

Access to Justice Commission
Minutes
May 5, 2009

The Access to Justice Commission met by conference call on May 5, 2009. In attendance were Justice Jim Burke, Justice Marilyn Kite, Judge Scott Skavdahl, Judge Tim Day, Judge Wes Roberts, Senator Tony Ross, Gen Tuma, Denise Burke, Rick Lavery, Dona Playton, Rennie Polidora, Walter Eggers, Larry Wolfe, Amanda Roberts, Dan Fleck, Sleeter Dover, Ray Machia and Ronda Munger.

Opening Remarks

Justice Burke began the meeting by asking the two subcommittee chairs, Walter Eggers and Dona Playton, to fill the Commission in on the work that the subcommittees have been doing.

Resource Development Subcommittee

Walter Eggers, chair of the Resource Development subcommittee, reported to the Commission that his subcommittee has met several times since the last Commission meeting. The primary focus of the meetings has been to conceptually design a plan for a 2010 legislative effort. Walter explained that several of members of the resource committee subcommittee have been working on individual pieces of the project. Larry Wolfe circulated a draft budget for a statewide legal services program, as well as the beginnings of a draft report on Legal Services to the Indigent in Wyoming. Judge Scott Skavdahl compiled information on county expenditures for title 25 proceedings, GAL cases and Abuse Neglect cases. Walter explained that the subcommittee was considering the option of using court filing fees as a revenue source for legal services.

Delivery Systems Subcommittee

Dona Playton, chair of the Delivery System subcommittee, reported to the Commission that her committee had met several time as well. The delivery system subcommittee has been working on collecting information about the current legal services providers. Dona provided the Commission with a chart outlining each of the different providers and the types of cases those providers are allowed to take. Dona is in the process of drafting a document that outlines each of the providers existing budgets and the qualifications that have to be met before services can be rendered. Once all of the information is compiled, Dona intends that the information will be provided to the Commission. The delivery system subcommittee discussed using a survey to get information from the local bar organizations, clerks of court, department of family services and public health agencies in order to begin to design a statewide delivery system. Dona reported that the subcommittee believes there should be a long term and a short term plan for the delivery of legal services.

Justice Burke requested that once the list of providers is known, their specific qualifications and the services they provide, that the information be disseminated to the state bar office, the clerks of court and the judges around the state.

Draft Report on Legal Services to the Indigent in Wyoming

Justice Burke asked Larry Wolfe to explain his vision for the position paper that he is drafting. Larry explained that the report is an attempt to bring together the bulk of the information that is being gathered by the Commission, and put that information into a format that everyone can work from. At this time, it is Larry's intent to insert the ABA Principles for Civil Legal Aid into the document and then develop the other sections around them. In the end, Larry believes that the report will help the Commission make key judgments and decisions about the proposal that will be given to the Legislature. Once the report is drafted, the draft legislation, PowerPoint presentations and surveys can be created from there. The Commission discussed the ABA Principles at length. The Commission agreed that overall the principles were a good starting point, but that it may take some time to accomplish all of the goals. Dona agreed that the delivery services subcommittee would work on the following sections of the report: 1) Population Served; 2) Current Services (federal funding and UW College of Law). Walter agreed that the resource development subcommittee would work on the following sections of the report: 1) Current Services (county efforts and GAL services); and 2) information on how other states provide legal services to the indigent.

Contact with the Shoshone and Arapahoe Tribal Court

Judge Wes Roberts reported that he had met briefly with Judge John St. Clair, Chief Judge of the Shoshone and Arapahoe Tribal Court. Judge Roberts attended the Justice Summit on the Reservation. Judge St. Clair reaffirmed his interest in the AJC. Judge St. Clair mentioned to Judge Roberts that Ray Machia had contacted him regarding the \$167,000 of LSC funding. Judge Roberts expressed his willingness to chair a subcommittee on access issues for the tribal population. Justice Burke thanked Judge Roberts for volunteering and asked Judge Roberts to name and assemble the subcommittee.

Supreme Court Website

Ronda Munger reported that John Capron of the Supreme Court IT staff was working on creating an AJC website as a part of the Boards and Commissions section of the Supreme Court's website. The plan is to list information about the AJC, the legal services providers in the state, and links to other useful websites.

LSC Applicants

Rick Lavery reported to the Commission that he had received Corey Erickson's application to be the Wyoming Legal Services Provider. Rick offered to provide all the documentation to the Commission for review.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Access to Justice Commission will be Tuesday, June 9th.

Commission adjourned