

Agenda Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice
Minutes of the
Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice
2 o'clock p.m.
December 10, 2014
225 Spring Street
Wethersfield, CT

Members in attendance: Ms. Dawn LaValle, Atty. Jeff Dowd & Ms. Krista Hess, Co-chairs; Ms. Heather Collins, Mr. Joseph DiBenedetto, Ms. Ann Doherty, Ms. Curleen Elliot (by phone), Atty. Cheryl Halford, Ms. Jocelyn Kennedy, Ms. Anne Rajotte, Mr. Christopher Roy.

Members absent: Atty. Jamey Bell, Atty. Barbara McGrath, Ms. Aisha Banks, Atty. Nancy Boone, Mr. Jonathan Stock, Ms. Julie Styles.

- 1.) **Welcome** members: Chairs.
- 2.) **Approval of Meeting Minutes of 10/29/14** : The Minutes were approved with one correction, to a member's title.
- 3.) **Online Calendar Proposal:** Update
 - **How we got from *Google Calendar*, to a *List by Topic*:** Atty. Dowd explained that the Judicial Branch's web board has given general approval to listing pro bono or legal aid clinics for the public. The Access to Justice Commission at its October meeting supported a simple version of a calendar that would list free legal clinics. While the Workgroup at its previous meetings discussed various iterations of developing a calendar, in an effort to simplify the information for the public, an idea to develop a list of clinics took shape. The clinics will be listed by topic, such as *General Help*, *Foreclosure Help*, *Worker's Rights*, *Veteran's Assistance*, etc. Mr. Roy will be the Judicial Branch staff member charged with posting to the page submitted workshop/clinic information. While the Web Board will have ultimate approval as to where on the Judicial Branch website the "*Legal Clinics & Help*" page will be located, the Workgroup supports a location on the Branch's homepage, jud.ct.gov, to help people find the information quickly and intuitively. The page should also be linked from the Branch's existing self-help and law libraries pages.
 - **Criteria & Application form:** Ms. Hess & Attorney Halford: A draft application form, influenced by an existing application for attorneys who would like to volunteer for one of the Branch's Volunteer Attorney Day programs, was shared with the members. The criteria to have a pro bono/legal aid legal advice event listed includes a program description; the sponsoring entity; certificate of good standing; and contact information for interested parties to inquire about the program. There was discussion about how the application will be both distributed to potential listers, and returned to the Branch for consideration. Ms. Hess and Attorney Halford oversee the Branch's existing Volunteer Attorney Day programs; it was generally agreed that the applications would be distributed by them and returned by FAX or email to them for consideration. Mr. Roy would then post the listing on the Legal Clinics & Help page. The details on implementing the process will be worked out internally.

4.) Partner by Regions – Update:

- Two forms: one for librarians and one for patrons: Ms. Ann Doherty led the discussion about resource guides to be offered to public librarians who are trying to assist members of the public seeking legal information. The state library association —there are more than 220 public libraries, as well as college libraries, scattered across Connecticut — has developed a regional system to make the delivery of information and services more efficient and relevant. A draft resource guide was created by Ms. Doherty listing a region's towns, and the attending courthouse, law library, court service centers, and public information desk locations and phone numbers. The draft also included information on contacting by email law librarians and court service center staff members, and webpage addresses. The draft was intended for the librarians, with a second guide to be created for the public. Another draft was presented by Ms. Collins, including Ms. Doherty's information, and adding legal aid locations and contact information specific to the region. Ms. LaValle said that what the public librarians need is something is something that they can look at quickly and give their patrons appropriate resources. She suggested dropping the town listings and map from the drafts, pointing out that the librarians would know what region they are in. She also said that creating separate guides for the public and librarians is probably unnecessary, as the information that is being provided for librarians is also appropriate for the public. Finally, she agreed that adding region-specific legal aid information would be helpful. She suggested the next draft be simple, straightforward, and easy to read.

5.) Workshops Update: Mr. Chris Roy, Attorney Cheryl Halford:

- Attorney Halford and Mr. Roy, using the data collected by Ms. LaValle's survey of public librarians, have been brainstorming about what to include in an introductory 2-hour workshop for public librarians. They told the workgroup that the data reveal that public librarians are looking for basic information on the role of court service centers and public information desk professionals, and law libraries and librarians. The first workshop will be an overview and therefore will not deal in any great depth with how to do legal research or how to search for statutes. The members discussed the general parameters of what the workshop should contain; whether it should be interactive (Ms. LaValle said the Library Association has training facilities to accommodate hands-on, online training); and the need to videotape the training so that non-attendees can benefit from the information. The goal is to conduct the first workshop in March 2015.

6.) Justice Summit :

- The members talked generally about what a 'justice summit' for librarians (including state, local, university and community college) and Branch staff would look like: should there be moderated panels? Would there be information booths? etc. However, it was agreed that before any planning could commence, firm parameters need to be further defined. An email will go the Workgroup members to ask for specific recommendations. It is anticipated that the summit could be held next summer.

7.) **Matrix:** Update

- Curleen Elliott gave an update to the members on a survey that she's conducting to identify potential legal information resources available to the public at Connecticut's community colleges. Specifically, she is looking to gather data on: computer and WiFi availability for the public (non-students); hours of operation; whether the site hosts legal databases such as LexisNexis and Westlaw.

8.) **Report of the Workgroup to the Access to Justice Commission**

- The members received a draft of the report, which was prepared by Attorney Dowd on the Chairs' behalf. The group discussed the recommendations and agreed with the recommendations. The report will be part of the Commission's larger report to the Chief Justice and, once accepted, will be made available online for the public.

9.) **Assign date for next meeting and assign tasks:** The next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 28, 2015, at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield. A snow date of Feb. 4 was also selected. The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.