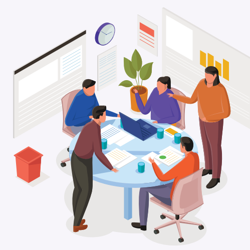
A2J TECH

MEETING THE LSC TECHNOLOGY BASELINES

This guide simplifies LSC's Technology Baselines, making best practices easy to understand while helping legal aids deliver high-quality services and advance access to justice through the use of technology.

Chapter 1 – Overall Program Capacity



To harness technology's full potential in legal services organizations, it is crucial to take a forward-thinking approach, which includes creating a dedicated IT team, budgeting for tech tools, and ensuring staff members are proficient in the latest technology. This proactive stance in your strategic plans and budgets ensures readiness for future advancements.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Set up a team or committee focused on technology needs and updates.

2. Dedicate a part of your budget specifically for technology, including future updates and security.

3. Ensure you have tech-savvy individuals in leadership roles.

4. Organize technology awareness and training sessions for all staff members.

5. Have a technology expert or consultant review your systems and plans every few years.

6. For every 40-60 workers, a company should have one IT person.

Chapter 2 – Sustainability

Introducing new technology is similar to embarking on a journey; it involves not only the initial preparations but also the ongoing strategies to ensure a seamless experience. Much like staying informed about the latest travel updates, it's beneficial to stay attuned to the most recent advancements in technology.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Plan for the long-term costs of any new technology project, including its upkeep.

2. Assign specific individuals or roles responsible for technology maintenance.

3. Before fully integrating new technology, test it on a smaller scale to ensure it suits your needs.

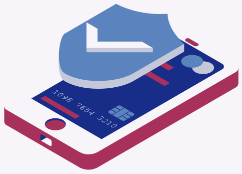
4. Educate your team about the importance and use of new technologies you'll be using.

5. Stay informed about new technological trends and how they might affect your services.

Suggested Tools:

- A2J Tech Blog Posts

Chapter 3 – Security



It's essential to protect private details — not just for clients and legal compliance, but also for the organizations' reputations. Setting up strong safety measures helps keep out unwanted access, guards against data leaks, and makes sure things run smoothly even when challenges come up.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Choose strong passwords and change them periodically using a password manager. A strong password should be at least 12 characters long with a mix of strong character types like uppercase letters (A-Z), lowercase letters (a-z), numbers (0-9), and special characters (such as !, @, #, $, %, etc.).

2. Create policies about how staff use the company's computer network, both in the office and from home. This helps keep the company's information safe. It's up to each company to decide the best rules for them.
    a. Review Section 3.1 B for a list of what you should cover in your policy.
    b. Check out the LSNTAP's Safety Guide for more information

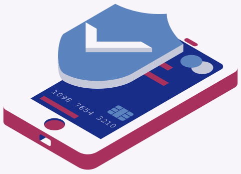
3. Offer annual training sessions on the best practices for online safety.

4. Always have a backup of important data and a Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) to follow if computer systems crash or important information is lost.

5. When a security issue arises, have an Incident Response Plan (IRP) that quickly explains who does what, how to report it, and how to communicate about it.

6. Create a step-by-step plan outlining what to do if there's a breach in security.

Chapter 3 – Security



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How to achieve this baseline:

7. Install Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) technologies to shield your devices from viruses, malware, and other harmful threats.

8. Use email filters and security tools to guard against phishing scams, malware, and other email-based threats.

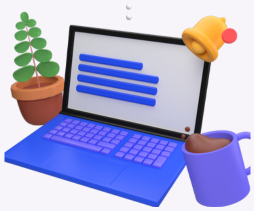
9. Implement a multi-step verification process, such as receiving a code on a mobile device, when accessing sensitive data.

10. Talk to a trusted insurance agent about cyber insurance and check to see if your coverage is enough for the data you hold and your security measures.

11. Create rules for using personal and company-owned devices like laptops and phones to keep data safe.

12. Set rules for staff on using official and personal cloud services, know the terms and security of using cloud platforms, and regularly check cloud backup policies, considering extra backups if needed.

Chapter 4 – Remote & Hybrid Work



In today's digital landscape, remote and hybrid work setups are commonplace, requiring your organization to establish guidelines and employ the right technology tools for success.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Make clear policies about who can work from where and when.

2. List out the technology tools everyone should use when working away from the office.

3. Choose a few people as go-to contacts if someone has technology challenges.

4. Decide on common work hours, even when people are in different places.

Chapter 5 – Management of Client and Case Data

Efficiently managing client and case details is essential for any reputable legal services organization. This involves using secure and user-friendly systems to organize cases. A Case Management System (CMS), often referred to as 'legal case software,' serves as a robust tool designed to help streamline and monitor critical client and case information. Meanwhile, a Document Management System (DMS) functions as a digital filing cabinet, simplifying the organization and retrieval of crucial documents and files.

How to achieve this baseline:

Find a Case Management System that allows you to do the following:

1. Users and administrators should be using at least two methods like a password and a code from a phone (also known as multi-factor authentication) before getting into the system.

2. Safely store, regularly back up, and transfer data.

3. Securely manage cases and access data from anywhere.

4. Input and view data to fit your organization's needs, including how information systems look and how it performs conflict checks.

5. Pull out data whenever required, and export it in various formats.

Chapter 5 – Management of Client and Case Data

Continued

How to achieve this baseline:

6. Generate reports and client data for planning, reporting, evaluating your programs.

7. Capacity to connect the Case Management System to other programs for improved reporting, data analysis, and other features.

8. Input and edit data as events happen, including for tracking hours worked.

9. Automatic checks for human error to make sure your data is correct and consistent

10. Ensure each case or activity is linked to the correct funding source.

Find a Document Management System that allows you to do the following:

1. Look for a system that integrates with your case management system and not only keeps everything organized, but helps you maintain that level of organization.

2. Keep all documents in one main place.

3. Decide how different kinds of files should be stored specific to your organization's needs.

Chapter 6 – Production and Supervision of Legal Work

Leveraging technological tools like Case Management Systems, Document Management Systems, and Document Automation Platforms empowers organizations to maintain effectiveness and efficiency in their legal operations. These tools, when combined with proper oversight, enhance the organization's ability to achieve successful case outcomes.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Take down case notes electronically.

2. Store, see, and change case and client info anytime.

3. Gather documents in one place to reduce duplication of effort and resources.

4. Make sure you can access your databases and files from anywhere.

5. Use a Case Management System to increase efficiency in handling new cases and managing ongoing ones.
    - This includes directing phone calls, sorting online case submissions, sharing information safely with your partner tools, and ensuring compatibility with electronic filing systems.

Chapter 6 – Production and Supervision of Legal Work

Continued

How to achieve this baseline:

7. Give management access to case lists and other important materials they need to oversee in the workspace.

8. Management should have editing access to keep track of changes.

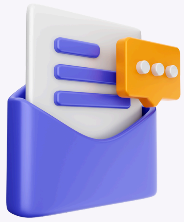
9. Log your hours electronically, with integrations into your payroll system.

10. Provide electronic methods for organizing discovery, including tagging and Bates stamping capabilities.

11. Make sure every legal expert has the latest online research tools and knows how to use them best.

12. Regularly train staff in the use of automated documents, collaborative tools, and new tech updates to ensure consistency and quality in their legal work.

Chapter 7 – Electronic Records Management



Legal services organizations are advised to maintain an orderly and secure system for their electronic documents, including emails and recorded conversations. This entails implementing a system that ensures specific access rights and provides clear guidelines on where and how to store different types of records.

How to achieve this baseline:

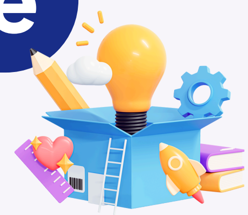
1. Properly file all electronic records, including data files, case-related documents, emails, instant messages, and recorded conversations.

2. Have strict policies on who has access to electronic files including specific actions like view, edit, or move based on the user's role.

3. For LSC grantees, make sure your records management adheres to LSC requirements, maintaining client confidentiality and facilitating LSC reviews.

4. Keep all relevant electronic records, including data from various systems, case docs, emails, instant messages, and phone recordings accessible to necessary parties, with policies in place to ensure proper record deletion at appropriate intervals.

Chapter 8 – Knowledge Management



To enhance knowledge sharing and streamline access to vital legal information, organizations can utilize Knowledge Management Systems. These systems facilitate the capture, organization, retrieval, and sharing of knowledge, ultimately improving decision-making and productivity within your legal services organization.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Use a system that easily stores and retrieves essential documents like pleadings, briefs, and motions based on content.

2. Equip staff with tools to find, browse, and delete documents effectively, using platforms such as document management systems, internal wikis, or shared folders.

3. Make sure electronic access to highly important internal forms, procedures, and practice guides, are all centralized in one area.

4. Introduce a universally searchable contact system to manage a wide array of contacts, from pro bono attorneys to adverse counsel.

Chapter 9 – Intake and Telephonic Advice

It is vital for legal services organizations to have functional phone and online intake systems, since these systems are often the first point of contact for many people seeking legal help. Using the right technology ensures that everyone gets timely and proper assistance.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Launch a unified phone system, taking into account locations with weak signals.

2. Track the number of calls coming in, including times with high caller volume.

3. Implement call routing based on factors like language and subject matter to facilitate matching callers with their needed resources accurately.

4. Add in tools like Teletypewriter (TTY), Video Relay, and Video Remote Interpreting. This ensures everyone, including those with speaking or hearing challenges, can connect easily.

5. Maintain an electronic manual that's central, easy to search, and updated. This will serve as a reliable guide for intake staff.

6. Along with telephonic methods, offer a way for people to reach out online. It widens your reach and could help reduce phone traffic.

Chapter 10 – Legal Information for Low-Income Persons

Legal services organizations provide accessible, current, and reliable legal information to the communities they serve. This means not only having up-to-date online resources, but also making sure resources are accessible to all, regardless of their technology fluency or the devices they use.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Develop a collaborative statewide website that offers up-to-date details about legal services, self-help materials, and referral resources, all presented in easy-to-understand language.

2. Every legal services organization should have a clear, compelling online presence detailing the following: the services they offer; clear paths for online intake; triage systems; contact details; and application procedures.

3. All websites and online resources are designed to be mobile-responsive, especially for users who predominantly access information via smartphones or tablets.

4. Provide technological tools (such as video-conferencing capabilities, laptops, tablets, and mobile hotspots) for clients who need them, especially those in rural populations that may not have regular access to these technologies.

5. Enhance community legal education by effectively using online conferencing tools and educational videos to reach a broader audience.

Chapter 10 – Legal Information for Low-Income Persons

Continued

How to achieve this baseline:

6. Plan for the lifecycle of any tech hardware used in service delivery, such as self-service kiosks. This includes maintenance, timely updates, replacements, and safe disposal or destruction.

7. Practice deleting any unprotected user data and put policies in place to prevent unauthorized access or software installations.

8. All online platforms and resources comply with accessibility standards like Section 508/WCAG, ensuring accessibility to the widest possible audience, including those with limited English proficiency.

9. Use current technological features to send timely reminders or alerts to clients about important dates, deadlines, or updates.

Chapter 11 – Support for the Use of Private Attorneys

To effectively collaborate with private lawyers, organizations need solid technological systems and methods in place. This not only boosts the quality of your legal services but also makes the experience smoother for volunteer attorneys.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Create a dedicated section on your organization's website and/or statewide website where pro bono and private attorneys and other case handlers can review available cases, register interest, and access essential training materials and training opportunities.

2. Use a management system that tracks referred cases, monitors time spent, ensures timely case resolution, and records a volunteer's interaction history, from case handling to financial contributions.

3. Develop a protocol for secure electronic sharing of case and client data with volunteers, ensuring the confidentiality of sensitive information while enabling effective volunteer work on cases.

4. Make sure to provide private attorneys with access to necessary automated documents, pleadings, and brief banks for pro bono representation.

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Chapter 12 – Training

As technology continues to change, legal services organizations should also assess and update their processes with the latest tools. Regular training sessions can make a huge difference, ensuring everyone in your organization is on the same page and using technology to its full potential.

How to achieve this baseline:

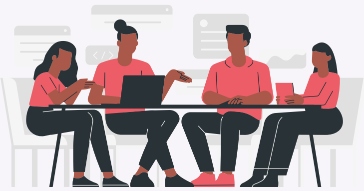
1. Periodically conduct technology surveys with staff to pinpoint training needs and the relevance of training content.

2. Include technology training, encompassing systems, software, and security best practices, as a vital component of the employee orientation process to ensure that new hires meet the latest technology standards.

3. Offer staff on-demand training resources like webinars, podcasts, and online packages for continuous skill and knowledge enhancement, utilizing diverse training platforms, including webinars, online meetings, and hands-on sessions, to ensure accessibility and flexibility.

4. Your IT team and staff need to be on the same page with the organization's technology policies and the ABA's ethical standards on technology.

Chapter 13 – Communication and Collaboration



Effective communication and teamwork are essential for the smooth operation of legal services organizations. This involves seamless collaboration among teams, maintaining consistent access to information, and keeping communication lines open.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Streamline collaboration by setting organization-wide standards and developing policies for the correct usage of electronic communication tools.

2. Avoid over-reliance on emails for team tasks, particularly when real-time collaboration could be more effective; instead, categorize emails based on their topic or purpose.

3. Use tools like cloud-based platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Google Workspace), blogs, wikis, and web conferencing for communication needs.

4. Encourage the use of document links instead of attachments. This ensures all team members access the latest version, improving consistency and efficiency.

5. Regularly train staff on optimal use of collaboration tools and stay updated on the latest technologies.

Chapter 14 – Administration

Running a legal services organization requires effective communication and a secure HR infrastructure. It also entails transparent accounting practices and an adaptable grants system capable of efficiently managing various grant types.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Make sure there is a streamlined system for internal communication, utilizing channels like emails, blogs, or web conferencing.

2. Implement a ticketing or helpdesk system to efficiently track and manage tech issues and user support queries.

3. Use a cloud-based Human Resources Information System (HRIS) capable of managing payroll, timekeeping, benefits administration, and maintaining confidentiality.
   - Make sure to have multi-factor authentication or related security measures like single sign-on to protect sensitive information and system access.

4. Use a cloud-based accounting system that manages everything from the general ledger and payables to the segregation of funds and client trust accounts. The accounting system should provide detailed financial reporting that adheres to all standard requirements.

5. Implement a grants system that can sync with a Case Management System, to make tracking easier for specific grants.

6. Systems should capture all grant-related details, from applications and proposals to requirements, payments, and activities.

7. Use automated features for tasks like accounts payable and credit card transactions to increase ease and efficiency.

8. Clearly define protocols for handling issues or communications that arise outside of standard working hours.

Chapter 15 – Development and Fundraising

Legal services organizations can receive their funding from different sources. Using the latest tech can make fundraising smoother, reach more people, and strengthen ties with those who donate. With a strong online presence and effective social media strategy, legal services organizations can use technology to boost their fundraising efforts.

How to achieve this baseline:

1. Create a compelling website with details of program services, volunteer opportunities, and an online donation option.

2. Develop a holistic strategy to reach target audiences, including potential supporters, volunteers, and donors.

3. Electronically track each donor's contact details, donations, and interactions.

4. Produce reports based on specific donor criteria, like interests and giving history, for enhanced outreach.

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Need more resources to get started?

Check out the 'Useful Websites, Resources, and Other Tools' section of the Baselines, or contact us for tailored technology assessments and Business Process Improvement (BPI) solutions for your organization.