Project Narrative

1. Need for the project

Colorado Legal Services (CLS) has consistently made efforts to align its technology initiatives with its overall programmatic strategic planning efforts. Even with these efforts, given the fast-paced evolution of technology in general, it is challenging to fully understand and determine the best options for supporting existing efforts, and expanding and implementing new technologies to improve the program's efficiency and effectiveness.

The technology-related challenges experienced by the Colorado Legal Services (CLS) program as a whole include: how to maximize scarce financial resources to create the most efficient and effective technological environment for staff, volunteers, applicants, clients and community stakeholders; assistance in the identification of any critical technology-related procedures, processes or policies that should be developed and implemented; identification of the technology skills that staff and volunteers need to improve productivity and effectiveness; identification of methods to ensure that staff and volunteers are up-to-date on technology training and knowledge in general; and minimize duplicative efforts regarding the use of technology, not only internally as a program but with legal services community stakeholders, as well.

Currently the industry standard regarding technology support staff / user ratio is two full-time employees for every one hundred users. CLS currently has approximately one hundred and six full and part-time staff. CLS also has approximately twenty to thirty volunteers (not including PAI attorneys) working in CLS offices throughout the state, with the exception of summer months, when the number of volunteers is approximately forty people. CLS currently has three full-time staff in the Technology Unit (tech unit) supporting thirteen offices statewide.

CLS tech unit staff provide support to and maintain inventory of over one-hundred and ninety laptops, desktops and monitors (as well as keyboards and mice), forty-five printers (or AIOs, all-in-one printer/scanner/copiers) and other devices such as projectors, webcams, video cameras and mobile hotspots. CLS tech staff are responsible for technology hardware and software (including technology support), network infrastructure, maintenance and support of its case management software LegalServer (including building and running reports) and other software including VMWare, Office 365 applications, BestCase bankruptcy software and Abila accounting software, and procurement of services from vendors such as Internet and phone providers. CLS technology staff have access to a network consultant who assists in troubleshooting complex network and phone issues and who helps with program's strategic technology planning. CLS also has support from a phone vendor, as well as from a firewall vendor. CLS tech staff are also responsible for the creation and maintenance of CLS online offerings, including maintaining multiple websites (for example static, multimedia and online court form and letter preparation content) and social media accounts.

While three full-time technology-focused staff, and access to additional assistance of consultants when complex issues arise, might seem generous in comparison to the staff other legal services programs have allocated to technology development and support, the time required to ensure that daily operations run as smoothly as possible, that funders are provided required reports accurately and on time, to fix any issues that arise with equipment or within the network, and the additional day-to-day tasks of the unit provides little opportunity for technology staff to direct attention to the big picture, such as how well existing technology is supporting program operations, and how implementation of technologies in the future could further support the overall mission of CLS to provide high-quality civil legal assistance to as many of Colorado's low-income population as possible.

The guiding principles of the current CLS Strategic Plan include the following: meaningful access – it should be simple and effective for low-income people to make contact with CLS; single program – CLS, even with multiple offices statewide, should function as a single program or law firm, and will be seamless to applicants for services and clients, as well as to the general public; legal services – CLS will

provide an appropriate level of high-quality legal services to every person who seeks assistance; and high quality – all services provided should be of the highest quality.

Technology impacts each of these principles in the following ways: meaningful access – quality of phone equipment and services, access to the online application, ability to communicate with clients and applicants through email and through other technologies, and to communicate within the program regarding applications for services and actual legal work – all of these technologies impact the ease by which applicants, clients and stakeholders communicate with CLS; single program – because of technologies available to staff, including the shared drive, document management software, LegalServer, Brosix and other applications, the program has the ability to work internally as a single program, and to present as a "single entity" to applicants, clients and stakeholders statewide; legal services and high quality – providing efficiencies through use of technology impacts the quality of legal services available to applicants, clients, community partners and stakeholders.

In 2017, Colorado's Access to Justice community, with grant funding provided by Public Welfare Foundation and the National Center for State Courts, completed a statewide assessment of services available throughout Colorado with the goal of providing one hundred percent meaningful access to Colorado's population. CLS had a significant number of staff who participated in the Justice for All project which created the strategic plan to meet its' goals. Stakeholders then requested and received grant funding to implement the strategic recommendations set out in the plan.

In early 2016, two staff from the Legal Services Corporation conducted an engagement site visit to various CLS offices. While the visit was not specifically designed to assess effectiveness of CLS technologies, LSC staff informally provided suggestions on how to improve technologies used in CLS' Coordinated Statewide Intake system and in other ways as well. CLS reviewed and responded to the suggestions provided by LSC staff as a result of the Program Engagement Visit.

A technology assessment will provide CLS with a comprehensive view of the program's current technology and computing environment. It will provide a broad perspective on hardware and software available, staff technology skills, technology budgets, vendor relationships and commitments, technology procedures and policies, remote data access and more. This perspective and knowledge will help identify gaps in current technologies and determine whether any critical procedures or policies are missing or new initiatives are needed. It will identify the areas in which CLS could best spend technology training dollars, including identifying additional "hard" technology skills needed by CLS technology staff and/or specific skills needed from consultants. It will inform decisions including the possible need to change software, hardware, or systems currently being used to support the program's work. For example, CLS is considering moving additional services and technology to the cloud within the next few years. This assessment will help CLS determine whether such a move is wise and distill best practices were CLS to do so. This assessment will inform discussions of the risks and benefits of all options.

Efficiencies created by implementing any recommended improvements to technologies will have a positive effect on CLS staff, applicants for its services and program clients. Applications for services may be processed more quickly and accurately, and identification of services appropriate for a client's legal issues may be more quickly assessed and completed. Information and services available to applicants and clients online may be improved based on the recommendations implemented as a result of the assessment. This project may lead to an improvement of the programs' operations by providing recommendations for improvements in areas of technology identified by the assessment. For example, were recommendations to include improving or updating tech-related program policies and procedures, those policies and procedures could provide clearer direction for staff regarding the use of program technologies. Recommendations might involve improving existing security measures, thereby minimizing any program downtime, or time or consultant services needed to patch potential security gaps in the future. CLS might also validate its technologies as they are, such as, the use of LegalServer, and provide assurances that no improvements are needed in its use of specific technologies.

2. Detailed Description of the Project

CLS is requesting funding to complete a technology assessment of its overall use of technology. Technologies to be assessed include the following: network infrastructure, internet services and alternatives, software, hardware, data backups, security and privacy, online efforts to provide legal information and assistance, staff technological roles and responsibilities, staff technology training, technology carriers/vendors and contracts, technology policies and procedures, budgeting, remote data access, management of mobile devices and similar technology needs and concerns.

CLS will hire a consultant to conduct the technology assessment. The consultant will use tools such as surveys, interviews and technology devices to run check on the network such as determining whether any personal external hard drives or smart phones are connected to staff workstations. The consultant will assess staffing needs, will determine whether additional technology training is needed for staff, will check that software is up-to-date, will determine whether additional technologies should be implemented in the program to increase efficiencies, will provide recommendations on how to improve technologies available in the program and more. CLS will then hire a consultant to assist in prioritizing recommendations based on a result of the technology assessment, and who will also help with creating of an implementation plan. CLS staff will assist the consultant by providing information needed regarding CLS technologies in use, by creating survey tools and instruments for use by the consultant when needed and will assist with prioritizing recommendation and creation of the implementation plan.

3. Project Timeline and Activities

Project Timeline

August 2018
Project charter created. RFP created, proposals reviewed, vendor selected, project scope agreed on, Statement of Work from vendor accepted by CLS. Critical path identified, work breakdown structure created. Stakeholders identified, kickoff meeting.

September 2018
Meetings – vendor, staff, stakeholder; survey or other feedback instruments and instructions created; information supplied to vendor to assist with assessment; communications plan created.

October 2018
Meetings – vendor, staff, stakeholder; survey instruments distributed; information supplied to vendor to assist with assessment.

November 2018
Meetings – vendor, staff, stakeholder; survey results submitted and reviewed by project team; information supplied to vendor to assist with assessment. Implementation consultant recruited, interviewed and retained. assessment results provided to CLS and implementation consultant; recommendations prioritized and implementation plan reviewed and adopted.

December 2018
Meetings – vendor, staff, stakeholders; wrap up tasks associated with assessment completed by consultant and CLS project team; consultant to assist with developing an implementation plan as a result of the completed technology assessment is hired. Implementation team created, identification of potential funding sources for implementation projects completed, and final report submitted to LSC including CLS' technology implementation plan.

4. Project Deliverables

The grant's end product will be an assessment of the program's technology in the following areas: hardware and software available, staff technology skills, technology budgets, vendor relationships and

commitments, technology procedures and policies, remote data access and infrastructure, work station security and adoption of an implementation plan.

Tech Unit staff will meet with project stakeholders, including the consultant, to assist with prioritizing recommendations as a result of the technology assessment. Recommendations will be prioritized using the "Action Priority Matrix". This will help CLS prioritize work based on impact and effort (including human and financial resources available). The technology budget will be reviewed to analyze potential allocation of funds needed to implement high priority projects.

This project will lead to an improvement of the programs' operations by providing recommendations for technology upgrades needing additional resource allocation. For example, if recommendations include improving or updating policies and procedures, those policies and procedures will be prioritized and identified for review and updates by senior management, tech unit staff and Technology Committee members. The assessment will provide a clear direction for staff regarding use of technologies. Recommendations might involve improving existing security efforts, thereby minimizing the possibility of program downtime due to an outside "hacker" or other security breach, or a commitment to acquire any consultant services needed to quickly resolve potential security breaches in the future. CLS may also receive validation of the way in which technologies currently deployed are reliable as is, such as perhaps the current use of LegalServer, CLS' case management software, and possibly be assured that no improvements are needed in certain areas of technology currently in use in the program.

5. Program capacity and project staffing
The senior management team at CLS, including Jonathan Asher, Executive Director of Colorado Legal Services, Reenie Terjak, Director of Advocacy, and Molly Ryan, Director of Administration and Access, have been involved in the formulation of the goals and direction of this potential project. A consultant will be hired who has experience conducting technology assessments. Experience working with legal services organizations on technology assessments will be preferred. The consultant, who will help with prioritizing implementation of recommendations as a result of the technology assessment, will be screened and considered a top candidate if they have favorable references and also have demonstrated experience working on technology projects in a legal services environment.

Molly French, CLS' Technology Manager, will be the project manager and will work closely with the consultant or consultant team. She will help gather any information the consultant needs to conduct the assessment. She will assist in creating any survey instruments for staff that would be beneficial for CLS to create and distribute (instead of the consultant). She will lead project meetings and assist with prioritizing implementation recommendations and creating the implementation plan. Ms. French will have trained Technology Unit staff on additional technology support functions, specifically phone system and network support, in order that time required to accomplish technology assessment project objectives will be achievable. Ms. French, has supervised, overseen and completed work on eleven CLS TIG-funded projects and has worked for CLS for sixteen years. She received her Project Management Certification (PMP) from the PMI Institute in October of 2017. Ms. French and CLS are very familiar with the TIG system and fully understand the support and commitment needed to ensure the project's success.

Makiko Suzuki, CLS' Technology Assistant, has worked for CLS for almost five years. Ms. Suzuki was involved in developing and launching COLS LegalServer in July 2016 and developed the CLS online intake application in LegalServer. She will assist in gathering information needed in order for the consultant to provide a thorough assessment of CLS' technologies. Time allocated to this project will be available to her as a result of assigning some of her current technology support responsibilities to Bentley Taylor, IT Administrator

Bentley Taylor, IT Administrator, has worked at CLS for over twenty-five years. Mr. Taylor will assist with gathering information needed from offices outside of Denver in order for an effective technology assessment to be conducted. Time will be made available to Mr. Taylor as CLS is planning to move its

data to one location which will free up Mr. Taylor's time as currently he manually pulls backup data daily from outlying offices. CLS will both be moving data to one location for backup as well as storing additional data in the cloud for redundancy.

6. Implementation of the Recommendations
CLS is committed to implementing any recommendations that result from the assessment. Tech Unit staff will meet with additional staff such as Technology Committee members and technology "point" persons from each CLS office and Specialty Units to prioritize recommendations. Recommendations will be prioritized using the "Action Priority Matrix". This will help CLS prioritize work based on impact and effort (including human and financial resources available). The matrix uses four quadrants in which to plot activities. "Quick Wins" are high impact, low effort. Technology Unit staff will accomplish these tasks with assistance from staff and volunteers. "Major Projects" category (high impact, high effort) recommendations will be prioritized by budget and time available to complete projects having the highest impact on overall strategic goals. Reasonable timelines will be established for implementation of these "high impact, high effort" initiatives. "Fill Ins", or low impact, low effort tasks will be addressed "as time is available" by tech unit staff. The technology budget will be reviewed to ensure allocation of funds needed to implement high priority projects.

Additional potential funding sources include: 1 - the Colorado Bar Foundation provides up to $5,000 annually to organizations working towards providing one-hundred percent access to justice to Coloradans. CLS will determine whether applying for this funding is appropriate. 2 – Ms. French, Technology Manager at CLS, will meet with the Director of the Legal Aid Foundation, Diana Poole, as well as with the Executive Director of CLS, Jon Asher, to determine whether existing funds, funds from potential donors or targeted funds could be earmarked to complete high priority recommendations provided as a result of the assessment, 3 – CLS will finish the project in time for the opening of the 2019 TIG funding cycle and will consider approaching the LSC TIG team to request additional funding for possible implementation efforts. CLS will weigh all options when considering funding for implementation of recommendations received through this assessment. Because of this project, CLS will have information to more effectively allocate technology resources throughout the program.