



Louisiana Access to Justice Commission
10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2024
MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

- Alainna Mire, ATJ Commission Co-Chair, LSBA Past President, Alexandria
- Charles Bourque, Jr., LBF Secretary, Saint Martin & Bourque, Houma
- Larry Centola, Martzell, Bickford & Centola, New Orleans
- Carrie Jones, Breazeale, LSBA Board of Governors, Sachse & Wilson, LLP, Baton Rouge
- Christy Kane, Pro Bono Counsel, Entergy Corporation, New Orleans
- Paula Miles, LBF Board, Office of the Public Defenders, Baton Rouge
- Chris Ralston, Phelps Dunbar, LLP, New Orleans
- SachidaRaman, Executive Director, Acadiana Legal Services Corporation, Lafayette
- Valerie Schexnayder, LSBA Secretary, Schexnayder Mediation Services, Baton Rouge
- Veronica Sizer, Executive Counsel, Title GOHSEP, Baton Rouge
- Tina Suggs, LSBA Board of Governors, Frederick A Miller & Associates, Metairie
- Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Southeast Louisiana Services Corporation, New Orleans
- Sandra Vujnovich, Judicial Administrator, Supreme Court of Louisiana, New Orleans
- Justin Woods, Clerk of Court, 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, New Orleans

Guests:

- Sarah Bertelot, President and CEO of the Louisiana Association of United Ways, Lafayette
- Amanda Brown, Executive Director, Lagniappe Law Lab, New Orleans
- Cassie Hollins, LSBA Leadership Class, Baton Rouge
- Hon. Patricia Oppenheim, Judge 22nd Judicial District, Covington

LSBA Staff:

- Stephanie Beough, ATJ Projects Counsel
- Bridget Berins, ATJ Coordinator
- Rebecca Collins, ATJ Projects Counsel
- Amy Duncan, ATJ Training & Projects Counsel
- Rachael Mills, ATJ Projects Counsel
- Monte Mollere, ATJ Director

I. Welcome and Introduction

Co-Chair Alainna Mire opened the meeting, welcomed new members, and reminded everyone about the upcoming January meeting, which will coincide with the LSBA mid-year meeting. Monte Mollere introduced Casey Hollins, a member of the LSBA Leadership Class.



II. Consent Calendar

Adoption of the Consent Calendar was moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

III. Commission Issues and Initiatives

Alainna encouraged new members to join committees, stressing the importance of active participation.

- a. **Accessibility Committee** –Valerie Schexnayder announced the upcoming Disability Law and Accessibility-themed journal, scheduled for publication in October-November 2024, with articles on ASL interpreters, court access innovations, and supported decision-making.
- b. **Community Outreach and Education Committee** - Sarah Berthelot, President and CEO of the Louisiana Association of United Ways emphasized the importance of civil legal resources for litigants and the value of partnerships. Sarah also mentioned the success of recent training sessions with Louisiana 211 and LSU libraries, which focused on navigating civil legal help. Upcoming training sessions for court and clerk staff on legal resources were also discussed. Stephanie discussed House Concurrent Resolution 38, aimed at raising awareness of legal options for individuals with disabilities and the development of a bench card for judges and attorneys.
- c. **Funding Committee Report** -Chris Ralston discussed the committee’s efforts to secure funding for Louisiana civil legal aid, celebrating the success in obtaining federal funding and stressing the need for continued state support. He emphasized the importance of education and advocacy to maintain and increase funding for civil legal aid.
- d. **Modest Means Committee** – Amy Duncan introduced the Modest Means Directory and announced an upcoming CLE on October 2, which will cover professionalism and law office management. She highlighted the high demand for modest means services and encouraged attorneys to join the directory.
- e. **Self-Represented Litigants (SRL) Committee** -Judge Patti Oppenheim reported on the opening of a legal help access point in St. Bernard Parish. She shared plans for the 2025 SRL Service Provider Summit and coordination with the Judicial College. The committee is working on automating court forms, coordinating self-help centers, and providing training for judges and staff. Stephanie Beaugh mentioned collaboration on developing resources for self-represented litigants for the Louisiana Board of Tax Appeals.
- f. **Technology Committee Report** - Amanda Brown reported on the development of eviction forms, focusing on simplified answer forms and trial preparation guides. The court kiosks project aims to establish kiosks in every district courthouse in Louisiana. Amanda Brown also discussed the Will Generator Project that she is



collaborating with Adrienne Wheeler from Louisiana Appleseed to automate living wills and last wills. The upcoming Legal Needs Assessment Project, funded by the Legal Services Corporation, was highlighted, with an emphasis on its integration with the navigator.

IV. Bar Foundation Report - Chuck Bourque provided updates on the Bar Foundation's new Executive Director, Laura Sewell, and the establishment of the Children and Families Justice Clinic at Loyola University College of Law. Chuck discussed grant applications for the LRAP and Kids Chance Scholarship Programs, and upcoming 2024-2025 grant awards. The Bar Foundation's pop-up tours and the next Board of Directors meeting in Shreveport were mentioned. Chuck also noted the annual Fellas Gala as a key event to bring together colleagues with shared interests.

V. Access to Justice Committee Issues and Initiative

- a. Disaster Law Collaboration Summit** - Sachida Raman reported on the Disaster Law Collaboration Summit in Lafayette, where 24 disaster response organizations gathered. Lafayette Mayor President Monique Blanco Boulet gave the keynote address, and the summit featured sessions on disaster response and legal solutions. Sachida highlighted the role of the Acadiana Justice Bus in providing legal services to disaster survivors.
- b. Pro Bono Campaign Introduction** - Rachael Mills introduced the 25 in 2025 Pro Bono Campaign, which encourages attorneys to complete 25 hours of pro bono work in 2025. Plans to promote the campaign through Bar Journal articles, social media, and letters from the court were outlined.

VI. Meeting Adjournment A motion to adjourn, was unanimously approved.

Next Meeting: January 16, 2025, with the ATJ Committee at the Renaissance Baton Rouge.