



Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

10:00 a.m. on Friday, May 15, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Hon. Jeffrey Cashe, 21st Judicial District Court
Greg Landry, Executive Director, Acadiana Legal Service Corp.
Chris Ralston, Vice President, Louisiana Bar Foundation, Phelps Dunbar, LLP
Dona Renegar, ATJ Committee Co-Chair, Veazey, Felder & Renegar
Jeffrey Coreil, Co-Chair, Neuner Pate
Christy Kane, Entergy Services, LLC
Luz Molina, Loyola University College of Law
Mark Surprenant, Board President, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services Corp., Adams and Reese
Shayna Sonnier, Treasurer, Louisiana State Bar Association, Hunter, Hunter, & Sonnier, L.L.C.
Brandi Cole, CenturyLink, Inc.
Alainna Mire, President-Elect, Louisiana State Bar Association
Virginia Listach, Southern University Law Center
Alan Brackett, Secretary, Louisiana Bar Foundation, Mouldoux, Bland, Legrand & Brackett
Hon. Lisa Woodruff-White, East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court

Guests:

Ann Gregorie, Executive Director, Baton Rouge Bar Foundation
Angela White-Bazile, Louisiana Supreme Court
Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Jennifer Eagan, Louisiana Supreme Court
C.C. Kahr, Executive Director, The Pro Bono Project
Adrienne Wheeler, Executive Director, Louisiana Appleseed
Amanda Brown, Executive Director, Lagniappe Law Lab
Ranie Thompson, CrescentCare Legal Services
Danielle Borel, ABA-YLD Representative, Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, L.L.P.
Hon. Scott Schlegel, 24th Judicial District Court
Tiberlee Barnum, ATJ Developing Leadership Intern
Emily Ketterer, ATJ Developing Leadership Intern
Carly Jonakin, ATJ Developing Leadership Intern
Chance Carter, ATJ Developing Leadership Intern

Staff:

Amy Duncan, ATJ Training & Projects Counsel
Linda Johnson, ATJ Technology Counsel
Joanna Laidler, ATJ Projects Counsel
Rachael Mills, ATJ Projects Counsel
Jordan Maier, ATJ Assistant
Monte Mollere, ATJ Director

Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Monte Mollere welcomed members and guests as they joined via BlueJeans. Participants were reminded of the meeting norms circulated beforehand.
- II. **Consent Calendar** – The consent calendar was passed as written. Jeff Coreil encouraged members to review the committee updates, which report the ongoing work of each group during COVID-19.
- III. **ATJ Community Response to COVID-19**
 - a. **Community Response**
 - i. **ATJ Disaster Subcommittee** – Ann Gregorie reported that the subcommittee has met online weekly during COVID-19 to share resources, remote office protocols, and legal issues. Ann reminded the Commission that this group has also begun to monitor recent weather events for disaster needs. Amanda Brown provided analytics on trends in legal needs. LSBA-YLD representative Danielle Borel has kept contact with the ABA and FEMA regarding disaster funding; the pandemic did not trigger disaster funding but the subcommittee has prepared a draft budget in case that should change. Danielle also provided data to GOHSEP: legal aid cases have temporarily fallen, but are expected to rise significantly once courts reopen.
 - ii. **Resources for the public** – Amanda Brown compiled pandemic resources:
 1. **Partner websites:** [SLLS Know Your Rights guides](#), [ALSC](#), [Pro Bono Project](#), [CrescentCare](#), [Louisiana Law Help COVID-19 help center](#)
 2. **Social media:** ALSC and SLLS Facebook Live
 3. **Lagniappe Law Lab tools:** [rent relief letter generator](#), [stimulus payment navigator](#), [CARES act for small business tool](#)
 4. **Louisiana Law Help analytics:**
 - a. Nearly 85,000 unique page views in March and April 2020, up 33% from last year
 - b. COVID-19 help center comprised 25% of web traffic
 - iii. **Resources for attorneys**
 1. **Training videos:** Amy Duncan created eight 10-15-minute training videos on housing/evictions, divorce, and custody to bring attorneys up to speed on emerging COVID-19 legal issues. The videos feature presenters from SLLS and ALSC and are accompanied by PDF training manuals containing the same information, compiled by LA Appleseed volunteer Margaret Viator.
 2. **Louisiana Justice Community Conference:** Amy shared that we may have the opportunity to host the LJCC online this year, which could allow for more innovation in the format and programming of the conference. Commission members are asked to share any suggestions or feedback on experience they have with other online conferences with Amy at amy.duncan@lsba.org.
 - iv. **Resources for the courts**
 1. **Judicial education:** Jennifer Eagan reported that the Supreme Court hosted three COVID-19 webinars on civil law, criminal law, and family/domestic law (which included a physician guest). The court is now working with the judicial college to create a 6-part education series based on the judges' reported needs.

Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

2. **SRL resources:** the SRL Committee compiled an extensive document of resources shared in the meeting materials.
 3. **Access to the courts:** Luz Molina expressed concern regarding ensuring access both for litigants and the public when holding hearings online or via phone. She also noted a lack of up to date information on local courts' websites. Jennifer Eagan is working on a tech grant which may help increase local courts' tech capabilities.
- b. Funding Committee** – Chris Ralston shared that the Funding Committee has been meeting every two weeks.
- i. ALSC and SLLS have received funding for pandemic-related legal work as Congress provided a \$50 million appropriation for LSC. LSC has requested an additional \$50 million for providers. The Committee has reached out to congresspersons through efforts such as ABA day and LA Appleseed's legal aid flyer to raise their awareness of legal aid and how essential it is in a crisis such as this.
 1. Christy Kane noted that the NLADA is spear-heading a letter from general counsels across the U.S. in support of the additional \$50m; Marcus Brown at Entergy has signed on.
 - ii. The Committee has had some success in working with the courts to have filing fees collected and disbursed.
 - iii. The Committee is monitoring IOLTA revenues, which will be negatively impacted by low interest rates. The LBF is trying to minimize the immediate impact to funding recipients.
 - iv. At the state level, the governor included an appropriation of \$500,000 for legal aid in the budget prior to COVID-19.
 - v. LA Appleseed is hosting Constituent Services webinars featuring Greg Landry and Laura Tuggle on May 20, June 3, July 8, and September 2 to educate legislators on where to send constituents seeking legal help. Commission members are asked to share the [event registration link](#) with legislators.

IV. Reports from Partners

- a. The Judiciary** – Judge Lisa Woodruff-White and Judge Jeff Cashe reported that courts are considering many options for safe reopening, such as introducing cell phone lots/pager lots; offering remote default hearings to SRLs; opening remote videoconferencing kiosks in legal aid offices, courts, libraries; and requiring facemasks, temperature checks, and social distancing in the courthouse. The judges emphasized that the courts appreciate and rely on materials created by the ATJ community, including bench cards and SRL resources.
- i. www.courtonline.us – 24th JDC online court check in
 - ii. Greg Landry expressed concern that requiring facemasks in the court but not providing them to litigants would create an access to justice issue for low-income people.
 - iii. Adrienne Wheeler reported that Louisiana Appleseed drafted a bulletin and interactive map for the public detailing how to file in every JDC, available [here](#).
- b. LSBA** – Alaina Mire and Shayna Sonnier shared updates from the LSBA:
- i. Offices reopen for staff May 18; closed to the public through July 3.
 - ii. The deadline for LADB assessment and bar dues has been extended to August 1.
 - iii. Online CLE restrictions lifted; all 12.5 hours can be completed online

Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

- iv. The LSBA is offering free COVID-19 webinars [here](#) and has compiled other resources and news on the main page at www.lsba.org.

c. Civil Legal Aid Providers

i. ALSC report by Greg Landry:

1. Case volume slightly above normal, mainly in employment, housing, consumer, family law issues. ALSC is seeing a decrease in CINC cases, as mandatory reporters (teachers, doctors) are not in contact with children and CPS workers are hesitant to enter homes to investigate and monitor.
2. ASLC is updating Facebook and its website daily to reach the public.
3. ALSC will expand office work on Monday, still with a large portion of staff working remotely.
4. Funding is stable – ALSC qualified for a PPA loan, and received several grants and donations from LSC, LBF, Hancock Whitney, and Blue Cross Blue Shield to address COVID-19 issues. They are also submitting a grant application to increase rural pro bono participation.
5. ALSC is hiring new staff to meet anticipated increase in legal need – Commission members are asked to refer potential applicants.

ii. SLLS report by Laura Tuggle:

1. SLLS anticipates an extreme rise in eviction cases following the end of the governor's moratorium on June 5. Hannah Adams developed an eviction bench card and SLLS had the opportunity to train approximately 100 eviction court judges and Justices of the Peace on evictions under the CARES Act.
2. SLLS funding is also stable thanks to new resources, which make up the gap from loss of funding.
3. SLLS hosted a Zoom orientation for approximately 25 summer law clerks and is interviewing applicants for ten new staff positions next week.

d. Pro Bono

- i. C.C. Kahr reported that intake for the Pro Bono Project is slightly reduced with an increase in calls for urgent matters, which are referred back to SLLS and Louisiana Law Help. They have expanded their volunteer base during COVID-19. They are operating the Jefferson and Orleans self help desks virtually but are concerned for low income litigants who have limited access and familiarity with technology.
- ii. C.C. expressed concern for funding, as their budget heavily draws from fundraising and private donations. Ann Gregorie noted that bar association funding will also be at risk, as they rely on CLE fees and donations. The Baton Rouge Bar Association did receive an LBF grant which assisted them in purchasing the technology needed to go remote.
- iii. Baton Rouge Bar Association volunteer engagement has also been steady.

- ## e. LBF – Alan Brackett shared that in response to the pandemic, the Louisiana Bar Foundation surveyed grantees, identified immediate needs, and disbursed unallocated funds, mostly for tech needs. The Board opted to maintain funding levels for 2021 despite an anticipated decrease in IOLTA funds of about \$4 million. Any grant carryovers from the last grant period will be honored. The LBF anticipates that 2021-2022 year funding will be heavily reduced, though some banks have been willing to negotiate rates. New officers were instated: Skip Philips as 2020-2021 President, Chris Ralston as Vice

Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

President, Alan Brackett as Treasurer, and Deidre Robert as Secretary. The LBF office will open to staff only next week, with half staff rotating in-person and remote weekly. The LBF will also begin an economic impact study later this year.

f. Louisiana Law Schools

- i. Professor Molina shared that Loyola went online starting March 13. The school is hiring an epidemiologist to design a new system for the safety of students and staff, which will likely include a hybrid in-person/online teaching model. Luz expressed concern regarding teaching students how to build an attorney-client relationship via videoconference. Additionally, she noted that immigrant clients are particularly affected by COVID-19 as many have lost their jobs, cannot access stimulus funds, and have limited access to technology.
- ii. Professor Listach reported that SULC is also closed in-person. The legal clinic is in the process of transitioning their intake and forms online. They are currently doing intake via phone and are in contact with most of their existing clients. They are seeing more bankruptcy cases than any other area, and in the fall will coordinate with the psychology, sociology, and social work clinics to address clients' nonlegal needs. Professor Listach emphasized that students are still a ready and eager source to assist with projects remotely. This month the ATJ Interns will be virtually visiting Baton Rouge probation hearings and the reentry program.

V. Technology

a. 24th JDC – Judge Scott Schlegel shared that having a technology infrastructure already in place, including e-filing, e-signing, and online forms, allowed the 24th JDC to remain almost fully functional throughout COVID-19. While videoconferencing is currently the default, the court also adopted a remote check-in system (available at www.courtonline.us) to reduce traffic in the courthouse for those proceedings that must occur in person.

b. Lagniappe Law Lab

- i. Lagniappe Law Lab continues to work on redesigning ProBono.net/LA.
- ii. The Justice For All project needs the assistance of Commission members in sharing the community stakeholder and end user surveys with their networks. The surveys are available below. The surveys seek to capture a statewide view of the user experience of the civil legal system in Louisiana.
 1. JFA End User Survey: <https://bit.ly/JFASurvey>
 2. JFA Community Stakeholder Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JFACommunityStakeholdersSurvey>
- iii. Lagniappe Law Lab is close to finishing a beta version of Civil Legal Navigator and will soon need assistance in user testing the software.
- iv. Lagniappe will be hosting an ATJ Tech Fellow this summer, who will assist in automating the remaining statewide pre-approved forms which have not yet been automated.

VI. Adjourn

- a.** Next meeting: August TBD, remote
- b.** Thank you for your service on the Commission this year. President-Elect Alainna Mire will make appointments to the 2020-2021 ATJ Commission in late June/early July. Please let

Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

Monte Mollere (mmollere@lsba.org) know if you are interested in continuing your membership. Generally, one third of the membership rotates out each year.