

ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION MEETING
11:00 A.M. ★ Thursday, January 19, 2017
Baton Rouge, LA

Attendance:

Marta Schnabel, O'Bryon & Schnabel, Co- Chair
Valerie Bargas, Kinchen Walker Bienvenu Bargas Reed & Helm, LLC; Vice President, Louisiana Bar Foundation
Hon. Sheral Kellar, Louisiana Workforce Commission
Luz Molina, Loyola University of New Orleans College of Law
Joseph Oelkers, Acadiana Legal Services Corporation
Jee Park, Deputy District Defender, Office of the Public Defender, Orleans Parish
Chris Ralston, Partner, Phelps Dunbar, LLP
Hon. Harry Randow, Judge 9th Judicial District (retired)
Stacy Seicshnaydre, Associate Dean of Experiential Learning and Public Interest Programs, Tulane Law School
Mark Surprenant, Partner, Adams and Reese
Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Hon. Lisa Woodruff-White, Chief Judge, East Baton Rouge Family Court

Staff:

Amy Duncan, ATJ Training Counsel
Nicole Louque, ATJ Admin. Assistant
Monte Mollere, ATJ Director
Rachael Mills, ATJ Projects Counsel
Michael Schachtman, ATJ SRL Counsel

Guest:

Angela Bazile, Executive Counsel to Chief Justice
Bernette Johnson, Louisiana Supreme Court
Linton Carney, Pro Bono Project
Donna Cuneo, Executive Director, Louisiana Bar Foundation
Greg Landry, Executive Director, Acadiana Legal Services
Darrel Papillion, LSBA President
Jane Sherman, President, Louisiana Bar Foundation
Adrienne Wheeler, Justice and Accountability Center

Welcome & Introductions

Marta Schnabel welcomed the Commission members and participants introduced themselves.

Commission Updates:

Communications Training Update- Jane Sherman

Approximately 30 people attended the November Voices for Civil Justice (Voices) communications training hosted by the Louisiana Bar Foundation reported Jane Sherman. The program lead by Voices President Martha Bergmark educated attendees on step and a unified message approach to relay messages related to civil legal aid to people in and out of the profession. LBF President-Elect, Valerie Bargas added that training pushed attendees to think strategically about a messaging plan. Marta Schnabel suggested the commission members may wish to become members of the Voices listserv, and Nicole Louque was asked to distribute information on how to join the listserv.

Commission Website – Michael Schachtman/Nicole Louque

Louisiana ATJ Commission Co-Chairs Marta Schnabel and Chief Justice Bernette Johnson recently received a copy of a paper written by a student comparing ATJ efforts in Louisiana to those in New York. The paper base only on an online search of our unfinished web page concluded that the Louisiana ATJ Commission has much work to do. Acknowledging the use of the internet as predominant source of information for many, an updated ATJ Commission

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page was previewed at the meeting. Staff agreed to distribute the link and members were encouraged to provide input.

ATJ Commission Presentation – Marta Schnabel

The Louisiana Judicial College has approved an ATJ Commission's request to present at the annual LSBA/Judicial College Summer School. Marta Schnabel suggested that a presentation conducted at the Louisiana Justice Community Conference which showed the breath of the ATJ Commission efforts, be presented. Commission members presenting previously and attending summer school will be asked to participate.

Committee Updates:

Funding – Economic Impact Study – Jane Sherman

LBF President Jane Sherman reported the event that led to development of a new Louisiana Economic Impact Study (EIS) : On April 19th, 2016 members of the funding committee met with members of the Governor Edward's staff to discuss Louisiana's need for civil legal aid and the lack of state funding. His staff acknowledged the Governor support of civil legal aid, but said the current deficit in the budget was not encouraging for an appropriation. The findings of the 2011 Economic Impact Study was shared with the staff and there was a suggestion that the EIS be updated. Supported by an offer from the LBF to fund the initiative, the Louisiana ATJ Commission approved updating the EIS. The Louisiana House of Representatives passed a resolution asking the Commission to report the findings to the legislature no later than January 31, 2017.

The study was completed by Community Analysis Services with nearly 40 Louisiana civil legal aid organizations participating in the analysis. The study was meant to measure the SROI (Social Return on Investment) of civil legal aid in fiscal year 2016 and found that for every dollar invested in Louisiana's civil legal aid services, these programs deliver \$8.73 in immediate and long-term consequential financial benefits.

Funding – Legislative Initiatives – Chris Ralston

Chris Ralston thanked everyone involved in getting the EIS done so quickly. The Funding Committee has been given indication that an appropriation for civil legal aid is unlikely this year and the Committee has proposed an increased in notarial fee registration to help fund civil legal aid. An increase of the modest \$25 annual registration fee could raise \$400,000 for civil legal services. Chris Ralston reported on a meeting with Secretary of State, Tom Schedler and his first assistant Kyle Ardoin to provide advance notice of the initiative since Sec. Schedler office oversees Louisiana notaries.

Resolution 8 on the agenda for the LSBA House of Delegates will hopefully garner approval for this effort. Chris Ralston will reach out for help identifying Legislators that can support our efforts. Jane Sherman mentioned they fully expect to there to be some opposition.

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Building Bridges Committee – Adrienne Wheeler

Recently the Building Bridges Committee merged with the LSBA's Re-Entry Court working group. Adrienne Wheeler, executive director of the Justice and Accountability Center (JAC), explained the work of the Re-entry Court Pro Bono Program and the central role and coordinating work JAC is performing with this group.

Thirteen courts have statutorily been designated as Re-Entry Courts. The working group and Building Bridges Committee is focusing on Orleans and Jefferson parishes. The mission of Re-Entry Court is to reduce recidivism through participation in a 2 year program, with 5 years of supervised probation. The participants are taught a trade, job and interpersonal skills and are provided other services to ensure their success. Pro Bono attorneys are needed to help remove obstacles that often hinder success, such as, traffic violations that prevent them from obtaining a license, child supports problems, etc

Volunteer pro bono attorneys are provided practice guides and are operating under limited scope representation. MCLE credits are available for pro bono hours. Recently the U. S. Attorney's Office hosted a CLE on Re-Entry Court issues and about 100 people attended and about 50 people signed up to participate in the program.

Amy Duncan solicited volunteers for the program and will place a link on the ATJ Commission site to JAC where attorneys can volunteer.

Building Bridges Committee – Justice Re-Investment – Amy Duncan

The LSBA Criminal Justice Committee has a resolution before the House of Delegates supporting the actions of the Justice Re-Investment Task Forces.

Self-Represented Litigation Committee – Judge Harry Randow

At the Commission's last meeting the committee approved creation of standardized forms. The committee is in the final review stage and expects to have them available within the next few weeks. The forms will be posted on the LSBA website, LawHelp and the Supreme Court website. The forms will be maintained and updated by the ATJ facilitated Family Law Task Force. Judge Randow congratulated the committee and thanked them for all their hard work. Marta Schnabel asked that the Chief Justice be asked to pen a letter to all the courts requesting they make the forms available on their websites.

Potential New Initiatives

Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows – Mark Surprenant

This project would focus on retired lawyers and Judges that want to stay active in access to justice. Use of experienced attorneys as fellows in non-profit legal agencies benefits the individual, the program and the clients. Massachusetts Access to Justice Commission has an Access to Justice Fellows Program that Mark Surprenant would like to research as a model for Louisiana. A motion was made to create an exploratory committee to provide information to the Commission in determining whether this is something the Commission would like to pursue. Mark agreed to report back at the next meeting.

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Access to Justice Initiatives

Statewide Pro Bono Survey

Rachael Mills will send an updated link to the survey. The LSBA has donated prizes for a raffle as incentives to encourage completion of the survey.

LA.FeeLegalAnswers.org

Since the August 2016 launch, 116 users have accessed the site and 69 attorneys have registered as volunteers.

Pro Bono Publico and Children's Law Awards

Please don't forget to send in your nomination. The deadline for receipt is February 17, 2017.

Unmet Legal Needs Study

The study will be distributed shortly. We expect it will provide a good base line for other studies to come.

Adjournment