



Nevada Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission



Minutes

Friday, March 11, 2016 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Video Conference Sites: **Las Vegas** Regional Justice Center, 17th Floor
Supreme Court, AOC Room B

Carson City Supreme Court
Law Library, Room 107

Reno 2nd Judicial District Court
75 Court Street – Room 220B

Elko 4th Judicial District Court

Commission Members in Attendance

Justice James Hardesty
Justice Michael Douglas
Julie Mogensen
John Desmond
Judge Patrick Flanagan
James Conway
AnnaMarie Johnson
Melanie Kushnir
Julie Cavanaugh-Bill
Sugar Vogel
Heather Caliguire
Connie Akridge
Judge Elizabeth Gonzalez
Judge James Wilson
Doreen Spears Hartwell
Ron Spratt
Judge Tod Young

Attending Guests

Kimberly Farmer
Max Couvillier
Andy Mierins
Buck Lewis
Stephanie McDonald

Staff Members Present

Angela Washington

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Access to Justice Commission meeting was called to order at 2:09 pm by Justice Douglas. Opening statements regarding the Ely Family Law Conference were made and thereafter a roll call was conducted.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the approval of the following minutes from previous meetings:

Approval of November 20, 2015 ATJ Commission Minutes
Approval of March 1, 2016 ONE Promise Nevada Campaign Minutes

One correction was made to the November 20, 2015 minutes: within the Statewide Legal Service Delivery Reports, Nevada Legal Services, the minutes should reflect that Nevada Legal Services has 25



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attorneys and six offices. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved with the aforementioned correction. A vote was taken and the matter passed unanimously.

Statewide Legal Service Delivery Reports

Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada (LACSN) – Melanie Kushnir provided the report for LACSN. LACSN participated in the Ely Family Law Conference and was able to place nineteen pro bono cases with attorneys in attendance. Appreciation was expressed to the all parties who donated raffle items to the Ely Family Law Conference to support pro bono participation. Also, Jim Berchtold, who recently held the Director of Development and Public Relations position with LACSN is leaving the organization.

Nevada Legal Services (NLS) – AnnaMarie Johnson provided the report for NLS. Krissta Kirschenheiter has been named the new statewide pro bono director for the organization and has assumed the responsibilities of the role. NLS participated in the Ely Family Law Conference and worked to assign pro bono cases there; all pro bono cases were placed during the conference. Also, NLS has instituted a “Pro Bono by Phone” program whereby pro bono attorneys can assist clients by telephone or by Skype. The program has been received very well. NLS is participating in the Ryan White, Part B Program to provide legal assistance for those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and are facing denials of Medicaid coverage as well as an event with the Office of Military Assistance scheduled for March 20th. Lastly, NLS is preparing to hire a Director of Development.

Southern Nevada Senior Law Program (SNSLP) – Sugar Vogel provided the report for SNSLP. SNSLP continues its aggressive outreach and in-office services. Additionally, SNSLP co-hosted a Will Drafting event with the Young Lawyers Section, Nevada Legal Services and Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada during Pro Bono Week. The event was very successful and as a result, SNSLP will be a part of another will drafting event again in April. Lastly, SNSLP is working very closely with the new Elder Abuse Unit in the Clark County District Attorney’s Office.

Washoe Legal Services (WLS) – James Conway provided the report for WLS. WLS hired a new Director of Development. The new director has twenty years of grant writing experience and fundraising experience in the legal field; she has been working with WLS since January of 2016. WLS remains active in Lyon, Humboldt, Pershing and Lander Counties and well as Washoe County. WLS is in the beginning stages of building a more robust pro bono program and hopes to get some off of the ground soon.

Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans (VARN) – Julie Mogensen provided the report for VARN. VARN recently hosted its annual pro bono awards event and presented approximately thirty awards. Additionally, VARN sent four participants to the Ely Family Law Conference and was successful in placing all of its pro bono cases. Lastly, VARN has applied for several grants and has recently hired a new immigration attorney.

Discussion Items

National Pro Bono Online Website. Buck Lewis of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC presented the National Pro Bono Online Website project to the Commission. Mr. Lewis shared the following aspects of the website with the Commission:



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- An income screen is in place and is currently established at 250% of the poverty guideline;
- The program will refer clients to other agencies if the online support is not able to assist. This particular feature is customized for each state;
- The program has the potential to assist one hundred thousand people per year;
- The national site is scheduled to launch August 1, 2016, however the launch time for individual states can be adjusted if needed;
- The website in Tennessee has proven to be of significant assistance to legal services and sometimes acts like a legal 911;
- The website is capable of capturing statistical information, such as number questions answered and the number of topical questions answered;

Community Reinvestment Act Review. Justice Hardesty started the conversation with observations of the Community Reinvestment Act materials. He further noted that a review of the materials could assist the Nevada Bar Foundation with its future meetings with IOLTA participating financial institutions. Commission member, Ron Spratt indicated that banks view the Community Reinvestment Act as another opportunity for banks to give back. Regarding whether banks benefit from tax credits for IOLTA dollars, research will be conducted so that the results could possibly be used for future meetings with participating financial institutions.

Update on Providers Summit & Statewide Service Delivery Plan. Justice Hardesty reported that the Statewide Service Delivery Plan is being written. The plan is the result of several summits that included the legal aid organization executive directors and board members dating back to 2014. The goal is to present an outline of the plan to the summit participants for further input and then to have a draft for review by the Commission at the June meeting.

Reports

Statewide Self Help Centers/Website – The Statewide Self Help Center and Website project report was provided by Judge Tod Young and Stephanie McDonald. This project started at the State Bar’s Annual Meeting last year when Judge Young sought out information about Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada’s pro bono website, forms and other services provided. Justice Douglas, Judge Young, Barbara Buckley and others met to discuss next steps in instituting a new self-help program that could be used in the rural areas of the state. From there, the subcommittee worked on forms for use on the website, starting with the vetting of forms from other regions for use in the rurals.

Nevada Bar Foundation/IOLTA Program Report – Connie Akridge provided the report for the Nevada Bar Foundation/IOLTA Program and in doing so, presented to the Commission the annual report that was provided to the participating financial institutions. Additionally, a final report on the IOLTA Program grants was made – a total of \$2,813,917 was granted to fourteen programs.

Appellate Law Section/Pro Bono Program Update – Melanie Kushnir provided the report for the Appellate Law Pro Bono Program. One hundred and six clients have been referred to the appellate pro bono program, eighty percent of which are income eligible. Eighty-three of the referred clients have been matched with attorneys. Appellate litigation attorneys have been recruited to serve as mentors for those attorneys who take a pro bono case and many of the cases have led to published opinions.



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UNLV Boyd Law School PILA Report – Heather Caliquire provided the report for PILA. PILA hosted its annual Public Interest Law Association Auction on March 4th. This year’s Silver Staircase Honoree was Justice Kristina Pickering. Also, the auction awarded its inaugural Silver Embrace Award to The Embracing Project. Thirty-four thousand dollars was raised at the auction and close to 200 people were in attendance.

Other Business

In other business, the Judge Gonzalez discussed lunch meetings with large and medium firms to discuss an increase in pro bono. Also, Judge Flanagan reported that Renee Kelly and Caryn Tijsseling made a pro bono request to the Washoe County District Judges for their assistance in meeting with law firms in the area. Thirty-three targeted law firms were identified and each judge committed to taking attending lunch at two firms to recruit for the ONE Campaign.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 pm.