COVID-19 Resources

This page will be updated as more resources are identified. Last updated 12-9-20.

SRLN COVID Response Memos

Note: these memos are also available through our [Newsfeed](#), which includes many profiles of programs, innovations, and strategies that could be of value as you re-tool your services. SRLN has long championed remote services, so many examples include an aspect of remote. The memos listed below are generated from the discussions during the twice weekly COVID Problem Solving Calls, which are held Tuesdays at 4 pm eastern, and Thursdays at Noon eastern.

These calls are open to justice system professionals. Here is a [link to the outlines and notes](#). Please [sign-up for SRLN](#) if you would like to join.

Memos

- [Federal Funding Streams That Could Support Expanded Self-Help Services and Bolster Court COVID-19 Responses (News 2020)](#)
- [Reaching SRLs During COVID: Outreach Campaigns Leverage Social Media, Ad Spots, and Traditional Print to Ensure SRLs Know Self-Help Support Is Still Available (News 2020)](#)
- [SRLN COVID-19 Best Practice Tip: Produce Plain Language and Accessible Court Administrative Orders (News 2020)](#)
- [SRLN COVID-19 Brief: Managing Document Notarization Requirements During COVID (News 2020)](#)
- [SRLN COVID-19 Best Practice Tip: Joining Existing Disaster Response Network Ensures Legal Service Integration and Resilience (News Story)](#)

Remote Service Delivery

[The Resource Guide on Serving Self-Represented Litigants Remotely (SRLN 2016)](#) provides options for courts and other entities interested in providing services to self-represented litigants using means that are not face-to-face, instead of, or in addition to, in-person alternatives such as walk-in services, workshops, and clinics. It also includes information regarding technology and business process options and describes a study of how eight sites provide remote self-help services to self-represented litigants and its principal findings and recommendations.

[The Remote Appearances of Parties, Attorneys and Witnesses, A Review of Current Court Rules and Practices](#) (SRLN 2017) report is a follow up report to Serving Self-Represented Litigants Remotely – A Resource Guide. It "presents the author's conclusions about the current state of remote appearances in the United States based on his review of existing state statutes and federal, state and local court rules on the topic and discussions with knowledgeable persons throughout the country." The review's analysis includes benefits and disadvantages to appearing in court remotely, presumptive norms for court appearances, types of cases and proceedings in which remote appearances are permitted, necessary permissions, and technology standards and options.

[Eighteen Ways Courts Should Use Technology (IAALS 2018)](#) provides a path forward to help courts use existing technologies to improve the user experience, particularly for those people who choose to represent themselves.

Remote Legal Support Guide: A Best Practices Manual for Nonprofit and Pro Bono Innovation (2020) is a collaborative text by more than 10 organizations, to pool expert resources and experience. It features our national survey results, as well as successful Remote Legal Support programs and their program logistics, processes, challenges, tools, checklists, sample documents, and best practices. Complete with an interactive appendix, this manual will help organizations learn about and explore opportunities to build their own remote legal support projects.

Remote Court Appearances in the COVID-19 Era: Protecting Consumers in Collection Lawsuits (June 2020) is a two page issue brief that considers what steps courts should take to protect consumers before holding remote hearings in debt collection cases. Studies show that between 91% to 99% of consumers in debt collection cases are unrepresented so this brief focuses on protecting people who do not have an attorney. This report was published by the National Consumer Law Center.

Experienced Remote Court Self-Help Centers

The following state courts have been running remote self-help centers for many years. They have developed tested resources and expertise in providing remote services that are integrated into the court operations. In other jurisdictions, remote services may have been available on a county-by-county level for many years. For instance, in California 22 counties are currently working to expand remote services for court self-help through the SHARP Tech Connect Project. The list below is not intended to be exhaustive but rather focuses on tested statewide court based models.

Alaska Family Law Self-Help Center

Maryland Courts Self-Help Center

Minnesota Courts Self-Help Center

Montana Court Help Program

Utah Courts Self-Help Center

Best Practices in Legal Hotlines

Helping people over the telephone will be a core element of any successful plan in this crisis - this is especially true because the changing landscape means that people are not asking "the regular questions" and therefore, pre-existing materials outlining procedures and FAQs are likely to be incorrect. Running a successful hotline is both an art and a science. The good news is that well developed resources and experienced people are available in every state.

Legalhotlines.org is sponsored by the Center for Elder Rights Advocacy (CERA), a project of Elder Law of Michigan, with a grant from the United States Administration on Aging. CERA's mission is to provide technical assistance to legal hotline managers, developers, and other stakeholders for non-profit legal programs that provide telephone legal advice. The legalhotlines.org website maintains a library of materials on setting up and running a non-profit legal hotline.

Mobile Technology

SRLN Brief: Tools for Mobile Engagement with Customers, Clients, Colleagues and Partners (SRLN 2015)*

Remote Clinics

California Uses Video Conferencing to Extend Reach of Self-Help Center Across Three Rural Counties (News 2015)

Remote Pro Bono Delivery

Individual Appointments by Phone

Remote scheduling tools are used to make telephonic pro bono consultation appointments. For instance, the Utah Court Self-Help Center is using Calendy for SRLs to make appointments with volunteer lawyer, and the LA County Law Library is using a webform available from its homepage.

Remote Clinics

Pro Bono attorneys can also use the [California Court Self-Help Video Conferencing](#) model to provide clinic like help to multiple people in multipe locations.

Hotlines

Pro Bono attorneys can also volunteer on subject matter hotlines such as a [DV Legal Information and Referral Hotline](#) (please note these types of hotlines are state specific - this link is provided for illustration only).

Recorded Webinars of Interest

NCSC Recorded Webinars and other updates: [NCSC Corona Virus Newsroom](#)

LSNTAP offers a broad range of trainings and webinars about technology, with a special focus in current programming on issues such as supporting remote services. [Visit the LSNTAP webpage for more details.](#)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, the New York State IOLA Fund and NYSTech, have set-up weekly free webinars to support the New York State legal services community on topics relating to remote working, security and the delivery of legal services. [New York Access to Justice Commission Webinar Series on Remote](#)

Karen Lash of the Justice in Government Project recently discussed federal block/formula/open-ended reimbursement funding opportunities that are available to state and local courts navigating COVID-19, with a focus on civil self-help, technology innovation, and domestic violence. [Watch the National Center for State Courts Tiny Chat on federal pass-through funding](#).

[The National Center for State Courts "Tiny Chat" series](#) launched in response to COVID-19.

Namati Webinar: [Justice During the Pandemic](#)

Villanova & Namati: [Legal Empowerment, Covid-19 & Expanding Access to Justice w/Technology](#)

Best Practices in E-Filing

Principles and Best Practices For Access-Friendly Court Electronic Filing (SRLN & LSC 2013) This document, the preparation of which was funded by the Legal Services Corporation through a grant to Central Minnesota Legal Services, was developed in close collaboration with SRLN. It explores a variety of principles and practices in areas from fee waiver to training, and from front end design to management.

Court Plans to Re-Open

Michigan has published a [Toolkit for Returning to Full Capacity](#), [specific resources for SRLs](#) and [guidance for courts](#) on how to work with SRLs (see FAQ #1).

Duke Law's Bolch Judicial Institute has published [COVID-19 and the courts: A resource guide for judges](#), wherein you can find resources, guides, and examples of approaches to converting to virtual operations.

Model Emergency Eviction Prevention from our International Colleagues

On December 8, 2020, the Open Society Foundations joined The Shift, the Centre for Housing Law, Rights and Policy NUIG, CAN and a coalition of human rights groups in unveiling [comprehensive model emergency legislation](#) to protect the right to housing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis and an accompanying [briefing paper](#).

[Round-Up of COVID Pages from Partners](#)

[SRLN Self-Care Page](#)

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Topics

[100% Access to Justice](#) [Self-Help Centers](#) [Libraries](#)

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