

Justice Initiatives Committee (FKA Access to Justice Committee)

Fiscal Year 2021

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 the committee’s jurisdiction

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
FY 2020-2021	1.4, 2.3, 3.2, 4.4	A Lawyer Helps Pro Bono Honor Roll. The 2021 “A Lawyer Helps” Pro Bono Honor Roll (Honor Roll) continued 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. The Michigan attorneys and law firms appearing on the 2021 Honor Roll represented thousands of hours of pro bono service provided in the 2020 calendar year, increasing access to justice for many low-income Michigan families. This year, the coronavirus pandemic, extensive flooding in Mid-Michigan, widespread social unrest, and other unprecedented challenges have increased the need for pro bono service. Thankfully, Michigan attorneys, even when faced with significant disruptions to their own lives, have continued the tradition of pro bono service, supporting access to justice, and helping those in need. On April 23, 2021, the BOC adopted the JI Committee’s proposal to expand pro bono service recognition based on cumulative

		<p>pro bono hours provided by firms and corporations in a calendar year. Firms were eligible for recognition on a four-tiered list based on the following range of total pro bono service hours provided in a calendar year: • Tier 1 = 6,000–7,999 hours • Tier 2 = 4,000–5,999 hours • Tier 3 = 2,000–3,999 hours • Tier 4 = 100–1,999 hours More than 1,200 Michigan-licensed attorneys submitted their pro bono service hours and provided more than 42,500 pro bono service hours. While most eligible attorneys wanted to be publicly recognized for their qualifying pro bono service, many attorneys did not wish to be included on the published version of the Honor Roll and submitted their 2020 pro bono service hours for reporting purposes only.</p>
	<p>1.2, 2.3, 3.2, 4.4</p>	<p>2021 Spring Pro Bono Workshop. The 2021 Pro Bono Workshop was held virtually over two half days on May 25 & 26, 2021. More than 120 people attended both days of the workshop combined. Survey responses averaged 4.9/5 for all sessions and 100% of the attendees indicated they would attend a future workshop. Day One: The first day of the workshop was devoted to expungements and the new "Clean Slate" legislation that took effect on April 11, 2021. Session One: Update on Michigan Expungement Law & Policy. Panelists: John Cooper, Safe & Just Michigan; Sarah Munro, Michigan Advocacy Program; Eli Savit, Washtenaw County Prosecutor. Moderator: John Sier, Kitch. Session Two: Expungements 201. Panelists: John Cooper, Safe & Just Michigan; John Pallas, Dept. of the MI Attorney General; and Anne Yantus, sentencing consultant. Day Two: The second day covered topics specifically related to the pandemic and access to justice. Session One: Pro Bono Service Delivery Using Technology During COVID-19. Panelists: Kaitlyn Elias, Kitch; Michelle Erickson, Lakeshore Legal Aid; and Angela Tripp, Michigan Legal Help. Moderator: Caroline Bermudez-Jomaa, Legal Aid & Defender Association. Session Two: Serving Pro Bono Clients During COVID-19. Panelists: Ashley Lowe, Lakeshore Legal Aid; Alisa Parker, Legal Services of South Central Michigan; and Lisa Ruby, Michigan Advocacy Program. Moderator: Khalilah Spencer, Honigman LLP.</p>
	<p>1.4, 2.6, 3.2, 4.4</p>	<p>Michigan Bar Journal access to justice theme issue. November 2021 Issue (Originally slated for September 2021) Due to the pandemic, planning for the MBJ ATJ theme issue was postponed until early 2021, so that important aspects of the rapidly changing legal landscape could be incorporated in the articles/issue. Preparations for the ATJ theme issue required many hours of planning, drafting, and editing.</p>
	<p>1.4, 2.3, 3.2, 4.4</p>	<p>John W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award. The Cummiskey Award's purpose is to foster awareness of the need for involvement of the private bar in delivering legal services to the poor, by giving public recognition each year to a Michigan lawyer who has made a significant pro bono contribution to this</p>

		effort. The award was established in the name of John W. Cummiskey of Grand Rapids, a leading advocate and activist in the cause of making legal services available to all, without regard to economic status. The 2020 & 2021 Cummiskey Award recipient was Heidi Naasko of Dykema. Ms. Naasko has a demonstrated commitment to increased access to justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
	1.3, 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 alawyerhelps.org .
FY 2021-2022 Priorities	1.4, 2.3, 3.2, 4.4	Pro Bono Service Promotion and Recognition — Increase promotion of the Pro Bono Honor Roll to educate attorneys on expanded recognition opportunities that now include cumulative pro bono hours and the need for increased access to justice by expanded pro bono engagement.
	1.2, 2.3, 2.3, 4.4	2022 Spring Pro Bono Workshop — May 2022. Continue efforts to educate attorneys and increase practice readiness services and programs offered by SBM.
	1.4, 2.2, 3.5	Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct 1.8 — Recommend amendments to encourage broader support by interested stakeholders related to the humanitarian exception and allowable modest gifts to low-income/pro bono clients.
	1.1, 3.2, 4.4	Pro Bono Training Materials Repository A goal identified by JFA Task Force's Strategic Plan and Inventory Report (Strategic Pillar 3, Outcome Measure 2), was to "develop a statewide centralized online repository of training materials and practice resources for pro bono attorneys." Over the course of the upcoming bar year, the committee will look at prioritizing work on this important project.
	1.2, 2.2, 3.2, 4.4	Expand/Promote Pro Bono Partner Program — (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, which helps ensure attorneys wanting to engage in pro bono opportunities have sufficient support, training, and understand their ethical obligations.
Proposed Future Priorities	1.2, 2.3, 3.2, 4.4	Expanded promotion of the need for pro bono service involvement and expanded pro bono service recognition of individual attorneys, firms, and corporate legal departments.
	1.1, 2.3, 4.4	Expanded development and promotion of pro bono training materials repository.
	1.2, 2.3, 3.2, 4.4	Expanded promotion of the need and education of attorneys on how to increase access to the legal system regardless of one's ability to pay for legal services.

	1.4, 2.5, 3.1, 4.3	Continue to expand available pro bono opportunities available to Michigan attorneys by utilizing technology so attorneys can quickly find appropriate pro bono opportunities.
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Recommended Committee Changes: No changes are recommended at this time..

Additional Comments: None.