

UpFront

By Mike Eidelbes

Closing Justice Gap, Improving Court Access Among New MSC Commission Goals

Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget McCormack last month announced the creation of a new Justice for All Commission, with the goal of achieving 100-percent access to the state's civil justice system.

The commission was formed to lead the implementation of a Justice for All Task Force strategic plan released in December that outlined ways to help more Michigan residents solve civil legal problems like landlord-tenant issues, access to benefits, and family-law disputes such as parenting time or custody.

"All Michigan residents must have equal access to our courts and to resources needed to navigate our justice system, regardless of

who they are, what they earn, or where they come from," McCormack said.

Among the 30 members of the task force are SBM Executive Director Janet Welch and President Rob Buchanan.

"Since its founding in 1935, the State Bar of Michigan has been committed to serving the public, and there's no better way to advance our calling than ensuring access to justice for everyone," Buchanan said. "Our courtrooms can be daunting and impeding places, even now in the new age of Zoom access. Nobody should be denied resources or equality he or she needs and deserves for a fair outcome."

Among the Justice for All Commission's goals: simplifying, streamlining, and creating uniform processes for navigating the court system; improving technology and access at legal self-help centers while increasing public awareness of these tools; expanding use of text messaging and other convenient technology; and using plain language to explain court procedures. ■

For more information on the Justice for All Commission, visit www.courts.mi.gov/justiceforall

SCAO MiFILE Team Thanks SBM Members for Survey Response

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) MiFILE team thanks the more than 1,300 State Bar of Michigan members who participated in their December 2020 online survey. The MiFILE team will use the information in its ongoing effort to develop and improve the MiFILE Standard Solution.

The MiFILE team was encouraged by the volume and diversity of the responses it received. According to preliminary data, nearly

every Michigan county was represented in the survey. Almost 23 percent of participants are e-filing in model courts that are currently using the MiFILE Standard Solution, and more than 60 percent are e-filing with pilot courts using nonstandard versions of MiFILE.

The MiFILE team will further analyze the data and release a brief report on its findings in April. ■

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