



JOURNAL

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broadcasters who download the sound bites from the web.

In November 2003, NNS sent out ten stories from Nevada members used by an average of thirteen stations and aired over 236 times. Since September, legal services programs have successfully pitched stories on human trafficking training, poverty statistics, new "salvage vehicle" legislation, a childcare funding crisis and juvenile justice. We are very pleased.

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■ La Voz del Campesino

*By Michele Besso, Senior Attorney, Farm Worker Unit
Northwest Justice Project*

Radio KDNA, "La Voz del Campesino," has been broadcasting in Spanish out of an old schoolhouse in one of the poorest communities in the Yakima Valley since 1979. The core staff has been there from the beginning, keeping this public radio station running on a shoe string. Legal services advocates have broadcast a one-hour legal education program on KDNA at least monthly for at least 20 of those years. Topics range from minimum wage law and workplace health and safety to immigration and consumer issues. Audience members, long familiar with the format, call in with questions and comments. Others call the office the next day. For example the day after we discussed consumers' rights in dealing with collection agencies, an elderly, illiterate, monolingual Spanish speaking couple walked into the office. They were at their wit's end because collection agencies were after them for debts someone else had incurred using their social security numbers. Sometimes our clients do not even hear us on the radio, but reach us because they call the radio station for help. A group of workers recently fired from an onion packing shed in a remote rural town called the station for help and were sent our way. The KDNA radio station has been an invaluable community partner for legal services providers in central Washington, and this year we have added a twice-monthly Spanish language show on a community college radio station in the western part of the state. We will see if that partnership lasts 20 years as well.

*Michele Besso may be reached at
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■ The HALT eJournal

*By James C. Turner, Executive Director
HALT – An Organization of Americans for
Legal Reform*

HALT – An Organization of Americans for Legal Reform has always looked for new ways to spread the word about our self-help legal resources and to stay in contact with our 50,000 members. Our quarterly newsletter and website did part of the job, but last year we began a new search to find a vehicle that would allow us to communicate breaking news frequently and economically. In September 2003, we found what we were looking for: an e-newsletter compiled by the staff and distributed through an online service, Constant Contact.

The HALT eJournal is a twice-monthly e-mailed publication that informs our members, donors, board members and other interested consumers about our advocacy work, consumer publications and breaking reform news. Each issue of the easy-to-read HALT eJournal includes links to other organizations, helpful Web sites and informative articles about our work. In the six months that we have published our eJournal, we have seen a 75% increase in subscribers, which has translated into a significant growth in both web traffic and member correspondence.

Through the eJournal, we are able to update legal consumers regularly and keep them involved with our activities. Also, HALT is able to advertise our new free self-help resources to interested non-members, with whom HALT had lacked a way to communicate. Finally, the eJournal allows us to keep in contact with the people "in the trenches," which will assure that HALT stays informed and on top of any legal reform issue as it occurs.

As an organization committed to addressing the vast unmet legal needs of low and moderate income Americans, we are delighted with this success. Our eJournal is proving to be a cost-effective means of informing people about self-help materials, non-traditional legal service providers and other affordable methods to address the deficiency of inexpensive legal services. We think an email newsletter like our eJournal is an approach that can be utilized by legal service providers and encourage readers to visit www.halt.org to learn more.

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