

**Session I:
Introduction to Basic Lawyering Skills Training**

- 1) **SESSION NUMBER** Session I
- 2) **SESSION NAME** Introduction
- 3) **GROUP SIZE** Large Group
- 4) **TOTAL TIME** 55 minutes
- 5) **TIMELINE**
 - a. **Welcome/Overview/Logistics/Introductions**..... 15 minutes
 - b. **Vision, Mission and History of Legal Aid**..... 25 minutes
 - c. **An advocates story: what brings us to legal aid and why we stay**..... 10 minutes
 - d. **Division of Participants into Small Groups**..... 5 minutes
- 6) **OVERVIEW**
 - a) In a large group, the lead trainer or conference coordinator welcomes participants and introduces them to the general themes and goals of BLST, the BLST training team, and important logistical information. Through an interactive presentation, participants will explore the history, vision and mission of legal service – historically and in their own communities. This can incorporate a short clip from the American Experience Sargent Shriver bio about the creation of legal services. Then a training team member or another speaker will present a personal reflection, modeling what participants are expected to do in the small group session immediately following, explaining what brought them to legal services practice, why they have stayed, the benefits and burdens involved and their hopes for their careers.
- 7) **TRAINING OBJECTIVES**
 - a) Drawing from large group session, participants will be able to:
 - i) Describe the goals and objectives of BLST
 - ii) Become familiar with the training team, materials, schedule, logistics, and other housekeeping matters
 - iii) Be able to describe the origins and history of the legal aid movement nationally and in their own state and identify several different visions of how legal aid practice can be organized to maximize its benefit to client

- iv) Be able to tell their own story of their reasons for joining legal aid and their hopes in pursuing a legal aid career after seeing a personal story modeled during the session

8) DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

a) **Welcome/Overview/Logistics/Introductions**..... 15 minutes

- i) Conference coordinator/lead trainer welcomes participants and describes the goals of BLST, reviews schedule, logistics and materials and introduces trainers.

- ii) The goals of BLST are:

- (a) To introduce “new” lawyers to the underlying values of legal services practice including client empowerment, equal justice, access to justice, high quality representation, valuing diversity, building an effective work environment and multi-forum advocacy.

- (b) To provide “new” lawyers with the opportunity to practice a limited number of advocacy skills including interviewing, case planning, oral advocacy, negotiation and trial skills.

- iii) Schedule –Prior to the presentation the lead trainer should create a flip chart with the training agenda as shown on the agenda included at the front of this manual. Review the schedule with the participants.

- iv) Logistics – describe to the participants

- (a) The room layout for small and large group session rooms

- (b) The locations of bathrooms

- (c) Where break foods can be found

- (d) Where meals are served, and

- (e) Any other logistical issues peculiar to the site

- v) Materials – make sure everyone has their participant manual and point out that each session of the training has a tabbed section in their manual. Also point out that in addition to materials that will be reviewed during the training the manuals include significant additional resource materials, bibliographies and other materials that we hope the participants will review either while on site or when they get back home.

- vi) Have members of the training team each briefly introduce themselves. Their introductions should include:
 - (a) Their name and the program where they work
 - (b) A bit about their own work, their legal services work history and experience
 - (c) A very short reflection about why they decided to make legal services a career

- vii) The lead trainer should then provide the participants an introduction to each other by summarizing information learned about the participants from the pre-training survey – i.e. your average amount of experience is ____, ____ of you are generalists, ____ practice in these areas, etc.

- b) **Vision, Mission and History of Legal Aid**..... 15 minutes
 - i) Using the Seminal Visions of Legal Aid materials, the Alan Houseman history and the legal services portion of the Sargent Shriver video biography as a framework, one presenter will offer a general overview of the history of the modern legal aid movement focusing on the important legal advances that legal aid advocacy have achieved over the years, describe the different advocacy approaches that have found favor over the years and focus on the current period as one of great opportunity for change, reinvention and renewal as the original leadership ages out and a new group of leaders will carry the mission forward, including those advocates joining legal aid today.
 - (a) Show the short legal aid segment of the Shriver Biography video to show the origins of legal services
 - (b) reflect briefly on the history since that time as represented in the Houseman article
 - (c) Canvas some of the fundamental achievements of legal aid advocacy from the Houseman article (procedural due process, warranty of habitability, objective standards for access to public benefits, development of 1983 as a vehicle for civil rights claims, etc.)
 - (d) Present briefly the diverse visions represented in the materials of how legal aid programs can maximize their effectiveness as social change vehicles
 - (e) Brainstorm what is lacking and what alternatives the participants would hope to put on the table

- ii) In a delivery involving a particular geography or individual program, this general presentation should be followed with one that recounts the local history, emphasizes local accomplishments, describes the way legal aid is structured locally today and describes the vision and mission of the local community as currently established, with a particular expression of hope that the training participants will contribute actively to advancing the mission and changing and adapting the mission and an expression of commitment to give them the opportunity to do so

c) **An Advocates Story**..... 10 minutes

One advocate – a good choice would be a diverse mid-level advocate with about 5 years of experience, should be recruited to tell the type of story that participants will be asked to share in the next small group session. The elements of this story should include:

- What in their experience caused them to see legal aid as an appropriate career path and what was their path leading up to their current legal aid position
- What about their legal aid experience had motivated them to stay and continue their legal practice in the legal aid community
- What are some of the challenges they have faced and how have they overcome them
- What has surprised them and what are a few things they would hope to change about the culture and practice of legal aid
- What personal benefits have they gotten psychically and otherwise from their time in legal aid

d) **Division of Participants into Groups** 5 minutes

Conference coordinator/lead trainer explains logistical details about training, including information relevant to the conference center, if applicable. S/he then reads off or posts small group lists, explains rationale for groupings (diversity according to sex, race, geography, and type of practice, etc.) and directs groups to breakout rooms.

9) MATERIALS

- Houseman Article on Legal Aid History
- American Experience Shriver Video

- Seminal Visions of Legal Aid
- Visions Parsed
- Potentially materials about local program and history

10) STAFF REQUIREMENTS

Conference coordinator/lead trainer and “presenters” as described above

11) SPACE/EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES/ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

- a) Large group seating in theater style. Flip charts, easel, marker, tape and/or prepared large-size lists of groups.
- b) Computer with DVD player or CD Rom drive, LCD projector, screen.

12) TRAINER PREPARATION

- a) Conference coordinator/lead trainer should check that the majority of participants are present, trainers are assembled, and materials and small rooms for following session are in order.
- b) Each presenter should have a prepared presentation (i.e., s/he has already outlined, written up, and practiced it before a “live” audience). PowerPoint materials that reinforce the presentation are useful and should be prepared if possible.