

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
2012-2013 COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Committee Name: Committee on Justice Initiatives

Jurisdiction: Develop and recommend proposals for the effective delivery of high quality legal services in Michigan, equal and fair to all. This committee consists of several initiatives whose activities include:

- Analyzing and making recommendations for positions on proposed legislation, court rules, and other policies relevant to the committee’s jurisdiction.
- Developing policies and programs to benefit underserved populations; including juveniles and those with special needs.
- Encouraging and coordinating free or discounted civil legal services.
- Working to increase resources for civil legal aid programs.
- Examining collateral civil consequences of criminal convictions and issues of adequate representation in the criminal justice system.

Chair(s) and Committee Members:

Officer	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Co-Chair	Terri L. Stangl	320 S Washington 2 nd Fl Saginaw, MI 48607	989 755-3120	tstangl@ccj-mi.org
Co-Chair	Erika L. Davis	645 Griswold Suite 1300 Detroit MI 48226	313 237-6295	Erika@butlerdavis.com
Staff Liaison	Janet K. Welch Candace Crowley	State Bar of Michigan	517 346-6331 517 346-6319	jwelch@mail.michbar.org ccrowley@mail.michbar.org

Member/Advisor/Other	Member/Advisor/Other
Miriam Jane Aukerman	
Michael J. Blau	
Lorray S. C. Brown	
Margaret A. Costello	
Robert Fair Gillett	
Valerie R. Newman	
Linda K. Rexer	
Laurin’ C. Roberts	
Maya Watson	

Committee Meeting Schedule:

Please attach any additional information needed regarding Committee meetings as an addendum.

Meeting Type	Date	Location
CJI Meeting	May 21, 2012	Teleconference
CJI Meeting	June 25, 2012	Teleconference
Justice Initiatives Kickoff	October 22, 2012	State Bar of Michigan
CJI Meeting	December 12, 2012	Teleconference
CJI Meeting	February 12, 2013	Teleconference

Resources provided by the State Bar of Michigan in support of committee work:

The State Bar of Michigan provides Committee on Justice Initiative (CJI) with staff support and a budget to facilitate projects and meetings. Please also see reports for the individual initiatives - Equal Access, Justice Policy, Pro Bono, Criminal Issues - that are included at the end of this report.

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Committee Activities:

May 21st and June 25th Meeting CJI received reports from those who attended the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts and the Equal Justice Conference. CJI convened a Workgroup to provide comment on proposed Michigan Court Rules 1.111 and 8.127. The Workgroup recommendations were adopted by CJI and the State Bar Board of Commissioners. They were sent to the Supreme Court where they remain pending. CJI continued to receive reports on the work of the Criminal Issues Initiative regarding an indigent defense bill. It received reports on the soft launch of the Solutions on Self Help pilot website and the four local self-help pilot centers. It received reports from all of the initiatives regarding Annual Meeting programs, the Legal Services Corporation and National Legal Aid and Defender Association pro bono initiatives, the pro bono Circle of Excellence, the Cummiskey Award winner, the Pro Bono Coordinator's Workshop and Pro Bono month. It accepted reports from the Criminal Issues Initiative regarding self-help materials for people incarcerated for inability to pay fees, fines and costs without the benefit of an ability to pay for a hearing. (See Initiative reports attached to this report).

Members began planning for the October 22 Justice Initiatives Kickoff meeting.

Justice Initiatives Annual Kickoff Meeting Held on October 22, the Kickoff provided an orientation for seven new people who are part of the initiatives. A snapshot of the political landscape was provided by Janet Welch and Peter Cunningham. Michigan Legal Help and e-filing and the changes to service delivery was a focus. Reductions in the Legal Services Corporation funding and other legal aid funding remain a problem. The State Bar Voluntary Standard annual financial contribution increase to \$500 for those lawyers who can afford it was explained. A report on the EAI Annual Meeting program "Recognizing Unintentional Intolerance and the Challenge it Presents to the Legal Profession" was received. The group identified implicit bias as the likely topic for the Spring 2013 JI Summit.

December 12th Meeting The Committee met by phone on December 12 to confirm its desire to focus on unintentional bias for the Spring Summit and to partner with the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group for that purpose. It heard more information on the positive developments of Michigan Legal Help and the increased role of librarians in helping the public access that resource. Large numbers of people access the website, and language access and live chat will be upcoming developments. It learned that the indigent defense bill died in the lame duck legislative session; the Michigan Indian Child Welfare Act passed and the Custodial Interrogation Task Force legislation was also approved.

February 12, 2013 Meeting The Committee received detailed information from the Justice Initiatives Summit Cabinet regarding "Why Did I Do That? The Science Behind Our Decisions" to be presented on April 29th with the assistance of consultant Kimberly Papillon. It identified Val Newman, Mike Blau and Candace Crowley to prepare and present JI information to the State Bar Young Lawyers Section at the June 8 Detroit Summit. It received information on the State Bar delegation to the annual ABA Day trip to occur April 16-18 to lobby for LSC funding. Our representatives will focus on the funding cuts and the rise in Michigan's poverty population as noted in the 2012 Documenting the Justice Gap in Michigan report.

The committee received reports on attendance at the 2013 National Consortium meeting "Celebrating the Past as We Envision and Embrace the Future." It also heard of the plan of the EAI Disability Workgroup for the Annual Meeting program on mental health courts. It received information on the release of the February 2013 "Assessment of Pro Bono in Michigan" report developed as a project of the PBI and the Michigan State Bar Foundation with professional assistance from consultant John Tull. CJI heard an update on the May 15 Pro Bono Coordinators Workshop and the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Referral Match Program that partners the State Bar

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Taxation Section, the U of M Law School and the MSU School of Law to provide pro bono help to low-income taxpayers.

Justice Initiatives Summit Update The fourth annual summit described above was held on April 29th. A Summary of Events is available online.

Annual Meeting The meeting will be held in Lansing on September 18-21. JI will have a booth with materials. EAI will present a program on mental health courts. The Thursday night reception will have a diversity theme.

It is anticipated that in 2013-2014, CJI will reexamine its structure and work to respond to the changing landscape including the work of Judicial Crossroads, the State Planning Body, the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, and other developments.. The Initiative Co-chairs will be talking about their plans at the next meeting of the Committee later in June 2013.

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Article VI §6, Bylaws of the State Bar of Michigan

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Committee Name:

Criminal Issues Initiative

Jurisdiction:

Examines collateral civil consequences of criminal convictions and representational issues in the criminal justice system.

Chair(s) and Committee Members:

Officer	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Co-chair	Miriam Jane Aukerman	ACLU of Michigan; 89 1514 Wealthy SE, Suite 242, Grand Rapids, MI 49506	616.301.0930	maukerman@aclumich.org
Co-chair	Valerie R. Newman	State Appellate Defender Office; 645 Griswold St Ste 3300; Detroit, MI 48226-4215	313.256.9833	Valerie@sado.org
Staff Liaison	Peter Cunningham	State Bar of Michigan; 306 Townsend St.; Lansing, MI 48933-2012	517.346.6325	pcunningham@mail.michbar.org

Member/Advisor/Other	Member/Advisor/Other
Miriam J. Aukerman, Co-Chair	Hon. Katherine L. Hansen, Member
Sheila Spaulding Blakney, Member	David C. Koelsch, Member
Caridad Pastor Cardinale, Member	Hon. Mabel J. Mayfield, Member
Daryl M. Carson, Member	Rico D. Neal, Member
Julianne Claydon, Member	Valerie R. Newman, Co-Chair
Jeffrey J. Dufon, Member	Catherine O'Meara
Pamela C. Enslen, Member	Hon. Angela Kay Sherigan
Heather J. Garretson, Member	

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Committee Meeting Schedule:

Please attach any additional information needed regarding Committee meetings as an addendum.

Meeting Type	Date	Location
Description		
Teleconference Meeting	May 17, 2012	Teleconference
Teleconference Meeting	September 14, 2012	Teleconference
In-Person Meeting	October 22, 2012	State Bar of Michigan
Teleconference Meeting	November 28, 2012	Teleconference
Teleconference Meeting	January 16, 2013	Teleconference
Teleconference Meeting	February 20, 2013	Teleconference
Teleconference Meeting	March 20, 2013	Teleconference
Teleconference Meeting	April 17, 2013	Teleconference

Resources provided by the State Bar of Michigan in support of committee work:

The Initiative receives staff support from Peter Cunningham and Carrie Sharlow.

Committee Activities:

The Criminal Issues Initiative reviewed eight public policy items from the legislature and the courts. The Initiative offered recommendations on four items (SB 105-SB 107, and SB 98) and these were presented to the Board of Commissioners for consideration, after a review by the Committee on Justice Initiatives.

The Initiative also worked on several ongoing projects throughout the year.

In conjunction with the State Planning Body and the ACLU, the Initiative worked on several issues regarding court fees and fines, and “pay or stay” sentences. The focus has been on building support for adoption of a Court Rule requiring a determination of ability to pay before incarcerating a defendant for failure to pay. These projects will carry over into the next year.

Another issue concerned the Uniform Collateral Consequences of Conviction Act (UCCCA), the national model of collateral consequences. The Initiative has been working on ways to support the state effort, and the Representative Assembly has endorsed it this act. Members of the initiative have been refining the language of the proposed bill in response to stakeholder feedback, and have developed an overview of the legislation. Working with Peter Cunningham and other interested parties, Initiative members have been seeking input from various stakeholders to ensure that the legislation would not be too cumbersome to the courts. These meetings with stakeholders will continue in order to ensure that a broad group of stakeholders is supportive before a bill draft is completed and potential sponsors are approached.

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Future Goals and Activities:

CII anticipates that next year it will continue to focus on the two main projects from this year: (a) adoption of a Court Rule requiring determinations of ability to pay before incarcerating an individual for nonpayment; and (b) passage of the Uniform Collateral Consequences of Conviction Act. In addition CII will continue to comment on pending legislation of interest. Finally, at the beginning of the next Bar year, the Initiative will poll members about possible new projects.

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Committee Name: Equal Access Initiative

Jurisdiction: *This group develops projects, programs and trainings to benefit underserved populations on issues such as race and ethnicity, gender, and disability*

Co-Chairs and Committee Members:

Officer	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Co-Chair	Maya Watson	Bodman PLC 1901 Saint Antoine St Fl 6 Ford Field Detroit, MI 48226	(313) 393-7502	mwatson@bodmanlaw.com
Co-Chair	Laurin Roberts Thomas	Thomas Law & Consulting Group PLC PO Box 21187 Lansing, MI 48909	(517) 490-1679	thomlaw91@sbcglobal.net
Staff Liaison	Gregory P. Conyers	State Bar of Michigan, 306 Townsend, 48933	(517) 346-6358	gconyers@mail.michbar.org

Member/Advisor/Other	Member/Advisor/Other
Aaron Vaughn Burrell, Member Hon. William J. Caprathe, Member Mark A. Cody, Member Syeda Farhana Davidson, Member Erika Lorraine Davis, Member Yasmin J. Elias, Member J. Kay Felt, Member Hon. Patricia P. Fresard, Member Dale Ann Iverson, Member Linda D. Johnson, Member	Amy Elizabeth Moncion, Member Nicholas M. Ohanesian, Member Paul S. Teranes, Member Laurin' C. Roberts Thomas, Member Maya K. Watson, Member Michael T. Woodyard, Member

Committee Meeting Schedule:

Please attach any additional information needed regarding Committee meetings as an addendum.

Meeting Type	Date	Location
Description		
In Person Meeting	October 22, 2012	State Bar of Michigan
Teleconference	November 16, 2012	
Teleconference	December 20, 2012	
Teleconference	February 15, 2013	
Teleconference	March 21, 2013	
In person	April 25, 2013	

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Teleconference	June 6, 2013	
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Resources provided by the State Bar of Michigan in support of committee work:

The committee receives staff support from Peter Cunningham and Michelle Erskine.

Committee Activities:

EAI has various workgroups which include:

- Disabilities WorkGroup
- Diversity Project
- Jury Curriculum Program

2012 Annual Meeting Program

The EAI cosponsored a program on Unintentional Bias at the 2012 Annual meeting. Nationally recognized expert Stephen Robbins discussed ways that the brain operates to create biases that can interfere with diversity and fairness efforts. The program was well received.

Future Goals and Activities:

EAI is focused on reviewing the Jury Curriculum Program for possible updates and collaborating with the Law Related Education Committee to find new venues to present it. The Diversity Workgroup is looking at developing focus groups on changes in the language interpreter rules. The EAI is also looking for opportunities to address the availability of legal representation in civil matters.

EAI will collaborate with the Criminal Law Section and the Prisons and Corrections Section to cosponsor an Annual Meeting program discussing problem –solving courts, including drug courts and mental health courts. The Disabilities Workgroup of the EAI has taken the lead on organizing the event to be held Friday, September 20, 2013 in Lansing.

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Committee Name: Justice Policy Initiatives

Jurisdiction: Analyzes and recommends positions on proposed legislation, court rules, and other policies relevant to the Justice Initiatives.

Chair(s) and Committee Members:

Officer	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Co-Chair	Lorray S.C. Brown	Michigan Poverty Law Program, 220 East Huron St, Suite 600A, Ann Arbor, MI 48104	(734) 998-6100	lorrayb@lsscm.org
Co-Chair	Michael J. Blau	35145 Oakland St, Farmington, MI 48335-3344	(248) 943-6148	Mikeblau924@gmail.com
Staff Liaison	Peter Cunningham	State Bar of Michigan, 306 Townsend, 48933	(517) 346-6325	pcunningham@mail.michbar.org

Member/Advisor/Other	Member/Advisor/Other
Michael J. Blau, Co-chair	Nancy L. Mullett, Member
Lorray S.C. Brown, Co-chair	Kenneth C. Penokie, Member
Jessica S. Fox, Member	Christine N. Seppala, Member
Adrienne Hinnant Johnson, Member	Hon. Cynthia D. Stephens, Member
Hemant Madhusudan Keskar, Member	Thomas K. Thornburg, Member
Martin P. Krohner, Member	Hollie J. Wallace, Member
Daniel M. Levy, Member	

Committee Meeting Schedule:

Please attach any additional information needed regarding Committee meetings as an addendum.

Meeting Type	Date	Location
Description		
Meeting	May 16, 2012	Teleconference
Meeting	October 22, 2012	State Bar of Michigan
Meeting	January 3, 2013	Teleconference
Meeting	February 7, 2013	Teleconference
Meeting	March 5, 2013	Teleconference
Meeting	April 2, 2013	Teleconference

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Resources provided by the State Bar of Michigan in support of committee work:

The committee receives staff support from Peter Cunningham and Carrie Sharlow.

Committee Activities:

From May 16, 2012 to April 2, 2013, the Initiative reviewed 27 public policy items and provided fourteen positions that were subject for review by the Committee on Justice Initiatives before being provided to the Board of Commissioners or Executive Committee.

More Initiative positions on public policy items are expected before the end of the State Bar Fiscal Year due to upcoming meetings in May and June.

Future Goals and Activities:

JPI would welcome more opportunities to participate in discussions about important policy positions with other bar entities.

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Committee Name: Pro Bono Initiative

Jurisdiction: To support and encourage lawyers' efforts to comply with the Voluntary Pro Bono Standard by performing pro bono legal services and by making donations to organizations providing free legal services to the poor.

Chair(s) and Committee Members:

Officer	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Co-Chair	Margaret Costello	651 E Jefferson Ave Detroit, MI 48226	313-596-9854	costelma@udmercy.edu
Co-Chair	Robert F. Gillett	420 N 4 th Ave Ann Arbor, MI 48104	734-665-6181 ext. 24	rgillett@lsscm.org
Staff Liaison	Candace Crowley Robert Mathis	SBM	517-346-6319 517-346-6412	ccrowley@mail.michbar.org rmathis@mail.michbar.org
Commissioner Liaison	n/a			

Member	Member
Jennifer Z. Belveal	Sandra D. Parker
C. Michael Bryce	Linda K. Rexer
Hon. Denise Page Hood	Marcy L. Rosen
Joan Glanton Howard	Amy L. Sankaran
Kirsten A. Inquilla	Justin M. Sheehan
Ashley E. Lowe	Cynthia M. Ward
Todd M. Morgan	
Keith L. Morris	
Heidi A. Naasko	

Committee Meeting Schedule:

Please attach any additional information needed regarding Committee meetings as an addendum.

Meeting Type	Date	Location
Teleconference	June 7, 2012	n/a
Teleconference	September 6, 2012	n/a
In-person/teleconference	October 22, 2012	State Bar of Michigan
Teleconference	December 17, 2012	n/a
Teleconference	March 18, 2013	n/a

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Resources provided by the State Bar of Michigan in support of committee work:

The State Bar of Michigan provides the Pro Bono Initiative (PBI) with staff support and an initiative budget to facilitate projects and meetings.

Committee Activities:

The PBI has numerous committees and workgroups, including:

- 1.) Pro Bono Month Workgroup
- 2.) QDRO Administration Group
- 3.) Spring Pro Bono Workshop Workgroup
- 4.) John W. Cummiskey Award Selection Committee
- 5.) Circle of Excellence Committee
- 6.) ATJ Fund Approved Organization Workgroup
- 7.) Pro Bono Menu of Opportunities Committee
- 8.) Paralegals and Pro Bono Workgroup
- 9.) Voluntary Pro Bono Standard/Tiered Circle of Excellence Committee
- 10.) Pro Bono Reference Manual Workgroup
- 11.) Master Lawyers Section / PBI Involvement Committee
- 12.) Michigan Pro Bono Assessment Committee
- 13.) Pro Bono Honor Roll Workgroup
- 14.) Tax Section / Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Pro Bono Program Administration Group

The **John W. Cummiskey Award** was presented to attorney **Sister Ann Ozog** at the SBM awards dinner at the annual meeting in Grand Rapids. The award includes a \$2,000 donation to an ATJ program to be made through the Access to Justice Fund. Sister Ann asked that the award be designated for Lakeshore Legal Aid.

Nominations for the **2013 John W. Cummiskey Award** will be reviewed and a nominee identified in April 2013.

PBI Staff Liaison **Candace Crowley** was honored at the 2012 State Bar Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids with the **Michigan State Bar Foundation's Access to Justice Award**.

The Fourth October as Pro Bono Month Celebration occurred in 2012, which included more than 40 events throughout Michigan. The **Pro Bono Month website** included a list of upcoming pro bono month events, talking points, a sample speech, and many other resources.

In addition to the promotion of Pro Bono Month 2012 events planned by other organizations, the PBI played a pivotal role in the planning and execution of the **2012 Grand Rapids Pro Bono Fair, which included SBM President Bruce Courtade as a special guest speaker**. The primary purpose of the Pro Bono Fair was to give West Michigan attorneys an opportunity to check out and connect with legal services organizations in their community and to explore volunteer opportunities. The 2012 Pro

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Bono Fair was graciously sponsored by Rhoades McKee, Miller Johnson, and Community Legal Services of Western Michigan. The event was hosted by Thomas M. Cooley Law School's Grand Rapids Campus. At the 2012 Grand Rapids Pro Bono Fair, there were a total of 63 participants, which included 28 Michigan licensed attorneys and 35 law students and recent law graduates. The fair featured 20 different organizations that provide free or reduced-fee legal services.

Pro Bono Family Law/Domestic Violence Training was presented by the State Bar's Domestic Violence Committee, in partnership with the PBI. The intensive in-person training covered initial client interviews, substantive legal issues, pleadings, and pretrial and trial practices as they relate to family law cases with domestic violence components. The training was held on Friday, Oct. 26, 2012. The in-person training was hosted by the Auburn Hills Campus of Thomas M. Cooley Law School, with a simultaneous broadcast to Cooley's other Michigan campuses in Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, and Lansing. The training was free of charge for the 53 participants, including 42 Michigan licensed attorneys and 11 law students and recent law graduates that plan to take the Michigan bar exam within the next year. Currently licensed attorneys that attended the training have all committed to accepting a pro bono family law case from a legal services provider within six months of the training.

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed a proclamation declaring October 2012 as Pro Bono Month.

The **Fifth Annual October as Pro Bono Month** is set for October 2013.

The State Bar's "**A Lawyer Helps**" website continued to highlight the good work of many Michigan attorneys. "A Lawyer Helps" focuses first on the legal profession's priority of pro bono—free legal help for the poor and financial donations to help nonprofit legal aid agencies. But "A Lawyer Helps" also honors lawyers who additionally volunteer time to other efforts that benefit their communities.

2012 was another successful year for **MI-LAPP's QDRO Referral Program**. In 2012, the program closed 41 QDRO referral cases and 37 cases were referred to the QDRO program by Michigan legal services providers. The great success of the program in 2012 was due in very large part to the program's dedicated volunteer Drafters. In 2012, the program's volunteers included: **Joseph Cunningham, Bob Treat, Nancy Keppelman, David and Jackie Roessler, Mary Ade, Warren Widmayer, Michael Friedman, Gregory Schermerhorn, Crescent Moran, and Mickey Bartlett**. Each QDRO case that is prepared by a Drafter, on average, requires four hours to complete. MI-LAPP continues to rely on the QDRO Administration Committee, spearheaded by Joseph Cunningham of Joseph W. Cunningham JD, CPA, PC and Robert Treat of QDRO Express LLC.

Expansion of the MI-LAPP Malpractice Insurance Program continued. Lawyers without malpractice insurance coverage can apply for coverage through the State Bar/MI-LAPP Malpractice Insurance Program. Also, lawyers that accept cases from ATJ & Non-ATJ programs without malpractice insurance can also be provided coverage. In 2012, many pro bono attorneys utilized the

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MI-LAPP malpractice insurance program; attorneys that otherwise would have been unable to offer pro bono legal services due to their lack of malpractice insurance.

The **Fourth Annual Spring Pro Bono Workshop, “*The Power of Pro Bono*,”** occurred on **May 23, 2012**. More than 70 people attended the workshop, including pro bono attorneys and representatives from various legal aid agencies. The special guest speaker was State Bar of Michigan President, Julie Fershtman (2011-2012). The evaluations from the workshop were all very positive, with attendees reporting that they would attend the 2013 workshop.

The **Fifth Annual Spring Pro Bono Workshop, entitled, “*The Power of Pro Bono: For Your Program & For Michigan*,”** is slated for May 15, 2013 at the State Bar. The workshop sessions are designed to encourage interactive discussions, with many opportunities for attendees to network to discuss strategies for increasing pro bono legal services in Michigan. This 2013 workshop will also focus on the recently released ***An Assessment of Pro Bono in Michigan*** Report.

The **Circle of Excellence** was published in the June 2012 issue of the Michigan Bar Journal. There were 44 law firms and corporations included in the Circle of Excellence in 2012.

In 2012, federal funding for legal services was cut 15 percent, after being cut 4 percent in 2011. In Michigan, there are nearly 3 million low-income residents who qualify for legal aid. That’s approximately one of every three Michiganders.

The [*Assessment of Pro Bono in Michigan*](#) Report was released in February 2013. The Report was initiated in 2012 by the Michigan State Bar Foundation and the State Bar of Michigan Pro Bono Initiative. The objective of the Pro Bono Assessment was to bridge the gap between private attorneys desiring to offer pro bono services and resources and legal aid community organizations seeking greater participation and resources to respond to their clients’ legal needs. In these especially difficult times, exacerbated by continued decreases in LSC funding, bridging this gap is more important than ever. The primary emphasis of the assessment was on program pro bono delivery systems, coordination of resources, leadership and support, including institutional and structural support to facilitate that result. On May 16, there will be a follow up meeting of the Assessment Advisory Workgroup with John Tull in Detroit where more implementation specifics will be discussed.

The PBI is working with the **State Bar of Michigan’s Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section** to create a pro bono referral program which will be administered by the Section. Many paralegals and legal assistants throughout Michigan have expressed an eagerness to provide pro bono services, and the Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section Pro Bono Referral Program will make it easier for paralegals to provide pro bono service.

The PBI is partnering with the State Bar of Michigan’s Tax Section to administer the **Tax Section / Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) Referral Match Program**. Initially, the referral program will accept referrals from the MSU and UM LITCs. The referral match program will accept referrals from other LSPs once the program gets up and running. The tax section will recruit attorneys for the referral panel from their members. Nicole Appleberry (UM) and Michele Halloran (MSU) are conducting a tax training on June 8, 2013 at Cooley Law School. The training is free of charge with the commitment to join the pro bono referral match panel.

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Robert Mathis, along with Bob Gillett and Laurin' Roberts Thomas, attended the **2012 ABA Equal Justice Conference** in Jacksonville, FL. Terry Stangl attended the Access to Justice Chair's meeting.

The **Michigan Legal Help** website (michiganlegalhelp.org) was created to help people handle simple civil legal problems without a lawyer. The website features articles for people to learn about a specific area of the law and toolkits to help them prepare for self-representation in court. Some forms contained on the website are completed automatically once simple questions are answered. The Michigan Legal Help website does not provide legal advice, and it is not intended as a substitute for having a lawyer. The website does not currently cover all areas of law, but is adding more information all the time. The committee is monitoring the development of the site and considering whether the site may provide pro bono opportunities for lawyers or law students.

On April 16-18, in recognition of ABA Day, a State Bar delegation consisting of Bruce Courtade, Janet Welch, Reginald Turner, Peter Cunningham and Judge Timothy Hicks travelled to Washington, DC. The delegation successfully met with the offices of every member of Michigan's Congressional delegation, listed below, and asked members of Congress for support on the following three issues:

- Support for an increase in funding for the Legal Services Corporation to the President's budget request of \$340 million.
- Support in the form of co-sponsorship of the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act, which would reauthorize the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act.
- Protection of the federal judiciary from future deficit reduction and to increase funding for FY 2014 to an amount no less than its original FY 2013 appropriation.

Representatives of the State Bar met with the offices of the following members of Congress (* indicates that the meeting included the Senator or Representative): Senator Carl Levin, Senator Debbie Stabenow*, Representative Dan Benishek*, Representative Bill Huizenga*, Representative Justin Amash*, Representative Dave Camp, Representative Dan Kildee*, Representative Fred Upton, Representative Tim Walberg*, Representative Mike Rogers, Representative Sandy Levin*, Representative Candace Miller, Representative Kerry Bentivolio, Representative John D. Dingell, Representative John Conyers, Jr.*, and Representative Gary Peters

Future Goals and Activities:

Most of the project work described in this report occurs annually, and efforts will be directed to replicating and improving those projects. In the coming year, the PBI will continue efforts to improve the delivery of pro bono services to the poor throughout Michigan.