Section 1 – Top Maps

Organization: Montana Legal Services Association

Please rank your top 10 most useful maps, the intended audience and why you like them.

Rank	Map Number	Audience & Reason
1	DST-21	Internal and external audiences. The map personalizes poverty and is extremely useful for educating the public
2	CSP-8	Internal and external audiences. The map personalizes the case work and gives an accurate picture of where cases are being closed.
3	DST-7	Internal and external audiences. The map provides a clear picture of areas where poverty exists.
4	AGT-10	Internal and external audiences. The map quickly shows where services are and are not available.
5	AGP-27	Internal and external audiences. This map helps to compare where poverty exists and where MLSA is closing cases.
6	CGZ-S1	Mostly external audiences. This will be especially helpful in encouraging pro bono activities through out the state.
7	ALG-28-A	Mostly internal audiences. The map depicts areas for outreach.
8	ALT-28-B	Mostly internal audiences. The map depicts areas for outreach.
9	ALT-11-B	Internal and external audiences. The map illustrates travel distances in Montana, which will be potentially useful for including in grant applications.
10	DST-51	Internal audiences. This map is helpful in making resource allocation decisions. It also highlights circumstance changes vividly.

SECTION 2 – Overall Project Evaluation

Please be as descriptive as possible when answering the following questions:

1. **Before the mapping project, how well were you able to identify, analyze, and effectively communicate the concentrations of low-income persons and legal services provided across your service area, and the relationship between the two? What differences are the maps making in these areas? Please identify any direct areas of improvement.**

   Prior to the mapping project, MLSA's information about concentrations of low-income persons and service delivery was taken from public maps, case management system reports, and anecdotal evidence provided by staff members and partner organizations. The mapping project combined the available data into one tool that effectively illustrates the current situation of legal services in Montana. Creation of the maps through the GIS software take significantly less time than if a staff members creates a similar map using image editing software and produces a more professional result.

2. **Is having management information displayed visually in a map layout or as a graphic, as compared to a table, helpful to your management team? If yes, how? And, in what circumstances have you used the maps to explain your organization or an issue?**

   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.

3. **How useful are these maps in identifying access to legal services and targeting areas for increased focus?**

   The maps are useful in identifying access to legal services and targeting areas for increased focus. The maps help to confirm anecdotal evidence.

4. **Would having these maps generated on an annual recurring schedule be of value to you, your program, and state or regional planning process? Which maps do you think would be most helpful in such a process?**

   As changes occur, it would be valuable to have the maps generated on an annual schedule to determine the negative and positive impact of the changes.

5. **Do you think that the information provided in the maps might lead to new or improved management decisions, actions or relations (i.e., access to legal services, statewide or regional planning, locating emerging income-eligible populations, office locations and/or comparisons, resource or service deployments, improved program support, stakeholder awareness, priority setting, identifying trends or partner relationships and fundraising)? Are there any anecdotes that might be helpful in understanding the impact of the maps?**

   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.

   Since the maps have only been in use for three months, evidence of improved processes and management decisions are limited. The maps were used to educate the statewide planning stakeholders about the difference

between the number of low-income Montanans that exist (DST-21) and the number receiving services from MLSA (CSP-8). The visual comparison elicited an audible reaction of surprise from the audience.

6. **Do you have any estimates of money saved, resources raised, new program started or extended increasing access to legal services, or other metrics that would be useful in assessing the value of the project and the information it provides?**

   Not yet. MLSA is currently incorporating the maps into grant applications, pro bono recruiting, and management decision-making.

7. **Do you have any observations about the strengths and weaknesses of legal services mapping?**

   Legal services mapping is a nice tool to do before a public education campaign. While numbers typically are skipped, most people are interested in looking at maps.

   Since mapping is a new tool, management needs education in order to effectively use mapping for decision-making and public education.

8. **Do you have any concerns about the accuracy of how these maps represent management information, or about the implications of this representation?**

   The maps display information well, but depending on management's knowledge of the underlying data and map structure, that information can be interpreted negatively or positively. An excellent example is MT01-CGZ-52. The map is misleading because it initially looks like a significant portion of Montana is receiving direct representation; however, many lengthy pro se assistance cases are closed as K and counted in this map. Additionally, in certain rural areas, only one case may have been closed in a census tract that covers a large area, skewing what the map is intended to represent.

   Also, it is important to remember that maps don't explain the entire situation. Legal aid programs are in constant change as they reallocate resources in response to funding changes and the needs of client populations. A set of maps that represent a year of data may misrepresent what is actually happening.

9. **What lessons have you learned over the life of the project?**

   - Overlays are difficult to use unless they are being distributed on transparencies.

   - National parks, national wildernesses, and other large unpopulated areas should be mapped.

   - In areas with many small bodies of water, blue dots are difficult to distinguish from water.

   - Information about migrant populations is awkward to display.

10. **Are there additional maps you would find more useful, other ways of analyzing data that would be more useful or changes in the process that was used that you would recommend?**

    No.

11. **Are you interested in adopting mapping as an ongoing management support tool? What are the next steps to adoption? What roles could LSC play in that adoption?**

    MLSA is investigating the feasibility of adopting mapping as an ongoing management support tool. The next step is to complete the software grant application.

It would be helpful if LSC was able to partner with ESRI and streamline the software grant application process. A design similar to the process of receiving HotDocs licenses would be extremely helpful. Additionally, exploring cost-effective and straightforward methods for geocoding addresses would greatly simplify the process of adopting mapping at MLSA.

12. Are there any other observations about the maps or the project you would like to share?

David Maddox and Ed Jurkevics were very helpful throughout the process.