



Office of Inspector General

# Office of Inspector General's Evaluation of Legal Services Mapping

Attachments referred to in the January 19, 2005 letter to the Provision Committee Chairman David Hall have been provided to the Board of Directors. The attachments are publicly available at:

Mapping Evaluation Phase I - Legal Services in Georgia report:

<http://www.oig.lsc.gov/mapping/mapping.htm>

OIG Semiannual Report to Congress:

<http://www.oig.lsc.gov/sar/04b/lscoisar2004b.pdf>



Legal Services Corporation  
Office of Inspector General

Inspector General  
Kirt West

January 19, 2005

Professor David Hall  
130 Rocky Knoll Drive  
Stoughton, MA 02072

Dear Professor Hall:

I am forwarding some materials regarding the OIG's Legal Services Mapping Evaluation as background for the OIG presentation to the Provisions Committee of the Board on February 4, 2005.

The OIG has been evaluating the potential of mapping to support quality and effectiveness in legal aid work and management for several years. The project began in Georgia in 2001 and produced a wide spectrum of legal services maps, based on the Georgia programs' and OIG perspectives of what would be most useful for legal services managers, planners and LSC. Many of these maps are included in the attached Phase I report and full size at <http://www.oig.lsc.gov/mapping/mapping.htm>.

In late 2003, Phase II of the project continued to test legal services mapping in extremely dense urban and sparsely populated rural poverty areas, and to produce a core set of approximately 25 maps that could be universally applied to any legal services area to visualize that region's legal services environment. Phase II began in southern California, where the OIG worked closely with the five regional grantees and the originators of legal services mapping. Over the summer of 2004, the OIG completed an accelerated project to map Montana's needs and services. The Montana Legal Services Association presented some of that work at the September 2004 Provisions Committee meeting to illustrate their challenges and work; and later to support their internal and statewide planning. Currently, these maps are being used to support a Montana Legislature bill to fund a study of the civil legal needs of low-income Montanans to illustrate the scope and the size of the needs and services provided. In Georgia, we produced an update, using the 2000 Census and the new core set of maps. The status of these projects is summarized on pages 6-11 of the attached OIG Semiannual Report (SAR) to the Congress for April to September 2004.

As a result of our concept evaluation work, we believe there is some evidence that mapping technologies have the potential to make a significant difference in the quality and effectiveness of access-to-justice efforts throughout the nation by making very visible: 1) the low-income population; 2) legal services grantee services; 3) the impact of interventions; and 4) the relationships between all three generating new management insights and valuable questions. This makes it possible for grantee managers to better deploy resources, litigators to put their cases in a broader context, directors and boards to make a better case for new resources, and for partners to see the value of collaboration in support of access to justice.

The core technique is very simple. Mapping takes the Census data showing the poverty population, and visually and graphically shows the relationship of poverty to the actual distribution of clients the LSC grantees serve, based on case addresses from the grantees' case management systems. Through the maps, grantees are able for the first time to show the distribution of poverty at a more detailed view than the county numbers available from the Census. It was also easy to add other data on various areas of need such as mortgage foreclosures, domestic violence reports, and pro se court cases that help to bring a greater context to the legal needs and show the geographical realities of legal services provision.

The OIG presented a widely-attended session on the topic at the December 2004 NLADA conference in Washington, DC. A number of grantees indicated that there are benefits to be gained from mapping. Although they may be eager to employ mapping, they expressed concern about the initial technical complexity and effort.

The final report on OIG work will be completed shortly. The following are some of OIG's observations about legal services mapping:

- Mapping is beneficial for fundraising by showing the extent and urgency of need and the lack of legal aid resources to meet that need. The maps on page 8 of the Georgia Report show very large increases in the income-eligible population of one county (Gwinnett). We understand that the grantee used these maps to attract funding for expanding its work in that county.
- Grantees have stated that mapping can be a useful management tool for legal aid resource allocations, and improving access to legal services by suggesting appropriate geographic deployment of resources. See, for example, the maps on pages 12 and 14-19 of the Georgia Report.
- Grantees have indicated mapping has the potential to enhance litigation efforts by putting every case in a broader context.

- Grantees have used maps of need and capacity for building relationships for collaboration with other stakeholders such as the bar, police departments and courts.
- Grantees stated that they see its benefits for management, fundraising, and partnership building. Evaluation participants have told the OIG that they would like to have continued access to mapping. Other interested parties such as the Access to Justice Commission of the Washington State Supreme Court have recently started a statewide mapping effort.
- Mapping does not seem to be disruptive to grantees. The data for mapping already exists in case/services management systems and the OIG was able to extract it easily. There has been no need for case data clean up and, by using automated techniques, high map accuracies have been achieved even for rural clients.
- We learned that mapping is somewhat technologically demanding and that the technical capability for LSC grantees is relatively low.
- The cost of mapping declines with experience, time and economies are to be gained by a coordinated effort. There are cost effective ways of making mapping available to all interested grantees by using privacy-protected web technology.
- Mapping is employed by a variety of government agencies and non-government organizations serving widely dispersed social needs. DOJ, HUD, HHS, AARP, Fannie Mae, and United Way are examples of agencies that use mapping on a daily basis to manage their operations and to whom the OIG has spoken.
- Maps have the potential to provide an effective representation of the LSC services and activities by showing the movements of income-eligible populations and the impact of LSC funding allocations. See the maps and explanation on page 7 of the SAR.

We will soon be issuing the OIG final report to LSC Board and management. We are attaching, in a separate document, comments from a number of participants indicating that they believe state and local mapping confers significant benefits for grantees. However, these grantees believe they need a moderate amount of assistance in making use of mapping and that LSC should provide such assistance.

The question facing LSC management is whether to expend its limited resources to assist grantees in this area. There appears to be limited field capacity to produce maps, so one of the issues is whether LSC management should explore a "Legal

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Mapping Web Server" solution whereby grantees could download maps of Census data tailored to their service areas, and get their client's case locations mapped, using a privacy-protected online service. In addition, there is the question of whether LSC management should provide resources whereby grantees could access limited technical support and advice as they first undertake mapping.

Please do not hesitate to contact David Maddox of the OIG at (202) 295-1653, if you have any questions or need any clarifications.

Sincerely,



Kirt West  
Inspector General

Enclosure

## Sample Grantee Comments Regarding Mapping

### **Irene Morales, Inland Counties Legal Services (ICLS):**

*"I think at the beginning of this project I really was wary about where it would go or how it would be focused, but I can tell you after seeing the maps that I really am excited about it. I feel excited about it. I'm a person who likes things to be practical. If I can't see a practical use for it then I don't have any time or use for it, but I really see a lot of practical uses for this kind of information."*

*"The maps provide a "visual" that is difficult to describe to anyone unaware of the demographics of the enormous geographical ICLS service area. The maps and the ability to work with GIS software will give ICLS a significant "leg up" in providing a clear picture of "need" to the ICLS Board of Directors, community partners and stakeholders as well as both current and potential funders. This can also be used as a tremendous management planning tool useful to help view the impact of various projects or outreach efforts."*

*"I think the immediate use of this tool is to help us learn more about our own client community and how well we are serving them. To be an evaluation tool internally. I also see the potential to use this tool for fund raising from special grantors, by isolating certain age groups or language groups. We may use this to evaluate various projects that we might have in our service area, whether it's domestic violence, or outreach. For us, we do outreach all the way to Needles, and it's exciting to see that, yes, we have cases in Needles and Baker. Cases were all over the map. Obviously, there is the need for Advocacy. I can also see it as a way to step more algoid, because they can see a picture of where all of that work occurs on the hotline, that obviously we have people way out there. And, possibly a use for us in the rural areas is encouraging private bar involvement by being able to educate the private bar and showing that in the outlying areas, this is the poverty picture."*

*"We believe that these maps will be very useful as an internal management tool. They can be used for staff training, project planning with community partners, to help identify gaps in program services and to help to plan strategies to meet those gaps."*

*"I really want to see it go further. We can do it, but we really need help."*

*"I think that with enough resources, we can continue. I think to have enough resources and help it has got to take continued LSC support."*

### **Bruce Iwasaki, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA):**

*"It is important to keep in mind the different uses that the presentation of this data can be used for:*

*Management – priority setting and allocation of resources*

*Marketing – raise money from legislature, foundation, private bar*

*Advocacy – redlining, priority lending"*

**Greg Knoll, Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD):**

*“Before the mapping project we were unable to in any meaningful way identify, analyze or in any way communicate concentrations of potential/actual clients and the legal services LASSD provided across the service area. The maps have made a major difference in this communication. LASSD has found a close correlation between the concentration of services provided and concentrations of poverty individuals. We have shown our Board of Directors with one of the first maps provided through this project that we are on target with delivery of services to the community served. We can also use this information to note particular neighborhoods or census tracts where we are not providing the same level of services as in other areas. These will be used in the future for targeting outreach and requesting additional funding to focus direct services more intensely in certain geographic areas.”*

*“Like most folks here (referring to all grantees), we are really supportive of the mapping project in terms of what it can do for us managerially and how we are able to use it internally”. Additionally: LASSD has determined that for the most part its resources are deployed in concert with concentrations of the poverty population. The next level to be utilized would be specific maps that provide data on specific team services (e.g. hotline or domestic violence services) in relationship to the population. These would allow us to see if there are access issues to obtaining these specialized types of services. LASSD Management will utilize the maps to set strategies for outreach in various communities, the type of outreach to be provided (e.g. community education on CalWORKs issues, public housing, etc.) based upon an analysis of the current levels of substantive services currently provided in that community, as demonstrated by the GIS maps.”*

*“Very specific maps allow each program to evaluate delivery strategies and prioritization issues. The use of generic maps nationwide could result in misinterpretation or the ignoring of service delivery models. For instance, not placing numerous small neighborhood offices throughout the service area may be a good thing, if it is shown that outreach through various other modalities such as a telephone hotline, clinics at various neighborhood centers and courthouses, etc. provide superior delivery of services without the fixed overhead costs of rent, utilities, etc. For instance, LASSD utilizes space, utilities, telephones, and computers, all provided by the courts for housing Legal Service employees at the courthouses to provide services to those eligible applicants. Saving on the cost of an office in that particular judicial district allows LASSD to use the fixed cost budget for personnel, increasing the number of employees available to interface with clients.”*

*“We (Dennis Holz and Greg Knoll of LASSD) have shared over time, concerns that if we are to get some value out of this project there ought to be some continued support from LSC for at least the 2003 data, and we are hopeful that will occur”. Additionally: Mapping can play a major ongoing management support tool and we are definitely interested in adopting it. The next steps are as follows: 1) Have a training for computer responsible people in each program to convert annual data into a GIS format. 2) Training of computer responsible people to use ArcView to produce needed or desired maps by the program. 3) A LSC intervention for the nationwide purchase of GIS software at a reduced rate or contributed for free to LSPs. GIS software is expensive,*

and most programs won't be able to afford the cost of it for a management tool. ESRI has offered free and low cost software. However, the hurdles that have to be jumped through and the barriers to communication and obtaining the software are frustrating and do not produce timely support. The free software provided by ESRI at this point, does not really perform the mapping functions at a level consistent with what has been provided through this OIG program. Therefore another level of training must occur. Alternatively, a contractor could provide data disks as done previously and mapping based upon certain variables. However, it seems that in order to maximize the use of the data, local programs need to be able to create their own sets of variables and work with them to see what is effective and what is not. To some degree this is a trial and error process. Going directly to contractors will reduce the flexibility, re-engineering of data maps, trying new and different modalities, etc. all of which are necessary to fine tune the system to meet management and funder's needs. 4) Support must be ongoing for at least a 5-year cycle. LSC support for this period of time would institutionalize the process, create a sufficient backlog of data and maps from each year to compare against each other, and allow for course corrections from prior year mapping to refine and objectify strategies so that the process would take hold and have ultimate value. 5) LSC would negotiate with other governmental agencies, private resources, etc. either directly or through contractors or consultants to develop a huge easily accessible database of all available information in proper format. Identifying sources of information and leaving it up to each program to access those sources is slow, cumbersome, and may not be effective in the long run. Creating an institutionalized and secure website with database links to all available data that can be sourced, available only to programs that make a commitment to GIS mapping would be the first step in institutionalizing and grounding GIS work into most LSPs. This data "mining" would also allow LSC to develop the enviable position of control of knowledge regarding poverty populations throughout all regions, states and cities of the United States. This data source could become a source of revenue from non-LSPs interested in obtaining the data quickly and easily. In other words, the value would lay in the ease of accessibility at one website with links, instructions and caveats on the data available at each linked site. Additional non-web based data could be configured and maintained at the site."

**Neal Dudovitz, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles (NLS):**

*"If everyone had appropriate maps before them when the management team is contemplating an new project - whether it is a change in service delivery or an a new advocacy effort, it would significantly help our planning; utilization of resources cost-effectively; and finding and targeting fundraising opportunities. So I agree with you that we really should make these maps available to our management team."*

*"The maps told us where the pockets of Armenian and Chinese speaking people live in relation to the poverty population. There is an incredible correlation between people who speak Spanish and poverty."*

*"The maps also help us evaluate how effective we have been in our expansion into the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys as well as whether we have been able to adequately reach poor people in the far north and east portions of our services area that may be 50 to 100 miles from program offices."*



*"The goal of our program right now is to be able to do everything we do in 4 languages..."*

*Most useful maps include base of 125% poverty population density with overlays of Armenian, Chinese and Spanish speaking people and the Self Help map. Also, the maps showing the impact and effectiveness of our special health (HCC) and Self-Help Center projects are examples of how the maps assist in documenting the strength of these programs and in their continued funding. Similar maps in the future for other projects would be very helpful."*

*"As Executive Directors we naturally tend to focus on the Management/Fundraising uses for the maps - something that I think self evident. But, the more you really you get into it, the more you can see how the maps could be incredibly valuable for legal services program's advocacy efforts - our advocates could do some pretty wonderful stuff for our clients if they had reasonable access to maps like these. I think that the real magic in this is in incorporating our advocacy. How can we use this to enhance our efforts to get rid of a slumlord? That is really where we ought to be going. And, while learning how to use the tool by initially focusing on management/fundraising makes sense to me, ultimately, we should be transferring the skill to the advocacy side of our programs. That's why I'm here. This is why I think this is a great project. Because I think there are innumerable ways to enhance our advocacy."*

*"Using pictures and maps to demonstrate something can be more powerful sometimes than the sentence you write in a brief, if you do it correctly."*

*"You could get lost in this. You could spend hours playing around with this stuff, and you have to do some of that. But, you have to know enough about how to manipulate the data. It has incredible possibilities for us. It's being able to do it in a cost effective time effective way, and it's really hard for me personally because I like this stuff and I have some thoughts on how to do it, but I'm not technologically able to do it myself. Balancing how much staff time we can afford to devote to that is really the critical issue."*

*"There are great uses for this technology and it is worth devoting some staff time. Now we need to explore what the out of pocket cost would be to continue, and is it worth that expenditure. One of the things that this project has done is demonstrated what I think we all thought when it started, which is, there are great benefits for our program if we can find cost-effective ways to utilize mapping technology."*

**Bob Cohen, Legal Aid Society of Orange County (LASOC):**

*"Partnerships can go beyond Legal Services into other Social Service Areas. For example, we succeeded in developing a partnership with the Santa Ana Police in producing our Domestic Violence map."*

**Kate Bladow, Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA):**

*"Mapping is an excellent way to involve visual thinkers in management decisions. Patterns and abnormalities are illustrated clearly, allowing comparisons to be made easily between different service areas and regions."*

*"MLSA has used the maps both internally and externally at public presentations, pro bono recruiting events, MLSA Board of Trustee meetings, MLSA Advisory Council meetings, staff presentations, and statewide planning meetings. The maps have been extremely well-received. Electronic copies have been distributed to most statewide planning stakeholders."*

*"It is believed that maps will be extremely helpful in recruiting additional pro bono attorneys and educating the public regarding the need for legal aid."*

*"MLSA is currently incorporating the maps into grant applications, pro bono recruiting, and management decision-making."*

**Steve Gottleib, Atlanta Legal Aid Society (ALAS):**

*"This map illustrates a dramatic increase in poverty population in a couple of counties in GA, one of which is Gwinnett County. As I indicated, this turned out to be an opportunity for me to illustrate that Gwinnett County is not as rich as it thought it was and I was able to go to the County with the help of the map to indicate why we needed to open an office in that county and why we needed to get some county funding and we ended up getting \$50,000 from the court. Now, I don't want to claim that the map was the only thing that did it. The census numbers themselves were incredibly dramatic just looking at them but I think the map certainly helped because it really just highlighted it in a way probably fortuitous because you aren't going to get a situation like this very often but it happened so I took advantage of it."*

*"...the maps help illustrate something that you might already know in a lot of cases but it makes it more, you know... persuasive."*

*"...this helps illustrate that we in fact are doing work in the areas of highest concentration of Hispanic clients, and actually in fact poor Hispanic clients. This would be helpful for me to demonstrate to a funder that Hispanic outreach work has indeed targeted people who need to be targeted so I think it would be helpful."*

*"Some of these maps now that we have them like the county level percentage of Georgia persons in poverty or the 125% poverty population... those are going to be useful for probably the next ten years. Those are nice to have as reference points."*

**Phyllis Holmen, Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP):**

*"I think that's a basic analysis of service delivery. I think it reflects by and large that we are hitting the areas of concentrated poverty. This is the kind of map that would be sort of a touchstone map of what the program is doing and one would probably do it on an annual basis."*

*"Then we get into the whole series of regional maps and I think these are very helpful. They're good for management use and I think they're also potentially good for fundraising... they do reflect that we are getting out to the farthest distant counties we do have dots in every county. We are doing something in every county and so I'm going to share all of these maps with the respective regional offices."*