

## Justice Initiatives Committee (FKA Access to Justice Committee)

Fiscal Year 2019-2020

**Jurisdiction:** Support the State Bar’s access to justice efforts by:

- Developing and recommending proposals for proactive programs to benefit underserved populations, including the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, gender identity, juveniles, domestic violence survivors
- Supporting resources for civil legal aid programs
- Providing recommendations and support for the State Bar’s pro bono legal services program
- Recommending John W. Cumiskey Award recipient
- Identifying the need for any workgroups to support the jurisdiction of the committee
- Conferring and coordinating regularly with the Access to Justice Policy, Affordable Legal Services, and Online Legal Resource and Referral committees on common strategic goals
- Identifying possible collaborations to support

**Note:** This committee may have more than 15 members and may include non-State Bar members.

Time Frame	Strategic Plan Goal/Strategy	Description of Activity
5/19-9/19	1.4/2.3/4.4	A Lawyer Helps Pro Bono Honor Roll - Inaugural Year. In 2019, SBM launched the “A Lawyer Helps” Pro Bono Honor Roll (Honor Roll) to recognize Michigan attorneys and firms providing pro bono legal services. Michigan attorneys providing 30 or more hours of eligible pro bono legal services in a calendar year and firms with attorneys on average providing 30 or more hours of eligible pro bono legal services in a calendar year were eligible to appear on the Honor Roll; Continue promotion of the Honor Roll; Encourage increased participation by Michigan attorneys, firms, and corporations; Provide attorneys with easily accessible information on the pro bono opportunities available in their geographical area and area of legal expertise on the “A Lawyer Helps” website; Identify additional opportunities to recognize Michigan attorneys and firms providing pro bono legal services.
	1.2/2.3	2019 Spring Pro Bono Workshop (May 19, 2019)
	1.2/2.3/4.4	Michigan Legal Assistance Partnership Project (MI-LAPP) - includes Qualified Domestic Relations Order Referral Program, Tax Pro Bono Program, MI Patent Pro Bono Project, & Malpractice for Pro Bono Program
	1.4/2.3/4.4	Pro Bono Partner Programs (Program Development, Recruitment, and Promotion). The JI Committee established the criteria for the Partner Program initiative. To be recognized as a Partner Program, programs must complete a brief online application and certify their pro bono programs meet all established criteria.
	1.4/2.3/4.4	Online Portal - Pro Bono Opportunities. Includes the "Legal Clinics & Events Calendar" that is updated weekly with events. The calendar is available on the A Lawyer Helps website at <a href="http://alawyerhelps.org">alawyerhelps.org</a> .

10/19-5/20	1.2/2.3/4.4	A Lawyer Helps Pro Bono Honor Roll - Second Year Promotion. – The 2020 Honor Roll online applications will go live in early January 2020. Staff anticipates the 2020 applications being very similar to the 2019 applications. However, a Justice For All Task Force workgroup is looking at available data related to identifying gaps in currently available data related to pro bono delivery in Michigan. The workgroup is also identifying what data is needed and methods/strategies for collecting that data. So, depending on the JFA workgroup’s findings, additional questions might be added to the Honor Roll applications to collect the identified data.
	1.2/2.3/4.4	2020 Spring Pro Bono Workshop Planning Workgroup (May 2020, POSTPONED)
	1.2/2.3/4.4	Michigan Legal Assistance Partnership Project (MI-LAPP) - includes Qualified Domestic Relations Order Referral Program, Tax Pro Bono Program, MI Patent Pro Bono Project, & Malpractice for Pro Bono Program
	1.4/2.3/4.4	Online Portal - Pro Bono Opportunities - Legal Clinics & Events Calendar - The legal clinics calendar is updated weekly and can be found on the ALH website. The calendar currently lists events through January 30, 2019. In early December, staff will add events for the 1st quarter of the 2020 calendar year. While the events calendar is currently a document with events listed in chronological order, soon, the events will appear on a calendar like the current SBM online calendar that provides details of upcoming bar association events, etc. Staff is working with SBM’s IT department on this project.
	1.4/2.3/3.5/4.4	October as Pro Bono Month Celebration. This year’s Pro Bono Month celebration was the most successful yet, with more than 65 pro bono events planned during the month of October, setting a record for the number of events planned! The events are listed on the Pro Bono Month events calendar on SBM’s A Lawyer Helps website. B. Human Trafficking Training Held on October 17 Update – SBM, The Joseph Project, Lakeshore Legal Aid, D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, and the Oakland County Bar Association partnered to offer a human trafficking training on October 17th. The Legal First Responders: Equipping Attorneys to Empower Human Trafficking Survivors was hosted by WMU-Cooley Law School at its Auburn Hills Campus and simultaneously broadcasted to Cooley’s campuses in Lansing and Grand Rapids. The event was free with the commitment to accept a human trafficking referral on a pro bono basis within one year of the training. Speakers included Jennifer Grieco, SBM; Nate Knapper, FBI; Amy Allen, a forensic interviewer with the Department of Homeland Security; Elizabeth Campbell, Human Trafficking Clinic, University of Michigan Law School Human Trafficking Clinic; Kelly Carter, Michigan Department of Attorney General Human Trafficking Unit; and Ashley Lowe, Lakeshore Legal Aid. The idea for the training stemmed from an article Jennifer Grieco authored about legal first responders in the October 2018 Michigan Bar Journal.

<b>Current Projects</b>	1.2/2.3/4.4	A Lawyer Helps Pro Bono Honor Roll - Second Year Honor Roll Published. – Due to the healthcare crisis, the due date for 2020 Honor Roll applications was extended until June 12, 2020. Staff is compiling the applications and attorney and firm data. The 2020 Honor Roll will be published in early July 2020.
	1.3/2.2/4.4	Limited Scope Representation Pro Bono Project Proposal with Affordable Legal Services Committee – JI/ALS Committees have been working with the 3rd Circuit Court in Detroit on a pro bono project at the Self-Help Center. Plans were to have a clinic operational in March, but the clinic has been put on hold due to the 3rd Circuit Family Court planned closing until the end of the year. The committee is continuing its efforts to partner with the 36th District Court to handle landlord/tenant cases when the courts reopen. The committee is also looking at expanding ADR and ODR in resolving landlord/tenant disputes.
	1.2/2.3/4.4	Michigan Legal Assistance Partnership Project (MI-LAPP) - includes Qualified Domestic Relations Order Referral Program, Tax Pro Bono Program, MI Patent Pro Bono Project, & Malpractice for Pro Bono Program. The committee is continuing to work on expanding the capacity of the programs, number of pro bono attorneys on each program's pro bono panel, and promotion of services to the public.
	1.4/2.3/3.5/4.4	Michigan Bar Journal - Access to Justice Theme Issue - September 2021. The MBJ theme issue will educate members on ATJ issues and opportunities to help increase access to justice for low-income Michiganders.
	1.3/2.2/4.4	Midland Flooding Response Assistance - Disaster Legal Services Legal Assistance Initiative. Hotline number created for people impacted by the flooding disaster.
	<b>Future Goals</b>	1.2/2.3/4.4
1.3/2.2/4.4		Limited Scope Representation Pro Bono Project Proposal with Affordable Legal Services Committee – JI/ALS Committees have been working with the 3rd Circuit Court in Detroit on a pro bono project at the Self-Help Center. Plans were to have a clinic operational in March, but the clinic has been put on hold due to the 3rd Circuit Family Court planned closing until the end of the year. The committee is continuing its efforts to partner with the 36th District Court to handle landlord/tenant cases when the courts reopen. The committee is also looking at expanding ADR and ODR in resolving landlord/tenant disputes.
1.2/2.3/4.4		Michigan Legal Assistance Partnership Project (MI-LAPP). The committee is coordinating with the Tax Program's administration group to provide more webinars and recorded trainings for participating attorneys to expand professional competence and continuing professional development.

	1.2/2.3/4.4	Expanding/Promoting increased engagement of SBM's members in pro bono opportunities by educating members on the need, opportunities to help, and the benefits of increased access to justice for all regardless of income.
	1.2/2.2/4.4	<p>MI-LAPP Expansion as needed. With the success of the MI-LAPP programs, especially the QDRO and Tax Programs. Committee members were asked to identify other specialized areas of the law where it might make sense for legal aid programs, SBM, and its Sections to collaborate to potentially create new pro bono initiatives. The committee proposed several specialized areas of law where a collaboration might be helpful, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Drafting Child Support Orders - While the Friend of the Court calculates the amount of child support for orders, FOC does not prepare orders. Drafting these orders would require a relatively small-time commitment for pro bono attorneys, with no expectation of ongoing representation. The Family Law Section would be the obvious section for this type of collaboration.</li> <li>b. Real Property / Probate Issues. Many clients seek legal aid help because of issues with real property. Many times, the problem is due to title issues. In property tax foreclosure cases, even though many clients potentially qualify for financial help to pay all or part of the property taxes based on their incomes, they are ineligible because of a lack of ownership. The issue may arise when a parent dies and an heir(s) takes ownership. But the estate is never probated, and property ownership is never transferred from the deceased person. In these cases, pro bono attorneys could assist with probating deceased family members estate and transfer of ownership the surviving heir(s). The Probate &amp; Estate Planning and Real Property Law Sections would be the most obvious sections for this type of collaboration.</li> <li>c. Name Changes for Transgender People. People that are transitioning need help securing a legal name change so they can take an important step toward making their legal identities match their lived experience. Possible collaboration with the LGBTQA Section.</li> <li>d. Objections to Garnishment / Payment Agreements / Set Aside Defaults. Many people sued for unpaid debts never answer the complaints (many may not know they have to) which results in default judgments. Once a default judgment is entered, the garnishments are usually not far behind. Pro bono attorneys could help defendants set aside default judgments, object to garnishments, and set up payment plans. Committee members proposed offering clinic-style events in collaboration with the members of the Consumer Law and Solo and Small Firm Sections.</li> </ul>

**Recommended Committee Changes:** Change part of the jurisdiction statement. Change "gender identity" to "LGBTQA."

**Additional Comments:** Name = Justice Initiatives Committee, not ATJ Committee. The name was changed last year. No additional changes are proposed at this time.