



## Judicial Council of Georgia Access to Justice Committee Meeting

August 31, 2021  
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://georgiacourts-gov.zoom.us/j/81910790794?pwd=Q3dkeG1qTWZYOY21pOGtUcXZ6MXhaUT09>  
Meeting ID: 819 1079 0794  
Passcode: 367122

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Find your local number: <https://georgiacourts-gov.zoom.us/u/kd4PoJR8L0>

- I. Welcome and Introductions – 10 minutes Justice Bethel
- II. Written Reports- Summary of May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, minutes

### *SAVE THE DATES – Upcoming Events*

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

### **A2J Committee Project and Community Updates**

- III. New Standing Committee CALER and Annual Diversity Bars Meeting- 10 minutes, Justice Bethel
- IV. SRL Forms Working Group Update -10 minutes, Vicky Kimbrell
- V. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Working Group Update – 5 minutes, Jana Edmondson-Cooper
- VI. Pilot Project- 5 minutes, Nancy Long
- VII. Landlord Tenant Working Group and Survey Update – 10 minutes, Judge Cassandra Kirk
- VIII. Legal Record Restriction Clinic - 3 minutes, Tabitha Ponder
- IX. Old Business – 5 minutes
- X. New Business - 5 minutes

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**Judicial Council of Georgia**  
**Access to Justice Committee Minutes**  
**May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Justice Bethel opened the meeting. A brief discussion on hybrid meetings was discussed for the month of August, dependent on the conditions. The 2021 Annual State Bar meeting was discussed next. Justice Bethel encouraged all who can to attend either in person or virtually.

**Written Reports**

Minutes from the February 10, 2021, A2J Committee Meeting were approved.

**New Standing CALER Committee**

This committee is now in the “collection cycle” and moving forward with ideas within the committee.

**SRL Forms Working Group**

The forms working group is in the process on working on the script that will go with each video.

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Working Group**

This group is working to apply for a grant for the hearing devices. However, the grant would not allow for us to purchase equipment. As of now, we are looking into other ways to purchase equipment. Mobile hearing devices are preferred as they can be transported to different courthouses for usage. Per the AOC budget officer, the original prices of each device are \$3000 or \$4000. Per Will Simmons, we could purchase 10 for around \$4000 to \$5000 total.

**Self-Help Toolkit**

We have received 300 revised copies of the self-help toolkits. We are working on sending them to the court and the district court administrators. There is a Spanish version, but only in electronic version for now.

**Landlord Tenant Working Group**

Observations in Fulton are completed, next we are going to conduct observations in Cobb. Tabitha and Michelle have identified a few Georgia Tech students who are working on the app. With the moratorium set to expire, we are trying to find a way to keep people in their homes. There are several reports from New Hampshire Ohio and more, regarding volunteer programs. In Georgia, we have the mediators, and we would have enough to volunteer mediations throughout the state.

### **Pilot Project**

They have served 2133 patrons since the last Access to Justice meeting in February of 2021. In February, we had 858. March of 2021, they had 795. And in April, they experienced a dip to 460. The courthouse is open to patrons and the public. They applied for a grant for the Truest Foundation. The Honorable Kenneth Hodges the third assisted with their move from the second floor the first floor of the building. The Truest Grant approved a grant of \$15,000 for them to make the move. They received grants from the Georgia Bar Foundation with IOLTA. They have received \$20,000 for an audit, full time and part time staff. They have a CCLC grant of \$150,000 and projecting there will be a surplus. They had a fellows grant from the Georgia Bar Foundation in the amount of \$10,000. They are asking for money for computers and a scanner, and we spent about \$5800 so far and they have \$4200 left. The unauthorized or unlicensed practice of law was discussed. They help with people that have judicial specific packets only, not Legal Zoom or etc. The UPL department from the State Bar did partner with us. Steve Kaczowski reviewed the UPL counterpart before we produced it to make suggestions and edits. He was very helpful and would be excited to talk and share with our group.

### **Record Restriction Clinic**

The next clinic will take place May 22<sup>nd</sup>, it will be a virtual clinic in the Tifton Judicial District. Judge McBride was very involved in past Columbus clinic, he promoted the event on the radio several times spoke at different events. A second record restriction clinic was scheduled, because so many people attended the first Columbus clinic. Now, we have the same enthusiasm with judge Chief Judge Reinhardt. We are also looking to go to Gainesville, GA. The judges, DA, solicitor, and public defender are all on board and the sheriff will provide us free GCIC reports.

### **Old Business**

We discussed the possibility of looking into a fall conference for our Access to Justice Committee meeting at the State Bar. We will reach out to people and ask if they are interested in attending a fall conference.

### **New Business**

Any attorneys that practice in that that are that reside in Fulton County have part time judge vacancies. Also, the commission will have one final CLE coming up part two the CLE deadline of May 31. The CLE is scheduled for May 26 2021 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Justice Bethel will be our special guest and Tabitha Ponder will moderate on a pro bono panel.

# **Judicial Council of Georgia**

## **Annual Diversity Bars Minutes**

**June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

### **GAWL**

Judge Angela Brown of the Cobb County Superior Court here for GAWL. The Leadership Academy continues to be strong, impacting our younger leaders who are interested in getting into the leadership portion. They must have six years or more in law and completed some community work. The women's reentry program is going well also. They are looking forward to their new incoming president, Tina Folsom. They are working on reaching out in solidarity with other bars and showing our presence at other committees within their leadership programs as well.

### **Gate City**

There will be a full CLE, dealing with issues relating to getting back to business as normal, in the new remote hearings. The CLE will be Saturday morning from 8:30am to 1:30pm. And then jazz with judges which includes full course meal, wine and live music. Judge Brown was thanked for the ethics and professional responsibility legislative and Supreme Court updates, pandemic emergency court operations, post court COVID jury trials, the future virtual proceedings and trial practice panel of the bargain price of \$175.

### **Georgia Legal Services**

GLS represents victims of family violence survivors to secure protective orders and legal representation in cases involving healthcare, food stamps, and financial security in the 154 cases across rural Georgia. Because of COVID and the resulting loss of jobs and lack of childcare some survivors were staying in their homes with abusers. More recently survivors have been able to escape the abuse and GLSP caseloads are up. GLSP also recently received a Georgia Rental Assistance grant from the Department of Community affairs and as a result of the CDC moratorium we have seen a massive increase in cases regarding evictions. Through our Rental Assistance program, GLSP has been able to provide legal representation and rental assistance to preserve housing for tenants across rural Georgia. GLSP has 10 regional offices across the state and eligible clients can call 1 833-457-7529 to see if they are eligible for legal representation.

### **GABWA**

They have held an estates planning training for members with the intent to provide wills for teachers. The training took place June 3, and they will hopefully have additional wills trainings throughout the year. They have also been planning for the 40th GABWA anniversary. The broadcast will take place on September 25, 2021, and tickets will be \$50. They will have an upcoming general meeting in June meeting which will take place on the June 17th at 6pm and it will also be virtual. It is the ABCs of Georgia's Election Integrity Act, that is SB202.

### **Stonewall Bar Association**

They started the judicial section of the State Bar Association to help organize the judges in our community, which has allowed us to expand for just doing CLE is also doing CJs for judges throughout the state regarding LGBTQ issues. They started a racial justice grant, which is a grant program to

received 17 applications. Now that they created a new sponsorship level to continue the program called the Racial Justice grant sponsorship. They will have their annual dinner in person this year, as well as live streamed. It will take place in late October (they are still working on the actual date.) On June 14 of a virtual CLE on the boss stock decision which stated that discrimination is LGBTQ people and employment is illegal. And on June 26, they will have their first in person event.

### **Georgia Latino Law Foundation**

This this foundation translated the current Self Help Toolkit booklets into Spanish with Anna Maria Martinez assistance. She is the staff attorney to Judge Max Lopez by day and she is the president of the Georgia Latino Law Foundation. Last year, GLLF started a virtual judicial internship program. Last year they placed 29 law students with judges all around the state everywhere from federal judges to magistrate judges and served virtually for six weeks.

### **Atlanta Legal Aid**

Mike Monahan spoke on the state bar's access to justice committee. They have several projects have been underway at the Bars Access to Justice committee. Often you will hear about court-based efforts on the Judicial Council side, and you will hear about member bar member focused efforts on our side. They have watched each other's agendas and attend each other's meetings and they have two bar rule proposals in the pipeline that are going to the access to justice committee at the bar. One is on authorizing in House counsel in Georgia to engage in pro bono efforts with recognized public interest programs and pro bono programs. It is being refined; they may hold a vote on a final proposal at our next meeting this summer. The second rule would allow inactive lawyers to practice pro bono. They are not sure if they are going to combine the two together and present the two together yet, it depends on the evolution of the two proposals. This committee is also helping to supporting Georgia free legal answers.org, which is a virtual platform. This allows people with legal problems who have under 200% of the poverty guideline to post a question online and have volunteer lawyers answer them virtually in real time. They are morphing the Georgia bar, which is in once a year on a roll CLE certificate program and works with the recognized pro bono programs into a statewide web based on a roll that lawyers can self-add. They have adopted Georgia Legal Connect for a pilot program, which allows another virtual platform for a lawyer to work on a case with a client through a legal aid program. Finally, they are working to support Georgia Legal Services by starting a Mini Pro Bono mediation program, currently looking at Bibb County.

### **Georgia Hispanic Bar**

They have two big events each year, the Veterans Day ceremony and Latin America. The Georgia Latino Foundation and the Georgia Hispanic Bar also work together on a multitude of projects.

### **Lawyers for Equal Justice**

We will follow up on updates from this organization in the future.

### **Access to Justice for the Georgia Judicial Council**

To clarify, they have access to Justice for the Georgia Judicial Council and Access to Justice for the State Bar, there are two different Access to Justice Committee. One big project that is in rotation are free legal clinics, which are expungements across the state of Georgia where they focus on rural areas

to bring free legal resources. The volunteer lawyers receive CLE credit as well. When the clinics took place in person, the self-help toolkits were distributed (the same toolkit that was translated in Spanish.) There are also working on Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons matters. In the moment they are working on upgrading the order PA systems in courtrooms and have created a counter card to help people. For Landlord Tenant issues, they are in the initial stages to see if they can create a landlord tenant mediation ADR program statewide. Their program does send the landlords to mediation, they have partnered with mediators and legal aid in the landlord tenant so we can get as many people some funding and to keep as many people in their homes as possible.