

Improving Service through Innovations in Technology

One way in which the School is commemorating its 75th anniversary is by asking how it can better serve the people of North Carolina. We believe that we can significantly improve our use of information and communication technology in our teaching, advising, and research. Therefore we are starting a two-year effort to identify and implement improvements in each of these areas. Faculty member Frayda Bluestein is leading the effort.

The initiative has many parts, but its main themes are how to improve productivity, accessibility, and responsiveness in the School's work with state and local government leaders. I am allocating funds for pilot projects and for investment in new staffing and technologies to support innovative proposals.

A significant part of the initiative involves meeting with public officials and their professional associations to find out how we can improve our use of technology to address their needs.

Anyone interested in learning about the progress of the initiative or in making suggestions or other contributions is invited to contact Bluestein at (919) 966-4203 or bluestein@sog.unc.edu.

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New Legal Guide Available for Pregnant and Parenting Minors

The School of Government is offering a new, easy-to-read booklet, available in English or Spanish, that can be read and printed online without charge or registration. It answers questions about North Carolina and U.S. law affecting women seventeen years old or younger who are pregnant or parenting. Partners, parents, relatives, and guardians—anyone on whom a minor depends—also will find the guide useful.

Topics include whether a minor may legally raise a child, have (or refuse to have) an abortion, place a child for adoption, get married, drop out of school (or insist on staying), sign a lease, consent to health care, take out a restraining order, and get public assistance or a job. Also, it addresses what rights and responsibilities a baby's father and grandparents have.

A separate section describes the law relevant to immigrants, new citizens, and those not yet fluent in English.

The new guide is available at www.teenpregnancy.unc.edu or www.teenmother.unc.edu. It is the last in a series of four, all available at www.adolescentpregnancy.unc.edu. The first three were for health care providers, social services workers, and school personnel. Thanks to support from the School of Government and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, about 14,000 North Carolina professionals, most of them working in public agencies, have received a copy of each guide.

Online Clearinghouse of Documents Open for Business

Why reinvent the wheel when drafting basic contracts, policies, forms, and the like? To help local government officials share good materials, the School has established the North Carolina Local Government Document Warehouse at <http://nclgdocs.unc.edu/>.

The purpose of the warehouse is to make available to public officials throughout North Carolina examples of documents that have been developed by North Carolina local governments for their own use. Anyone can submit a document that he or she thinks will be useful to colleagues. The website allows for searches.

Documents already submitted include policies on cell phones, an RFP for disaster recovery services after seventy hours, a policy on municipal procurement cards, and a form for informal construction quotes.

The warehouse's open-submission policy calls for each user to review and evaluate documents obtained from the warehouse to determine whether they are useful, appropriate, and legal for the user's particular need. The documents are not reviewed by School faculty, and the School strongly recommends that you consult with your local attorney before using any.

For more information, contact Frayda Bluestein, at (919) 966-4203 or bluestein@sog.unc.edu.