

MINUTES
Connecticut Judicial Branch
Access to Justice Commission
February 4, 2020
2:00 p.m.
Quinnipiac University School of Law
370 Bassett Road, North Haven, CT

The Access to Justice Commission met on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at the Quinnipiac University School of Law in North Haven, CT.

Members in attendance: Justice Maria A. Kahn, Judge Leo Diana, Judge Gerald Harmon, Atty. Janice J. Chiaretto, Atty. Tais Ericson, Atty. Jennifer Ferrante, Atty. Patricia Cruz Fragoso, Ms. Krista Hess, Ms. Dawn LaValle, Atty. Chris R. Nelson, Atty. Moy N. Ogilvie, Dean Brad Saxton, Atty. James P. Sexton

Also in attendance: Judge Elizabeth Bozzuto

- I. **Welcome:** Justice Kahn welcomed the Commission members and thanked Dean Saxton for hosting the meeting.
- II. **Review/Approval of the Draft Minutes from the October 17, 2019 meeting:** The draft minutes for the October 17, 2019 meeting were approved.
- III. **Update from Workgroup on Appellate Pro Bono:** Justice Kahn reported that the Workgroup on Appellate Pro Bono has not met since the last Commission meeting. Atty. Sexton reported he has taken his first pro bono Appellate case. Due to the success in his first case, Attorney Sexton's firm has been working to take on more cases. Justice Kahn thanked Atty. Sexton for taking the lead in Appellate Pro Bono.
- IV. **Update from the Workgroup on Libraries and ATJ:** Ms. Hess reported the Workgroup is focusing on several initiatives at this time. First, *a public service announcement*, will provide Connecticut residents with important information about the ways that they can access court information from their public library or home computer. The initial PSA will be a 30 second radio clip presented in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, the most frequently spoken languages in Connecticut, and will provide a brief exchange between librarian and patron announcing the availability of numerous court-related resources available in public libraries. A video PSA will be developed next. The Workgroup is also developing a Speaker's Bureau which will provide library staff with the opportunity to request Judicial Branch personnel to speak on court-related topics. Presentation topics may include subjects such as how to complete court forms; securing an interpreter and other commonly used areas. Branch staff will also continue to educate libraries and librarians on how to navigate Judicial Branch resources so they can best guide patrons where to start.

- V. **Update from Workgroup on Modest / Moderate Means Programs:** Atty. Nelson stated the Workgroup continues to focus on those who are not indigent but do not have the means to pay for full attorney services. One of the goals is to strengthen the existing Incubator programs and look for ways to expand the program in other areas of the State. There has been an ongoing struggle with securing attorneys to participate in the Incubators. Those who have participated have often had a prior career either before, during or after law school. This should be taken into consideration when seeking candidates going forward. Part of the focus should be on new graduates or those who have been out of school for a couple years and looking for a new job. Justice Kahn added that there appears to be two areas of focus. The first being, where to advertise to get candidates and on how best to screen candidates to get the right fit. Justice Kahn suggested outreach should be conducted to other lawyer groups and organizations that may provide a good pool of possible candidates.
- VI. **Update from Workgroup on Law Schools:** The Law School Workgroup submitted a proposal to expand their Workgroup's Charge to include the ability to provide the Commission with relevant research into access to justice related best practices. Justice Kahn will review the proposal and take appropriate action. Justice Kahn mentioned that Fordham Law School recently held its annual public service fair. The fair brought together numerous resources, law schools and public interest groups in a single location. Dean Saxton noted that Quinnipiac School of Law has hosted a similar event and will contact other CT law schools to see if there is interest in duplicating the Fordham model here.
- VII. **Update from Workgroup on General Pro Bono:** Judge Harmon and Atty. Ogilvie reported that the draft pro bono survey previously drafted by the Workgroup is awaiting feedback. The existing survey will be used this year. The Workgroup is compiling a chart listing pro bono opportunities in CT. The chart provides additional information helpful to attorneys assessing the best pro bono options for their availability and skills. The chart includes information such as the area of law, average time commitment, and the type of work involved.
- VIII. **Update from the Workgroup on Video-Conferencing and ATJ:** Ms. Hess stated the Workgroup would like to pilot video conferencing in Civil matters. Judge Bozzuto would like video conferencing used in Family cases as well. Using video conferencing will reduce the need for in person appearances. Attorneys may be more willing and able to perform pro bono work if they do not need to drive to court and wait for the case to be heard.
- IX. **Future Access to Justice Commission Initiatives:** Justice Kahn reported on several initiatives. The first initiative involves the Judicial Branch's External Affairs division recording a *podcast to promote the Incubator programs*. The podcast is currently available on the Judicial Branch website. Next, the Judicial Branch has been asked to *present at the ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference in Atlanta, GA in May 2020*. Justice Kahn encouraged those who can, to attend the conference. Lastly, the *CBA Pro Bono Committee has established a subcommittee to discuss a*

Hartford Housing based volunteer attorney pilot program. Alex Gillett has been asked to serve on the committee and will keep the Commission informed on its progress.

- X. **New Business/New Items:** Justice Kahn encouraged working groups to continue thinking of ways to increase access to justice within Workgroups as well as increase collaboration across Groups where possible.
- XI. **Schedule Next Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be convened on *Thursday, June 4, 2020 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Hartford Community Court, 80 Washington Street, Hartford.*
- XII. **Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.