Expansion of Family Law Facilitator Services in San Diego County

1996	AB 1058 statute enacted, effective 1/97
9/97	Family Law Facilitator, Frances Harrison, hired Two family law attorneys hired to staff two different locations initially 1st 3 months spent becoming operational, drafting forms, instructions, etc.
1/98	Opened doors in downtown San Diego and in the northern part of the county in Vista. Assisted with all issues relating to child support, statute "broadly" interpreted
3/98	Hired two court clerks, one for each site
6/98	Hired additional attorney and additional clerk to staff a third site, Family Court, also in downtown San Diego. Services to be provided included help with divorces, separations, civil parentage actions (not IV-D), child custody, visitation, and other simple family law issues
9/99	Hired two attorneys and one clerk to staff three additional locations, one to assist with domestic violence restraining orders at the Family Law Annex, and one to split time between an east county location (El Cajon courthouse) and a south county location (Chula Vista courthouse). Services at the El Cajon courthouse and Chula Vista courthouse were to include general family law issues. Subsequently all domestic violence restraining orders at the Family Law Annex were taken over by agreement with the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Association FLF partnered with Legal Aid under a State Bar grant. Legal Aid provided a bilingual attorney at the Chula Vista courthouse and the Court supplied a bilingual clerk. The Legal Aid attorney assisted customers on the days the FLF attorney was not present, but under Legal Aid income guidelines.
11/99	First paralegal acquired (from court under unification)
4/00	Second paralegal hired Judicial officers continued to ask administration to hire additional experienced family law attorneys for the Facilitator program.
6/00	Hired another attorney for the downtown (IV-D) site

Now had for five locations: One Facilitator/Manager
Six staff attorneys
Two paralegals
Five clerks

8/01 Hired additional attorney to staff the Chula Vista courthouse site full time

9/01 Hired additional attorney for the downtown (IV-D) location, transferred one attorney to the Vista courthouse site

Hired two additional paralegals

2/02 Hired two more attorneys for Family Court

Now had: One Facilitator/Manager
Two attorneys – Vista courthouse
Four attorneys – Family Court
Two attorneys – IV-D site downtown
One attorney – Chula Vista courthouse
One attorney – El Cajon courthouse

Early 2002 Status conference initiative (caseflow management) moving forward, additional staffing required

Spring/ Summer 2002 Hired seven additional attorneys to begin implementation of status conference hearings (caseflow management plan)

8/02 Hired three additional paralegals as part of caseflow management plan to help with additional workload from status conference hearings

Status conference hearings went into effect the summer of 2002, first at the Family Court location, followed by Vista, El Cajon, and then Chula Vista.

5/03 Hired additional bilingual clerk for Family Court

Now had One Facilitator/Manager
4 attorneys, 2 paralegals, 1 clerk – Vista court
6 attorneys, 2 paralegals, 2 clerks – Family Court
2 attorneys, 2 paralegals, 1 clerk – IV-D site downtown
2 attorneys FT, 1 PT (3/5) attorney, 1 paralegal – El Cajon court
2 attorneys, 1 PT (2/5) atty, Legal Aid atty, 1 clerk – Chula Vista court
(We have since lost the Legal Aid attorney due to budget cuts)

Early 2004	Family Law Presiding Judge requests FLF staff the guardianship calendar one day per week at the Probate Court to help pro pers coming out of the courtroom with their orders and defects in pleadings.
12/05	Hired additional attorney to float between sites for coverage purposes

With continued increased staffing, the Facilitator's Office is able to assist the court with all the pro per status conference hearings (now called Case Classification Conferences as of 1/05), increase the number of divorce workshops conducted at various courthouse locations, including Spanish divorce workshops, prepare all Findings and Order after Hearings and Judgments for pro pers coming out the courtroom, handle judicial referrals on the spot, as well as provide staffing for the guardianship calendar requested by the Presiding Family Law Judge. We currently staff five locations full time (one IV-D only, four general family law issues) and staff the Guardianship Calendar at yet another location one day per week.