

Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice
Minutes of the
Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice
January 18, 2017, 2:00 p.m.
Room 204, 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT

Members in attendance: Atty. Jeffrey J. Dowd, Ms. Krista Hess, Ms. Dawn La Valle, Co-Chairs; Atty. Jamey Bell, Ms. Heather Collins, Ms. Kate Frank, Ms. Ann H. Doherty, Atty. Cheryl Halford, Mr. Kirk Morrison, Ms. Linda Panovich-Sachs, Mr. Christopher M. Roy, Mr. Jonathan Stock

Members absent: Atty. Anne Rajotte, Ms. Gaye Rizzo

Guest: Mr. Joseph DiTunno, Deputy Director, Court Support Services Division (CSSD)

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m.

I. Review and approval of draft minutes – September 14, 2016

The minutes of the September 14, 2016 meeting of the Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice, as amended, were approved by those members who attended that meeting.

II. Presentation by Joseph DiTunno, Deputy Director, Court Support Services Division

Mr. Joseph DiTunno, Deputy Director, Programs and Statewide Projects, Family Services, CSSD, was invited to the workgroup meeting in response to a heightened awareness of the number of supervised visitation interactions taking place in libraries, as observed by public librarians. Mr. DiTunno explained that there are very few judge ordered supervised visitations. Most supervised visitations are voluntary arrangements agreed to by the parties involved. He further explained that the visitations may be supervised by a mutually agreed upon family member or a third party. The goal of the supervised family visitations is to eliminate barriers to seeing a child, and to provide a safe environment for the visitation to take place. The expectation is that library safety and security rules would be followed by all.

III. Prioritize Proposed Program Initiatives and Form Sub-workgroups

a) Marketing and Outreach to Public Libraries

The establishment of a “legal corner” in public libraries was suggested as a way to create a hub for patrons to access law-related resources and forms. It was agreed that such a hub should consist of a dedicated, imaged computer that would provide access to current legal information and would eliminate the need for library staff to maintain the currency of a print collection.

Members agreed that success of any proposed program will rely on getting the right message out to potential users. The need for marketing strategies was stressed. Public relations initiatives including public service announcements, posters, brochures, press releases, social media postings, and communication talking points were discussed. It was agreed that a consistent, clear message that is directed to both librarians and the public about resources and services needs to be drafted. Ms. La Valle stated that the State Library would be able to assist with the graphic designing and the printing of materials. It was determined that the outreach messages would have more impact if issued by the Access to Justice Commission. The initiatives will be presented to the Commission at its next meeting for review and approval.

b) Training Programs for Public Librarians

Mr. Roy reported on the legal reference training program presented to public librarians in December. The program was held at the State Library Middletown Service Center computer lab. Enrollment was limited to twelve participants. The presenters were from the Judicial Branch and UConn Law School. The program offered interactive, hands-on legal reference interview exercises. The program was well received by the attendees. Mr. Roy reported that the program will be offered again in April 2017. Also, additional advanced legal reference programs are to be planned for future presentations.

c) Justice Clinics in Public Libraries

Ms. Hess presented survey results from the canvassing of individuals attending the 2015 Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic. Patients waiting for clinic services were questioned by legal aid advocates as to whether or not they would utilize services offered at free legal aid tent, if available at the dental clinic. The majority of those questioned stated that they would take advantage of such a service. The suggestion was that the workgroup consider organizing a “justice clinic” to work toward meeting unmet legal needs, modeled on the dental clinic format. A one day program offering speakers, resource tables, and volunteer attorneys to answer questions was discussed. The consensus of the Workgroup was that the planning for a program should begin, but the planned program should start on a small scale, and grow based on interest and experience. It was emphasized that publicity was extremely important in order to reach key audiences.

d) Programming

Ms. Hess discussed the idea of the Workgroup creating a speakers program that would make available speakers from the Judicial Branch who would present programs at public libraries on law related topics of interest to library patrons. The Workgroup program would be modeled after the Judicial Branch Speakers Bureau.

Ms. La Valle distributed information about an American Library Association initiative focusing on working with veterans’ associations to assist veterans to find relevant information and resources to meet their unique needs. The Workgroup agreed that this would be another programming initiative to consider.

e) Sub-workgroups

Workgroup members volunteered to work on the following sub-workgroups:

Marketing and Outreach	Training	Justice Clinic	Speakers Bureau
Heather Collins	Jamey Bell	Jamey Bell	Heather Collins
Kate Frank	Cheryl Halford	Krista Hess	Jeff Dowd
Krista Hess	Kirk Morrison	Dawn La Valle	Krista Hess
Dawn La Valle	Chris Roy	Linda Panovich-Sachs	

All initiatives discussed by the Workgroup will be presented to the Access to Justice Commission at the next meeting for review and approval.

IV. Next meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.