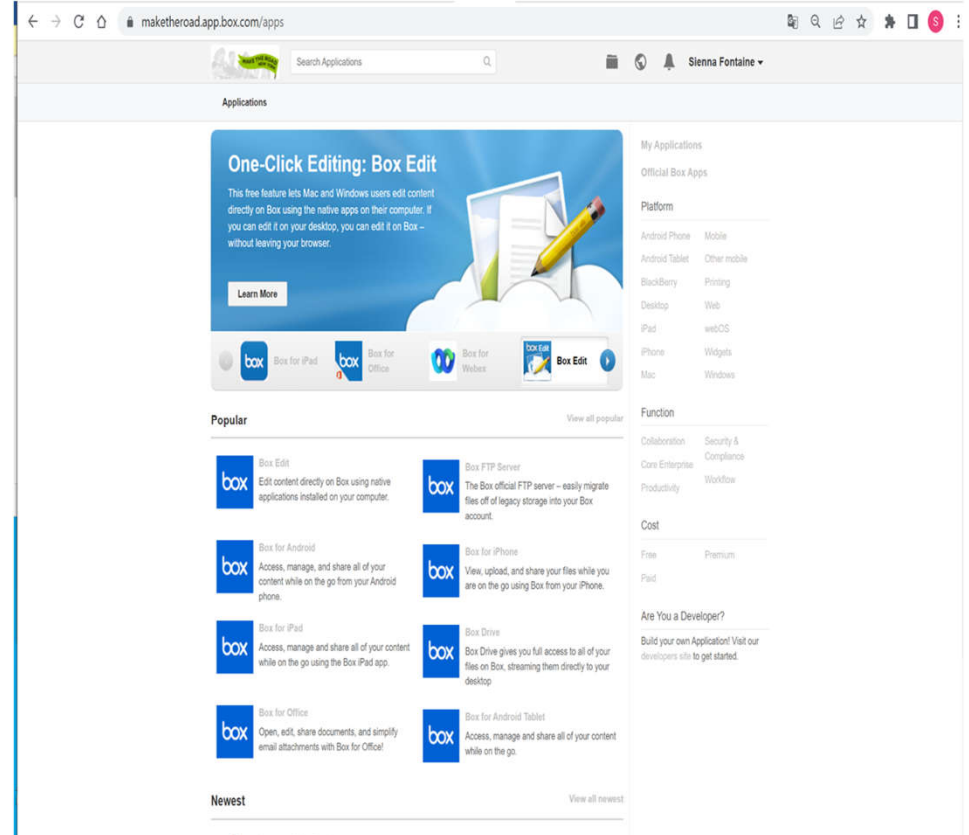
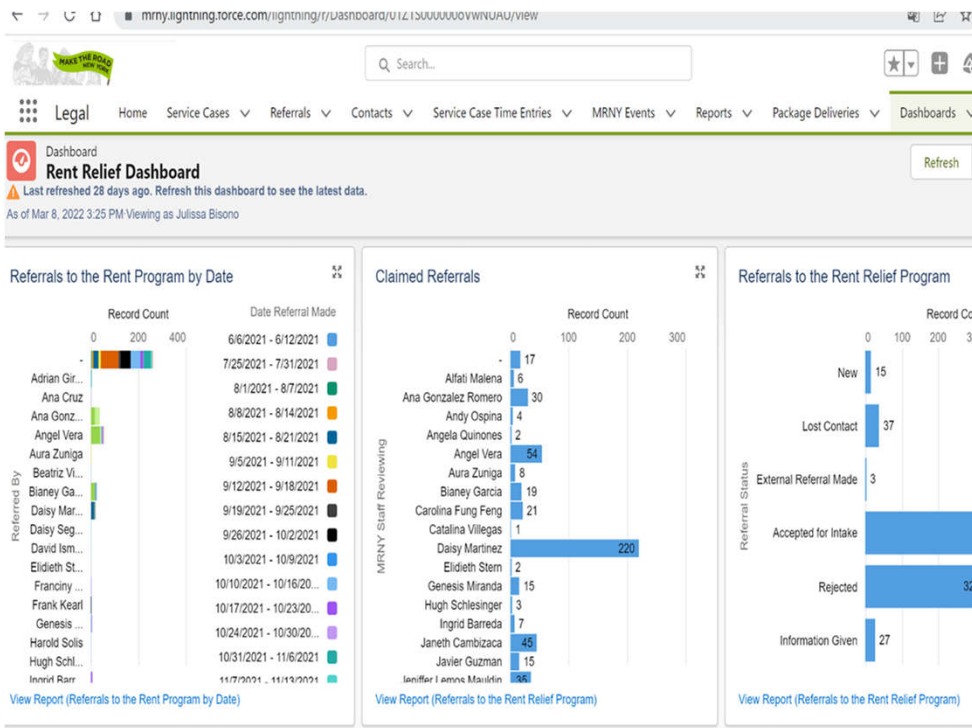
**Links to Client Sharepoint Sites**

- Catholic Charities Sharepoint Site
- InterfaithWorks Sharepoint Site
- Rise Sharepoint Site

Published 4/5/2022 | Edit

Windows taskbar: Type here to search, 41°F Mostly cloudy, 9:22 AM 4/5/2022

# Best service delivery innovation for MRNY over the last 2 years? We integrated our case management system (Salesforce) with our cloud-based file server (Box).



Rent Relief Applications (R1)      Applications Submit...      \$\$ Owed      Total Rec



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## Lessons Learned Two Years In

- The pandemic required us to balance the needs of our staff, clients and funders. At different times during the last two years, different “constituencies” would take precedence.
- The vast majority of our clients were not internet savvy at all, which made many tech options difficult for them (and us).
- A 2017 poll by Pew research showed that only 26% of those 65+ felt comfortable using technology and 41% of that group did not think they even had access to the internet.
- However, new research from AARP found that more older adults (44%) view tech more positively as a way stay connected than they did before COVID-19. In addition, 4 out of 5 adults age 50+ rely on technology to stay connected and in touch with family and friends. However the “younger” older adults are more comfortable with the technology than the older, older adults (75+).



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## Lessons Learned Two Years In

- Many of our partners (especially rural offices for the aging) would not even accept free tech from us. Our zoom presentations while frequent, were not well attended by persons of color.
- CELJ is also required to be in hospitals, nursing homes and do client home visits, due to the regulations of the federal Older American Act.
- All of this meant that we came back into the office (and community) much sooner than most, returning in June 2020 with capacity restrictions and five days per week as of July 1 2021.



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## Lessons Learned Two Years In

- We found the best use of tech dollars was to build out our already existing helpline. Our clients were much happier calling us on the phone and, in the first 2 months of the pandemic, calls increased ten -fold.
- Internally, we found the use of the Communicator App enabled staff to return calls to clients without giving out their cell phone numbers and to talk to each other with a chat feature.
- We have been back full time now since July 1, 2021 with exceptions for any COVID exposure, and a standing 2 days WFH per month for anyone who wants it.



## **Legal Aid Society**

### Developed New Access Points for Services

1. Partnered with CUNY to initiate a “Legal Aid Academy” for students – online library of relevant resources such as recordings of live townhalls, roundtables, and “Know Your Rights” trainings for students to access at their convenience
2. Developed a Centralized Virtual Intake System for Robin Hood Benefits Access

### Expanded Virtual Outreach Efforts

1. Continued to develop new, dedicated client-facing content for our website including further building out our dedicated COVID-19 information hub
2. Use of social media and other tools and YouTube



**Leadership tips for 2022? (limit to three words; separate by  
\_)**





# Thank you

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