



ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION

Access to Justice Commission Meeting Minutes Friday, March 6, 2020 – 2:00 p.m.

Commission Members Present

Justice James Hardesty
Justice Kristina Pickering
Connie Akridge
Latoya Bembry
Bobbette Bond
Julie Cavanaugh-Bill
John Desmond
Annamarie Johnson
Bronaugh Kelly
Judge Joanna Kishner
Noah Malgeri
Doreen Spears Hartwell
Judge Connie Steinheimer
Glen Stevens
Victoria Mendoza
Judge E. Alan Tiras
Anne Traum
Adam Tully
Sugar Vogel
Judge Nathan Tod Young

Guests Present

Bailey Bortolin
Barbara Buckley
Deonne Contine
Stephanie McDonald
Marissa Otteson
Jon Sasser
Susan Splan (IPO Raine Shortridge)
Summer Youngquist

Staff Present

Brad Lewis

Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes

The Access to Justice Commission (Commission) meeting was called to order. Justice Hardesty welcomed Victoria Mendoza, the replacement for Julie Bobzien at Volunteer Attorneys for Rural



Nevadans (VARN), Jon Sasser who stood in for James Conway after he departed Washoe Legal Services for the Reno Justice Court and Susan Splan, standing in for Raine Shortridge/Nevada State Bank. Justice Hardesty also congratulated UNLV PILA President and Commission member Alexis Taitel on a successful Silver State Auction and Judge Frank Sullivan for winning PILA's Silver Embrace Award. A roll call was conducted and approval of the November 15, 2019 minutes was requested. The minutes were adopted for the record.

CLE for Pro Bono ADKT

The CLE for Pro Bono ADKT developed by the Commission was Ordered on February 13, 2020 and goes into effect April 13. The ADKT includes both pro bono case-taking as well as Ask-A-Lawyer and Lawyer in the Library programs. It covers any legal aid provider program or those co-sponsored by legal aid, court, or other governmental organizations such as the Nevada Attorney General's Military Pro Bono Program or Washoe County Law Library. A key understanding agreed upon in the considerations was that more is learned by actual doing than in a webinar or education session.

It was welcomed that the number of pro bono hours devoted to earn one CLE credit was reduced from four to three. Chief Justice Kristina Pickering was important to this effort. Several Commission members shared their thanks with the Court and several mentioned that Legal Aid Center's Chair Patty Lee was eloquent in her support of hands-on learning during the public hearing. Justice Hardesty shared his appreciation for the efforts of the Nevada Board of Continuing Legal Education (NVCLE).

It was discussed that we should periodically review the effect on pro bono hours and questions were asked about how the reporting/recording would take place. Legal aid providers and court programs will keep track of attorney hours throughout the year. We will have an accounting of total hours awarded at year end from NVCLE. It was determined Brad would work with the providers and NVCLE on the details.

Pro Bono Promotion

It was determined that we should proceed with the previously discussed law firm CLE in the spring as a way to encourage taking cases and participating in Ask-A-Lawyer sessions. At this time members of the Court could formally roll out the new CLE for Pro Bono rule.

Statewide Technology and Self Help Forms

Using the new Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) information management system, more work on having more widely available statewide legal forms is in process. Stephanie McDonald of Legal Aid Center's Family Law Self-Help Center has already sent a new batch to Robin Sweet at AOC. Ms. Sweet has emailed them to all district court judges. When asked whether or not the forms were being accessed and used, Judge Young indicated that he does see them used.

Judge Tiras, a member of the Nevada Judges of Limited Jurisdiction (NJLJ) shared that a small NJLJ group is also working on providing forms for statewide use. Judge Tiras has met with staff members of the Self



Help Centers and the Commission in order to coordinate when practical. Nevada Legal Services added that they have updated landlord/tenant forms.

Justice Hardesty inquired about the universality of forms for use statewide and asked if forms had been catalogued. Summer Youngquist of the Clark County Law Library indicated that CCLL had catalogued many forms but said the age and current accuracy of the forms and web links are in question. An update would be needed to make it really useful. Justice Hardesty asked if the catalogue could be shared with the Commission for review. She replied CCLL would be happy to send to Brad. Brad should also reach out to the Washoe courts, including the Reno Justice Court and Churchill County.

Nominations

The following Commission member terms expire July 1, 2020: Judge Frank Sullivan, Annamarie Johnson, Noah Malgeri, Victoria Mendoza and Anne Traum. Additionally, 2019-20 UNLV PILA President Alexis Taitel rotated off April 15. The new PILA President is Ms. Greer Sullivan who should join us in June.

IOLTA

It was shared that the last IOLTA grant cycle saw the largest grants ever in Nevada IOLTA history. The 2019 grant was approximately \$3.2 million and the 2020 grant was approximately \$4.7 million, a substantial increase. Interest rates and financial institution participation at the Leadership Institution level contributed to these gains.

Chief Justice Pickering suggested in light of changing economic conditions and COVID-19, we should consider quicker action related to the next rate review.

Coronavirus

COVID-19 is beginning to change things and could increase the number of clients seen by legal aid and require changes in how the courts operate. It was reported that the Eighth, Second and Ninth Judicial District Courts have begun to put COVID-19 protocols into place. Incline Village is considering whether remote appearances may become mandatory. Guardianship matters may need to allow for appearance by video.

Justice Hardesty requested an update from each legal aid provider.

- Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada – The Family Law Self Help Center moved into a larger space better equipped to handle client needs. Wait times have improved for clients as a result and there is an overall less chaotic vibe. The new layout offers the benefit of more one on one assistance. The computer lab size has doubled. Users have noted that they appreciate the service and feel more like a person versus a number. An area of concern noted is that it would be better if family court judges prepared relevant orders when pro se clients are involved. While some do, many do not, which causes confusion, sometimes leaving opposing party



attorneys writing orders and contributes to delays. Judge Young suggested that this should be brought up in Bishop at the Family Law Conference Judges Meeting.

- Nevada Legal Services – Annamarie Johnson shared that New Mexico operates an interesting program which might be considered in Nevada. High schools run contests where students are encouraged to develop videos that outline legal resources that are available for students’ families. Prizes are awarded for the winners and videos are used in social media and online to help spread the word on services available and the work of the access to justice community. More information here - <https://nmbar.org/BreakingGood>. Winning video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIZq-halgts&feature=emb_title.
- Washoe Legal Services – Jon Sasser has been covering the transition from James Conway who went to Reno Justice Court and the arrival of the new WLS executive director, Deonne Contine. He outlined key issues in play now are housing affordability, homeless camps and TPOs. He noted Bailey Bortolin has done an excellent job on issues related to the legislature.
- Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans (VARN) – The new executive director for VARN, replacing Julie Bobzien, is Victoria Mendoza. She shared while she had been the managing attorney, she’s now tackling the finances and administration. VARN’s February pro bono awards had the largest turnout in recent memory. The program produced 93 attorney appearances, five Ask-A-Lawyer sessions and two Legal Aid Fairs. VARN is working to hire three new attorneys and a grant coordinator. An office move is under consideration.
- Southern Nevada Senior Law Program – The law program is now in its new building and recently welcomed a new hire from UNLV.

Informational Items

Informational items included the following. Details upon request from the Commission:

- Legal Aid Provider Highlights
- Self-Help Center Statistics
- Opioid Effect on Nevada Legal Aid Memo
- Public Awareness