

Minutes
Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act

Tuesday, January 17, 2012
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut

Members present: The Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III (Chair), Mr. Richard D. Byam, Atty. Robert D. Coffey, Ms. Sandra Lugo Gines, Atty. Stephen N. Ment, Mr. Ronald J. Macchio, Mr. David McCormick. Legal Services Attorneys Viviana Livesay and Maureen Finn, and Heather Collins, support staff.

- I. Welcome: Judge Carroll, Chair of the Advisory Board, welcomed the members. The minutes of the October 19, 2011 meeting were approved by the members.

- II. Outreach efforts: Judge Carroll asked for an update from Ms. Lugo-Gines on the art exhibit and educating the bar. Ms. Lugo-Gines told the members that the 2010 exhibit, Possibilities, at the Middletown courthouse in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act has provided the opportunity for the Branch to continue its support of artists with disabilities by displaying their works in courthouses around the state. Ms. Lugo-Gines has been in touch with an Administrative Judge who has expressed his support for the display; Ms. Lugo-Gines has also done outreach to non-profit organizations that work with artists with disabilities in venues around the country. She will continue to research the feasibility of art display. Ms. Lugo-Gines also told the Board that, under the Branch's Pillars of Service Excellence program, some 111 Branch staff members have participated in a half-day program about the ADA and how the Branch complies with the Act; an internal hand-out on diverse populations is being developed. Next, Ms. Lugo Gines next told the Board that she and Ms. Collins met with Jury Administrator Atty. Karen Berris about conducting outreach to the members of the bar on the services and accommodations available to the public, including members of the bar, witnesses, jurors, and so on. Atty. Berris and a judge developed a draft guide for accommodating jurors who require an ADA accommodation. Further, the Subcommittee on the American Bar Association and Technology & Access to Justice is considering developing a recommended "how-to" guide for the Bar and working in conjunction with Jury Administration to conduct outreach with various bar associations and/or their sections. Judge Carroll supports the art exhibit and the Bar outreach approach and indicated that educating attorneys on requesting ADA accommodations would be beneficial to everyone involved.

- III. Update from Legal Services: Attorneys Livesay and Finn told the Board that the Judicial Branch continues to add its ADA Notice on all new and revised forms and publications notifying the user of the Branch's compliance with the ADA and how to seek help through the Branch website. The Attorneys also discussed policies surrounding wheelchairs owned by the Branch. They told the Board that the ADA does not require the Branch to provide personal equipment, such as wheelchairs, and there were general questions about liability.
- IV. Update from Facilities: Mr. Macchio, at the request of the Board, conducted an internal survey to determine what, if any, Judicial Branch facilities have wheelchairs for the public, and found that there are currently 18 wheelchairs. However, Mr. Macchio said, it appears that only four of the wheelchairs are in good usable condition. There does not appear to be an existing policy outlining their use, but it was noted that some defendants with disabilities, appearing for arraignment directly from the lock-ups, may be using them if they are transported from a local police department. The Board agreed to contact the Director of Judicial Marshal Services to see if it has a policy, and to go from there.
- V. Board membership: Judge Carroll reminded the members that this is the fourth meeting and concludes the Board's first full year as an advisory panel to the Branch. The Judge told the Board that Chief Justice Rogers is quite aware of the ADA issues facing the Branch and is engaged in ensuring the Branch's compliance with the Act. This requires a high level of dedication on the part of Board staff members; there was discussion on whether it might be appropriate to rotate the membership, continuing to ensure representation from each of the Branch's five divisions while bringing in new people to allow for new ideas. Judge Carroll asked the members to indicate to him in an email their continuing interest in serving or providing a recommendation for someone else from their respective divisions.
- VI. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m. A future meeting will be in April, with the date to be announced.