



Judicial Council of Georgia Access to Justice Committee

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

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Dial In

+16465588656, 97364923198# US (New York)

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I. Welcome and Introductions – 10 minutes Justice Bethel

II. Written Reports- Summary of November 13, 2020

SAVE THE DATES – Upcoming Events

Upcoming Tentative A2J Committee Meetings Dates: May 12, August 11 and November 10, 2021 from 12 noon to 1:30 p.m.

A2J Committee Project and Community Updates

III. New Standing Committee CALER Update – 10 minutes, Justice Bethel

IV. SRL Forms Working Group Update <https://georgiacourts.gov/a2j/self-help-resources-highlighted-by-a2j/> -5 minutes, Vicki Kimbrell

V. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Working Group Update – 5 minutes, Jana Edmondson-Cooper

VI. Self-Help Toolkit -5 minutes Tabitha Ponder

VII. Pilot Project Update - 2 minutes, Nancy Long or Gerald Williams

VIII. Free Legal Record Restriction Clinic - 3 minutes, Tabitha Ponder

IX. Old Business / CJE Training Update – 5 minutes, Mike Jacobs

X. New Business/Landlord Tenant Working Group and Mobile App Update – 10 minutes, Judge Cassandra Kirk and Tabitha Ponder

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Judicial Council of Georgia Access to Justice Committee

Friday November 13, 2020

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Present:

Justice Charlie Bethel; Tabitha Ponder; Judge Bill Adams; Judge Cassandra Kirk; Judge Ethan Pham; Vicki Kimbrell; Judge Jason Thompson; Judge Clarence Cuthpert; Terica Ganzy; Sherri Edenfield; Terrica Ganzy; Jana Edmonson-Cooper; Judge Mike Jacobs; Judge Verda Colvin; Judge Warren Davis; Judge Sara Doyle; Judge Maureen Wood; Tracey Johnson

Guests: Nancy Long; Michelle Barclay; Latoinna Lawrence; Nicki Vaughan; Gerald Williams; Noelle-Alvarez Legueux; Cynthia Clanton; LaShawn Murphy; John Botero; Melia Wilson

Welcome and Introductions

Justice Bethel welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting. Tabitha Ponder conducted roll call.

Written Reports

Justice Benham confirmed that the August 19th, 2020 A2J meetings minutes materials were circulated amongst committee members. The minutes were approved by the committee. Justice Bethel also discussed the upcoming to be announced A2J Committee Meeting dates for 2021. Twelve noon will remain the standard traditional meeting time.

New Standing Committee

This full committee is scheduled to meet on December the 10th, 2020. By this date there should be sufficient information available so the committee can start planning. This committee is working towards making law libraries and self-help centers a focus of what they are conducting.

SRL Forms Working Group Update

The SRL Forms Working Group consists of Tabitha Ponder, Latoinna Lawrence, Karlise Grier, Judge Bill Adams, Judge LaTisha Dear-Jackson, and Cathy Waddell. They pulled together files and created the first set of forms together “divorce without children”. The decision was made to start with the easiest set of forms to navigate for self-represented litigants first. Multiple different formats were created: a generic form complaint, matching script and a short video to help people navigate the system and the complaint. The next form is a much more complicated process. The working group is switching from a basic complaint to a complaint with children, parenting plans and all documents that go with a divorce. All forms will be loaded into the judicial portal where self-represented litigants will have access to help them.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Working Group Update

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing subcommittee met and discussed several things, one of which was a way to increase awareness amongst the bar. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing created a bench card that was released in early 2020. One discussion within the subcommittee was how to increase awareness amongst the bar for both practitioners and members of the bench. As of now, virtual CLE(s) that address how to increase access to justice and access to our courts for persons

who are deaf and hard of hearing in is in full effect. There was talk on translating over to virtual hearings, for example: does your technology provide for closed captioning. They also want to have a module with regards to ethical concerns for judges and lawyers with regards to accessibility issues. This is important because ethics and professionalism CLE credits help to draw a crowd because people need those credits, which are a bit more challenging to get in general trial credits. With the help of a sponsorship, and some of these initiatives, there was discussion about applying for a grant with the National Center for state courts and State Justice Institute; they have technical assistance grants available. From experience with the commission, it is known they enjoy collaborative efforts. If this committee can collaborate between this committee and the Access to Justice committee with the State Bar or other stakeholders, that would be very helpful. There has been talk about getting letters of support there, we are reaching out to see just how to make our application as attractive as possible. Lastly, bench cards are still available. Each county should already have some, as samples were sent to each of the judicial districts administrator's offices.

Pilot Project Update

I'm Gerald Williams reported on the Pilot Project update. Since the total pilot project began, there has been 26,717 patrons that talked to their staff. Since the last Access to Justice meeting three months ago, we've had 3039 patrons their center and all forms have been updated. The forms are on the Dougherty county website. Currently, they are working on the translation of the forms to Spanish. They continue to assist all the patrons by phone in person technology, completing the forms by accessing peach court. They are also referring patrons to community partners and virtual court hearings are being held. The YMCA is partnering with us with the goodwill industry and the Albany Housing Authority. They have mailed letters to churches and other organizations to tell them about the Self-Help Center and what we offer. Nancy Long will meet with an immigration attorney later this month to talk about immigration customs enforcement issues. They are beginning to work on sustainability of the Self-Help Center. During a recent board meeting last week, the board is on board with trying to do the alternative dispute resolution program, this will act as their anchor as it relates to any sustainability. Judge Locket's clerk will be the contact person for the ADR project in Albany, Georgia in Dougherty County. He's been in contact with Tracy Johnson and received the model rules and has numerous discussions with her concerning the program. He also sent a proposed plan to Tracy for review. And he like I said he will be the point man. There may possibly be some attorneys to be trained by Tracy. The Self-Help Center and Dougherty county for the southwest Georgia will have six new computers. And a big thank you was giving to John Botero. John translated some of the most used forms for the pilot project into Spanish.

Free Legal Record Restriction/Expungement Clinic

A clinic was held on September 11th in Columbus, Georgia. And it was so much of a success, that we had to do a second part of the clinic on September 16th. Both clinics are now completed. A new grant is currently in the works with the Chief Justice Commission on professionalism for \$40,000. The next intended clinic locations will be in Tifton followed by Statesboro, Georgia.

Notice of Appeal Issue

Per Judge Doyle, we will revisit this issue in the future after COVID winter season.

Old Business /Stonewall Bar Association Judicial Section CJE Proposal

Judge Jacobs represents the Stonewall Bar Association on this committee and serves on the board. More than a year ago, they formed a judicial session, which is now comprised of 13 judges representing all classes of courts, except the probate courts. One vision for this judicial section was to sponsor a training on addressing sexual orientation and gender identity in courtroom settings that they would develop and take to each class of court at their periodic conferences. The first training is scheduled for Monday, December 7, from 12 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. They brought in two national judicial educators in this area, one of which comes from another state's Administrative Office of the Courts. Her name is Lisa Burke, she is the minority Programs Coordinator for the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts. And the other is Drew Lasser, who previously worked for Lambda Legal out of Atlanta but now is the diversity and inclusion director for the National LGBT Bar Association. During these trainings, judges feel awkward to ask for pronouns. They want people to feel free to inform the court how you wish to be addressed. There will be a two-hour session, however it is not possible to receive prior approval for CJ IE credit from the various classes of court, probate court, juvenile court and municipal court do not give advance credit. The superior and state court councils have approved it, so any superior court judge or state court judge who participates in this session will be able to get two hours of credit of CJ D credit for participating in the session. The magistrate court counsel turned us down, they have a prior approval process. All forms were filled out, but the response was that they were not willing to give advanced credit, but would consider on a judge by judge basis, anyone who applies for credit after the fact. This was one of our core objectives for forming the judicial section of the Stonewall bar. It will be virtually so any judge can participate, and the superior and state court judges will all be able to get credit for it as well. And I'll be happy to answer any questions. The first hour and a half will be recorded and later reserving the last half hour for question and answers. Judges are welcome to interject with questions but note those questions would be recorded. At the end of the presentations, they will go over the vocabulary pertaining to the LGBTQIA community.

New Business/Landlord Tenant Working Group and Mobile App

Cassandra Kirk, Tabitha Ponder, Latoinna Lawrence, Terrica Ganzy, Judge Bloom and Vicky Kimbrell are the committee along with three Georgia Tech students who have also volunteered. This committee is currently working on an app, pulling information from the Maryland law center. They are now outlining what should be included and how the app should work. We've received extensive resources from Terrica Ganzy has provided extensive resources. The Georgia Tech students are planning to develop a survey to gather information about people's ability to access resources at court. They will conduct court visits to Fulton and Gwinnett magistrate courts, so they can observe the sausage making of the landlord tenant process. Terrica Ganzy has started gathering resources for the citizens as it relates to eviction issues and Vicky Kimbrell will gather these resources and place in one document and try to disseminate it across the state.

Meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.