

Minutes
Access to Justice Commission
[Workgroup on Libraries and Access to Justice](#)

Wednesday, April 9, 2014
225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT

Members present: Atty. Jeffrey J. Dowd, Co-Chair; Krista Hess, Co-Chair; Ms. Dawn M. La Valle, Co-Chair; Ms. Aisha Banks; Atty. Nancy C. Boone; Ms. Heather Collins; Mr. Joseph DiBenedetto; Ms. Ann H. Doherty; Ms. Anne Rajotte; Mr. Christopher M. Roy; Mr. Jonathan Stock, Ms. Julie Styles.

Members absent: Atty. Jamey Bell; Atty. Cheryl Halford, Atty. Barbara McGrath.

- I. Welcome:** The Co-Chairs welcomed the members announced that, Ms. Styles, the Professional Development Coordinator for the Division of Library Development for the Connecticut State Library, is now a full member of the Workgroup.
- II. Review of February 26, 2014 Minutes:** There were no corrections or additions to the Minutes. Motion to approve the Minutes made by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Collins, motion passed.
- III. Review and discussion** of member-shared resources and what to do with the collected information: Following the February meeting, the members provided to Ms. Collins a list of two or three potential library/law library/public information desk/legal information resources found online. The list was compiled by Ms. Collins and distributed to the members for review. After a general discussion, it was decided that before such information could be posted in one place, such as an “Access to Justice” page, it would be best to group the submissions by category and then a decision of where to post it could be made. The Judicial Branch has hundreds of resources in the form of information and links to other sources of information on its website and its law library website, as do virtually all legal aid providers. The Branch is currently reorganizing its web pages to be more user friendly and intuitive and that includes an assessment of where to list information and in what form. It was generally agreed that the list will be useful as part of an overall clearinghouse of information, to be developed after training public librarians how to navigate to legal resources.
- IV. Follow-up on:**
 - **Status of survey of public librarians** on what legal information needs are most commonly sought: Co-chairs: The members received a link to a draft of a survey to be electronically distributed to public librarians across the state, which was created by a public librarian data analyst and posted to surveymonkey. The survey begins: *How can the Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice of the Judicial Branch’s Access to Justice Commission assist libraries in serving those looking for legal information? This survey of librarians will help determine ways the Commission can help.* The Workgroup

members reviewed the questions and agreed that the survey is an excellent foundation for establishing what needs exist to help the public via public librarians and libraries. Ms. LaValle noted that the survey will be a good start on mining the issues, but that focus groups and personal interaction will be needed to develop and sustain resource sharing. The members unanimously approved sending the survey, with one revision, to the Co-Chairs of [the Access to Justice Commission](#) for their review and approval, before the survey can be sent on behalf of the Workgroup.

- **Status of survey of Court Service Center/Public Information Desk staff** on the most commonly sought information and resources: The members reviewed the survey and in general discussion suggested a revision that more clearly seeks the opinions of the CSC/PID staff members. The members unanimously approved sending the survey, with one revision, to the Co-Chairs of the Access to Justice Commission for their review and approval, before the survey can be sent on behalf of the Workgroup. Atty. Dowd and Mr. DiBenedetto will coordinate with other Branch staff on the collection method; it was noted that SharePoint is an option.
- **Status of survey of law librarians** on the most commonly sought information and resources: the survey is similar to the one developed for the CSC/PID staff. The members unanimously approved sending the survey, with one revision, to the Co-Chairs of the Access to Justice Commission for their review and approval, before the survey can be sent on behalf of the Workgroup. Atty. Dowd and Mr. DiBenedetto will coordinate with other Branch staff on the collection method for the law librarian/CSC/PID surveys; it was noted that SharePoint is an option. There was also discussion on how to allow the survey to be shared with external providers such as college law libraries. Atty. Dowd will discuss that further with Judicial Branch IT experts.
- **Status of review of questions submitted to the Law Libraries** “Ask A Librarian” online service: Atty. Dowd, Ms. Doherty, Mr. Roy: The Workgroup reviewed data collected from two sources: emailed questions submitted to “[Ask A Law Librarian](#),” and the online Feedback form found on the [home page of the Judicial Branch](#). The questions are sorted and answered by law librarians. The bulk of submitted questions surround family court issues, while the majority of Feedback submitted relates to civil practice and procedure. The data will be useful in combination with other survey information and statistics in determining what information is most requested/shared by the public, in order to work with public librarians, including developing training opportunities.
- **Status of assessments of legal collections** in public libraries and creation of a checklist by law librarians: Mr. Stock brought to Workgroup a list of legal reference books that he said would give a good foundation for most libraries. There was discussion between the members of the helpfulness of creating a checklist of books, but no action was taken and the issue will be revisited at later meetings.

- **Pro Bono Calendars:** There are numerous pro bono (free) volunteer attorney programs in Connecticut, but no central repository for a person who needs such assistance to locate a program of his or her need. The group discussed what options exist to develop a central repository. Atty. Dowd is a member of the Judicial Branch internet web board; the Workgroup discussed the feasibility of establishing a permanent place on the Branch's homepage, www.jud.ct.gov that would feature a weekly or monthly calendar of programs across the state. Before the group could decide what type of calendar should be posted, what types of programs should be listed, etc., it was agreed that Atty. Dowd should bring this suggestion to the full web board at its May meeting, for their consideration. Mr. Roy volunteered to have the calendaring information sent to him for collating; Ms. Hess suggested that the legal program providers listed in the online pro bono catalog for attorneys, <http://probono.ctlawhelp.org/catalog>, would be excellent contacts for soliciting specific calendaring. Ms. Boone also volunteered to help put this together. The Workgroup will wait for Atty. Dowd to report back from the web board before proceeding.
- **Printed information:** Update on distribution of materials to public libraries from Workgroup members: Ms. Hess had 165 packets of CSC/PID 'palm cards' (describing the functions of [the centers](#) and [desks](#)) created for distribution to state librarians. The information will be very useful not only for librarians, but for the public, Ms. LaValle noted. She is going to see that the packets are distributed to all state libraries. Ms. Collins reported that the Judicial Branch had 1,000 copies of the [Public Guide to Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) printed for distribution at all state public libraries by Ms. LaValle and the Connecticut State Library Association. Ms. LaValle also suggested that it would be helpful for librarians to also have the link to any of the printed information that is disseminated online, along with a description of the information and a hard copy for review. This will be an ongoing effort.
- **Outreach opportunities:** Discussion on developing 'justice summits': What are the next steps? The members discussed the need for conducting surveys first to determine what information is known and what is needed. Ms. LaValle said that she believes it would be enormously beneficial to conduct focus groups of public librarians to help sharpen the focus of any outreach efforts, including justice summits. Ms. Hess noted that one of her Court Service Center staff members recently went to the local library near his courthouse office, and was surprised to find that the public librarians did not know about the resources available at the centers and desks, nor were they aware that the courthouse houses a law library. While the group agrees that training is needed, and that webinars and other electronic means of training will be necessary, face-to-face meetings and trainings will help elevate and sustain this evolving justice partnership.

V. Next meeting: The next meeting of the Workgroup is May7, 2014, at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield. An agenda is forthcoming. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.