

**Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice**  
**Minutes of the**  
**Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice**  
**March 16, 2016, 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; Ms. Heather Collins, Ms. Ann H. Doherty, Atty. Cheryl Halford, Atty. Anne Rajotte, Mr. Christopher M. Roy, Mr. Jonathan Stock, Ms. Julie Styles.

**Members absent:** Atty. Jamey Bell; Mr. Joseph DiBenedetto, Atty. Jocelyn Kennedy.

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm.

**I. Review and approval of draft minutes – October 27, 2015**

The Workgroup voted to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2015 meeting of the Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice. Heather Collins abstained from voting since she did not attend the October meeting.

**II. Review and Discussion of Programs for Public Librarians**

**a) Review/Feedback of “*Court Services and Legal Reference for Librarians*” for Librarians**

Cheryl Halford and Chris Roy reported on the program “*Court Services and Legal Reference for Librarians*”, which was presented to public librarians on October 29, 2015, at the Middletown Library Service Center, and again on March 3, 2016, at the Acton Public Library, Old Saybrook. It was stated that the program was well received in both locations. Workgroup members discussed the need to promote the program and reach more public librarians. Dawn La Valle stated that there are nine public library liaison groups throughout the state and perhaps having those groups involved in gauging interest and facilitating local arrangements for the program may be helpful to promote interest and schedule programs in the future. Dawn stated that the biggest challenge is making the connection with the public librarians. She also said that it is important to offer the program one or two times a year on a regular schedule.

Additional ideas for future initiatives were discussed by the Workgroup. One suggestion was that a staff person from the Court Service Centers and a law librarian team up to visit local public libraries. The team would informally provide the local librarians with a brief overview of the services and resources available at the courthouses.

It was also suggested that the Judicial Branch “Legal Exchange” programs, offered at the various courthouses, may be of interest to the public librarians.

**b) Planning of Second Program**

Anne Rajotte met with Cheryl and Chris to discuss and plan a second program on legal reference for public librarians. A draft of a program outline was distributed to the Workgroup for review. The proposed presentation would consist of multiple parts, covering a basic overview of the legal system, legal research and resources, with the final components offering interactive learning opportunities. Anne stated she uses the interactive model when teaching law students. The method engages learners and helps them put the information to practical use. The Workgroup decided the Middletown Library Service Center would provide the best setting to conduct the interactive program. The number of participants would be small, limited to the number of computers available in the center’s computer lab. Additional staff would be available to assist the participants, as needed. The Workgroup discussed whether attendance at the “*Court Services and Legal Reference for Librarians*” program would be a pre-requisite to registering for the interactive program. The

consensus of the group was that it would be best practice to attend the legal reference program before the interactive program. The intent is to build a progression of legal research learning experiences for the public librarians. The planning group will continue drafting a detailed outline for the second training program.

**c) eRegulations System Program for Public Librarians**

Ann Doherty reported that Kristin Karr, eRegulations Manager, Office of the Connecticut Secretary of the State, contacted the Judicial Branch Law Library Services to discuss possible training opportunities for the law librarians. Ann stated that Carolyn Child, UConn Law student, is interning this semester at the Office of the Secretary of the State and wanted to present training on the eRegulations portal to librarians for her course project. Carolyn indicated that she would like to create a program for public librarians. Jon Stock mentioned that the Law Librarian section of the Connecticut Bar Association worked with Kristin to produce a webinar and asked Dawn if the public librarians would be interested in viewing the presentation. Ann thought Carolyn was planning on a program, perhaps a slidecast or webinar, which would be designed to meet the needs of the public librarians. Dawn agreed. Ann stated she would forward Dawn's contact information to Carolyn and Kristin.

**III. Organizing the Bar/Judicial Branch Outreach and Programs for Public Libraries**

Krista Hess reported that she discussed the possibility of holding "Ask a Lawyer" sessions in public libraries with some bar members. The response was that there is a great concern about safety issues on the part of the attorneys. At this time, due to the reluctance of the attorneys to offer help sessions in the public libraries, that initiative is put on hold.

Jeff Dowd asked Dawn if the public libraries would be interested in displaying print guides and informational material about the law and the courts. Dawn stated that the handouts are always desired, either for staff or the public. Dawn stated that the Access to Justice Fair material was very helpful. Krista suggested that the resources in the book could be updated, and perhaps expanded, and bound for distribution to the public libraries. Also, it was suggested that the link to an online resource guide be incorporated on a bookmark or palm card for quick reference by library staff or the public. Dawn thought that was an excellent idea. She mentioned that she has been contacted by other state libraries inquiring about the activities of the Access to Justice Workgroup and the benefits derived by the public libraries from the relationships established with the other Access to Justice Workgroup members.

Jon stated that the Law Librarian section of the Connecticut Bar Association is interested in creating a joint workshop on libraries and Access to Justice, with the possibility of videotaping the program. Krista requested that Jon forward her contact information for the bar association's Law Librarian Section Chair.

Krista mentioned that a suggestion was made at the Access to Justice Fair that library liaisons work with each section for the Connecticut Bar Association.

It was noted by Heather that the Access to Justice Commission is scheduled to meet on March 30, 2016.

**IV. Next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.