

Focus on *Access to Justice*

For more information, visit www.lsba.org/atj.

LSBA celebrates two-year anniversary of *LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org*

L *A.FreeLegalAnswers.org*, the online pro bono program hosted in Louisiana by the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA), is celebrating its second anniversary.

On Aug. 22, 2016, Louisiana was one of the first eight states to launch a Free Legal Answers site. *LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org* is part of an American Bar Association (ABA) initiative to expand pro bono access throughout the nation; currently, 38 jurisdictions are participating.

The LSBA partners with the ABA to administer the day-to-day needs of the site while also recruiting volunteers to answer questions. The ABA maintains the software and provides malpractice insurance to all registered volunteers.

Attorney volunteers are able to log into the site whenever and wherever they like and



anonymously respond to legal questions submitted by individuals who could not otherwise afford to consult an attorney. Users who submit questions also must meet certain requirements; users must be at least 18 years of age, not currently in jail or prison, have an income within 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, and have less than \$10,000 in assets.

Since August 2016, 701 questions have

been submitted to the site, of which 613 questions have been answered by the 109 registered volunteers. This is an answer rate of 87 percent, much higher than the national answer rate average. On the national level, more than 38,000 questions have been submitted to the participating sites, with more than 5,000 attorneys providing responses to approximately 70 percent of those questions.

As the site continues to expand and the number of questions submitted continues to rise, the LSBA is always recruiting volunteers, particularly family law attorneys as about half of the questions submitted pertain to family law issues.

Those interested in volunteering or promoting this LSBA project to a local bar should email LSBA Access to Justice Projects Counsel Rachael M. Mills at rachael.mills@lsba.org.



Louisiana lawyers are proud to partner with Louisiana libraries to help address the legal needs of our communities.

On October 22-27, 2018, the Louisiana Library Association and the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) will sponsor “Lawyers in Libraries” events across the state in support of the National Pro Bono Celebration. Attorney volunteers will provide “Ask-a-Lawyer” sessions, or educational presentations, free of charge to library patrons.

WE NEED YOUR HELP to be the Lawyer in your local Library.

To participate in a “Lawyers in Libraries” event, contact the LSBA Access to Justice Department at (504)619-0106 or (800)421-5722, ext. 106, or email Joanna.Laidler@lsba.org. More info on the project can be found at: www.LouisianaLawyersinLibraries.org

Special thanks to all the participating attorneys helping to make this project a success.

ATJ staff attends Clerk of Court Institute

Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) Access to Justice (ATJ) staff attended the Louisiana Clerks of Court Institute in Lafayette on Aug. 22.

Clerks of court are often inundated with legal questions from the public, but unable to provide legal advice so as to avoid the unauthorized practice of law. However, clerks of court can provide information about civil legal aid to the public.

To help the state's clerks of court to assist the public, ATJ staff promoted materials with information about LSBA programs for low-income Louisianians. These programs include *LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org*, the on-

line pro bono program, and the new Modest Means Online Directory for clients who do not qualify for legal aid yet still cannot afford to hire an attorney. All resources can be accessed via the new LSBA "Find Legal Help" Portal at: www.lsba.org/public/findlegalhelp.

In addition, the Louisiana Access to Justice Commission will host a Self-Represented Litigant (SRL) Service Provider Summit on Nov. 2 in Natchitoches to provide courts with resources and direct assistance to better serve the public.

For more information about these programs, email LSBA Access to Justice Projects Counsel Rachael M. Mills at rachael.mills@lsba.org. 📧



Attending the Louisiana Clerks of Court Institute in Lafayette on Aug. 22 were, from left, Steve Andrews, president of the Louisiana Clerks of Court Association and Louisiana Access to Justice Commission member; and Rachael M. Mills, Louisiana State Bar Association Access to Justice Projects Counsel.



#yourLSBA: A Pro Bono Hero *Providing Justice for ALL*

“ Several years ago, a fellow attorney encouraged me to begin doing pro bono work representing children in Child in Need of Care (“CINC”) cases through the Southwest Louisiana Bar Foundation. With an undergraduate degree in Sociology/Social Work, CINC cases seemed a natural fit.

While it is disheartening to see first-hand the issues that many children face today, it is very satisfying to play even a small part in ensuring that these children get the best start possible given their particular circumstances, some of which are very difficult.

I encourage all attorneys, regardless of educational or legal background, to make time for pro bono work in a field that interests them. Doing so brings a sense of self-satisfaction unlike that achieved in our day-to-day work. ”

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