

**LOUISIANA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING
10:00 A.M. Friday, January 22, 2020**

Attendees

Angela Bazile, Louisiana Supreme Court
Talya Bergeron, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Amanda Brown, Lagniappe Law Lab
Miriam Childs, Law Library of Louisiana
Micah Fincher, Jones Walker LLP
Franchesca Hamilton-Acker, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Isobel Healy, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Arlene Knighten, Attorney at Law
Greg Landry, Acadiana Legal Service Corp.
Kathleen Legendre, Attorney at Law
Luz Molina, Loyola University College of Law
Jeff Nicholson, Nicholson Law Firm
Joe Oelkers III, Acadiana Legal Service Corp.
Elena Perez, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Sara Pic, Law Library of Louisiana
Sachida Raman, Acadiana Legal Service Corp.
Lisa Stansky, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Judge Raymond Steib, 24th JDC
Tina Suggs, Co-chair, State Farm
Jane Thomas, Attorney at Law
Ranie Thompson, CrescentCare Legal Services
Laura Tuggle, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services

Guests

Jennifer Eagan, Louisiana Supreme Court
Alainna Mire, LSBA President, City of Alexandria

Leadership Class

ReAzalia Z. Allen
Kristen D. Amond
Brittany B. Arvie
Elizabeth B. Bloch
Robert N. Cavell
Kayla D. Dupler
Margaret M. Guidry
Harry Landry III
Iriane B. Lee
Kolby Marchand
Nahshon J. Route

Staff

Stephanie Beaugh, ATJ Projects Counsel
Amy Duncan, ATJ Projects and Training Counsel
Jordan Maier, ATJ Assistant
Rachael Mills, ATJ Project Counsel
Monte Mollere, ATJ Director

Minutes

- I. Welcome and Introductions – Co-chair,** Tina Suggs welcomed the group and facilitated introductions.
- II. Consent Calendar –** The consent calendar was passed as written.
- III. Justice For All –**
 - a.** LSBA President Alainna Mire presented the findings from the Commission’s Justice for All Project, a grant funded by the National Center for State Courts:
 - i. Over 60% of Louisiana can be considered a “civil legal resource desert” – defined as an area in which people live more than a 45-minute drive from in-person civil legal help such as a legal aid office, law library, or self-help center.
 - ii. While 40% of Louisiana’s population earns incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, 34% of Louisiana population earning below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level live in these “civil legal resource deserts”.
 - iii. This is equivalent to over 600,000 people, and includes the entire parishes of Concordia, Tensas, East Carroll, and West Carroll. Additionally, many of these households have little to no internet access and experience the deepest levels of poverty, in some cases with over 50% of the population of the parish living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

- iv. The combination of high poverty, distance from in-person help, and lack of internet access makes legal assistance functionally inaccessible in these “civil legal resource deserts.”
 - b. Amy Duncan presented the project plan to address civil legal resource deserts:
 - i. Phase One: Identify one to three parishes to work with initially, and identify key project staff and partners to hold preliminary community meetings in identified parishes.
 - ii. Phase Two: Build community implementation teams, agree on priorities for implementation, and identify ways to support existing local efforts.
 - iii. Phase Three: Implement projects selected by local working groups.
 - iv. Phase Four: Continue local project implementation and develop sustainability plan.
- IV. **Louisiana Justice Community Conference** – Amy Duncan reported on the December conference, which was held virtually for the first time. Some unexpected benefits of the new format included the option for increased capacity, including non-attorney attendees; more national presenters; automatic session recording; and no risk of COVID-19 transmission!
- V. **Racial Justice and Civil Legal Aid** – Arlene Knighten reported on the ethics seminar given during the Louisiana Justice Community Conference, titled “The Rules of Professional Conduct and Cultural Awareness.” The session discussed how cultural competency, not just legal and technical knowledge, is essential to providing adequate legal services. Luz Molina challenged the Committee to consider how to involve the private bar in meeting these minimum standards. Margaret Guidry noted that the Martinet Society of New Orleans and Hispanic Lawyers Association submitted a proposal to the Louisiana Supreme Court in late 2020 for a diversity CLE requirement, which is under review.
- VI. **ATJ Developing Leadership Intern Program** – Rachael Mills provided an update on the status of the 2021 program. The program will include only two interns (as opposed to four) this year. Phelps Dunbar and Entergy will be sponsors for the 2021 program. We hope to identify two additional sponsors for the 2022 year.
- VII. **2021 Pro Bono Awards** – Jordan Maier announced that nominations are open for the 2021 LSBA Pro Bono Publico and Children’s Law Awards. Nominations can be submitted online at www.lsba.org/nominations. The deadline for submission is Monday, February 8. At this time, we anticipate that the May awards ceremony will be conducted virtually.
- VIII. **LIFT Flood Proof Project** – Elena Perez shared information on the LIFT Flood Proof Project in Baton Rouge, which is now accepting applications for its 2021 class. Attorneys in this 18-month incubator program receive mentorship, a \$10,000 stipend, and legal resources for launching their own practice in exchange for providing pro bono representation to people impacted by the 2016 flooding in Southeast Louisiana. The application can be found at www.lsba.org/lift and is due Friday, March 5 at 4:30 pm.

Staff contact Amy Duncan encouraged provider to suggest new projects/areas of need (e.g., evictions) by which the LIFT program could collaborate. Providers should contact amy.duncan@lsba.org with proposals.

IX. ATJ Commission Committee Reports

- a. **Self-Represented Litigants** – Stephanie Beugh shared the committee’s progress on addressing issues related to remote access to the courts. Barriers for SRLs include limited access to computer hardware, internet, and private space to appear in court, and lack of familiarity with computer software and court proceedings. The Pro Bono Project New Orleans created a video guide for SRLs appearing in the 24th JDC to address these latter issues; using this as a model, the committee is working with the LDJA to create a broader video guide that can be used in courts and self-help centers throughout the state.
- b. **Technology** – Amanda Brown shared that the Technology Committee is organizing a statewide civil legal technology planning session for March 23 to explore what technology is needed in the state. The Committee is also collaborating with the Supreme Court’s Technology Commission on the statewide automated forms website.

Jennifer Eagan noted that the Supreme Court Technology Commission recently made ten suggestions on increasing courts’ technology competence, five of which were approved, including:

- i. The development of automated statewide forms. Which forms will be developed has not yet been determined.
- ii. Website rebuilds for every district court in the state. The new websites will be uniform and able to accommodate online calendaring and online hearings
- iii. Online Dispute Resolution pilot courts in Slidell City Court and Orleans Municipal Traffic Court
- iv. Court Interpreter’s Program. Developing a cadre of approved interpreters on-demand for district courts.
- v. Opt-in accelerated online court, to be implemented in 24th JDC.

The Commission is also looking into the possibility of e-service for everything after initial complaint.

- X. **ATJ Grant Fund** – Monte Mollere reported on this item which was added to the agenda. Applications are now being accepted for 2021 ATJ Grants, which are available for 501(c)3 organizations pursuing projects related to the advancement and maintenance of statewide technology, the coordination of statewide intake and referral, and/or disaster or emergency response. Applicants should reach out to monte.mollere@lsba.org to discuss proposed applications and an invitation to submit a grant to the Louisiana Bar Foundation. Grant decisions will be determined by the LBF at their April 23rd board meeting.

XI. Adjourn

- a. Next meeting: March 12, 2021, virtual