

Focus on *Access to Justice*

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

Pro bono survey now active online: Seeking input on statewide access to services

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Access to Justice Department and Louisiana pro bono projects are partnering with the American Bar Association (ABA) to gather information concerning pro bono access throughout the state. Learn more and take the online survey at: www.lsba.org/goto/ATJSurvey

All LSBA members are encouraged to complete the survey, regardless of whether they have volunteered time to pro bono cases within the past year.

The survey, designed and administered by the ABA, will help to quantify and recognize the pro bono work done by attorneys, as well as help define the factors that encourage or discourage pro bono service.

All respondents who complete the survey and choose to provide their contact information will be entered into a drawing to win one of several prizes — 10 \$200 gift cards; 10 30-percent LSBA CLE discount coupons; and one tuition waiver for the 2017 LSBA Summer School Program during the LSBA's Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla. 📌

More LSBA attorney volunteers sought for participation in *LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org*

The new online pro bono website *LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org* connects low-income individuals with attorneys. Through the website, attorney volunteers are able to log in whenever and wherever they like and anonymously respond to legal questions submitted by individuals who could not otherwise afford to consult an attorney.

Via this outreach, the Louisiana State Bar Association is seeking to register at least 100 attorney volunteers to more broadly advertise the site to the public.

The American Bar Association provides malpractice insurance for any legal advice given through the site.

In order to qualify for the site, users must meet certain income eligibility requirements — must be age 18 or older; not currently in jail or prison; have a household income within 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines; and have less than \$5,000 in assets.

The LSBA is partnering in this initiative as another means to expand legal services to the poor or working poor in the state who currently cannot be assisted by the established civil legal aid community for various reasons — federal restrictions on income eligibility; restrictions on accepted case types; and/or logistical challenges in accessing legal services.

To volunteer or learn more, go to the LSBA's Access to Justice webpage, www.lsba.org/atj. Or contact Rachael Mills with the Access to Justice Department at (504)619-0104 or email rachael.mills@lsba.org. 📌

LIFT accepting applications for New Orleans Family Justice Center Project

Applications will be accepted until Feb. 1 for the Louisiana State Bar Association LIFT Program's (Legal Innovators for Tomorrow) collaborative project at the New Orleans Family Justice Center. Louisiana licensed attorneys with zero-five years' practice experience who plan to develop or have begun to develop a solo or small law practice and are committed to representing survivors of domestic violence are encouraged to apply. Learn more and apply: www.lsba.org/lift/. 📌



Nominations sought for awards

The Louisiana State Bar Association's Access to Justice Department is currently accepting nominations for the 2017 Pro Bono Publico and Children's Law Awards to be presented at a Louisiana Supreme Court-hosted reception in May.

The award categories include the Friend of Pro Bono Award, the Pro Bono Publico Award, the Career Public Interest Award, the David A.

Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award, the Law Student Award and the Children's Law Award. All awards recognize the legal professionals who have gone "beyond the call of duty" to provide pro bono services to the poor or assisted with children's legal issues.

Nominations will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17. To submit nominations, go to the LSBA Access to Justice's website: www.lsba.org/ATJ. 📌

LSBA's Access to Justice Department: 2016's "Top 10"

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Access to Justice Department realized many accomplishments in 2016 — accomplishments that can only be made with the devotion of hundreds of volunteers and the group of dedicated civil legal service organizations known as "Louisiana's Civil Justice Community."

The LSBA is committed to working with this community. The evolution of access to justice efforts in Louisiana, including current and future initiatives, was highlighted in the December 2016/January 2017 issue of the Louisiana Bar Journal. To read, go to: www.lsba.org/NewsAndPublications/Bar-Journal.aspx.

Here's the "Top 10" accomplishments in 2016:

1. Launched *LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org*, Louisiana's new online pro bono resource which provides free legal advice to indigent individuals.

2. Trained more than 150 librarians on re-

sponding to legal inquiries through the Legal Education & Assistance Program (LEAP), and assisted more than 700 people with legal problems in the annual Lawyers in Libraries Day of Service.

3. Created the Access to Justice Internship to build future civil legal aid leaders by providing an intense summer intern opportunity for Louisiana law students.

4. Facilitated the Louisiana Immigration Law Work Group and developed the LIFT Immigration Bond Project to assist detained individuals.

5. Convened the first meeting of the Louisiana Access to Justice Commission, chaired by Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson and former LSBA President Marta-Ann Schnabel, which continued and re-enforced the LSBA's long commitment to access to justice.

6. Completed an economic impact study on the costs and benefits of civil legal aid, with funding from the Louisiana Bar Foundation, which showed a social return on in-

vestment of \$8 for every \$1 invested in civil legal services in Louisiana.

7. Hosted the third annual "Self-Represented Litigant Service Provider Summit" to educate courts and access to justice partners on the best practices for serving the needs of self-represented litigants.

8. Provided 100 hours of trainings to more than 1,500 representatives of various public interest law firms, the public and the justice community.

9. Oversaw implementation the Louisiana Disaster Plan for Legal Services twice in 2016 to assist with the legal needs of those affected by severe flooding in March and August.

10. Worked with community organizations on a collaborative lawyering program to address the legal needs of people in Louisiana Re-Entry Courts which have the goal of reducing recidivism and increasing successful return to communities after incarceration. 🇺🇸

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