

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
2010-2011 COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

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.

Chair(s) and Committee Members:

| Officer | Name | Address | Telephone | Email |
|-------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|--|
| Co-Chair | Evanne Dietz | Oakland County FOC PO Box 436012 Pontiac, MI 48343 | 248 975-9770 | dietze@oakgov.com |
| Co-Chair | Erika Akinyemi | 645 Griswold, Suite 1300 Detroit, MI 48226 | 313 237-6295 | eakinyemi@sbcglobal.net |
| Staff Liaison | Gregory Conyers Judy Hershkowitz | State Bar of Michigan | 517 346-6358 517 346-6335 | gconyers@mail.michbar.org jhershkowitz@mail.michbar.org |
| Commissioner Liaison | N/A | | | |

| Member | Member |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Teresa Caine Bingman | Dale Ann Iverson |
| Tracey W. Brame | Linda D. Johnson |
| Hon. William J. Caprathe | Ayanna D. Jones |
| Mark A. Cody | Jay D. Kaplan |
| Ann M. Cooper | Mark D. McWilliams |
| Hon. Yasmin J. Elias | John R. Nussbaumer |
| Pamela C. Enslin | Hon. Paul S. Teranes |
| J. Kay Felt | Laurin' C. Roberts Thomas |
| Hon. Lisa K. Gigliotti | Maya K. Watson |
| Coffiann U. Hawthorne | |

Committee Meeting Schedule:

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

| Meeting Type | Date | Location |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Teleconference | October 28, 2010 | Conference Call |
| In Person Meeting | December 7, 2010 | State Bar of Michigan |
| Teleconference | February 1, 2011 | Conference Call |
| In Person Meeting | April 26, 2011 | State Bar of Michigan |
| Teleconference | June 14, 2011 | Conference Call |

Resources provided by the State Bar of Michigan in support of committee work: The State Bar of Michigan provides the Equal Access Initiative (EAI) with staff support and an initiative budget to facilitate projects and meetings.

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Committee Activities: EAI has various workgroups which include:

- Alternative Dispute Resolution Task Force on Diversity
- Disabilities WorkGroup
- Diversity Project
- Jury Curriculum Program

The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Task Force on Diversity

The task force was directed by a steering committee and assisted by co-facilitators. They held three day long working sessions with a large group of stakeholders from around the state that included experts in both ADR issues and diversity issues. Those sessions were designed to obtain input on the best ways to move forward with the need for diverse practitioners and to take into account serving diverse clients. The steering committee, comprised of various members of the ADR community, worked over the last several months to combine information from the three meetings into a document that seeks to fully capture the discussions and present action proposals for individual entities to review. While the role of EAI as a convener is completed, the plan going forward is to examine the information to identify potential topics for future projects.

The Disabilities Workgroup

The Disabilities Workgroup recently completed work on the follow up to the 2001 report entitled “Access to the Legal System in Michigan for Persons with Disabilities.” The new “Persons with Disabilities and Access to the Michigan Legal System: A Status Report, 2010” updates the questions asked in the 2001 report with information collected in a survey sent to over 300 lawyers who are either disabled or serve disabled clients. It also includes feedback from focus groups held around the state to gather input from care providers and patients at centers for assisted living, and gathered information with the help of the State Courts Administrators Office (SCAO) from judges, court administrators and Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Coordinators.

A second project is a quarterly online e-newsletter with concise, utilitarian articles regarding disabilities issues; over six years of these newsletters have been completed and the project is ongoing www.michbar.org/programs/equalaccess.cfm. This group also produced the *Michigan Bar Journal* theme issue on disabilities for August 2010.

The **Diversity Project** held three colloquia on diversity in the legal profession in June 2010 at three law school locations. The focus was gathering input for the development of the Pledge to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession in Michigan. Approximately 100 attorneys from across the state gathered to develop a consensus document that was adopted by the Board of Commissioners and is the foundation of the work now occurring in this area under the Director of Diversity.

The **Jury Curriculum Program** is one that requires the collaboration of the legal and educational communities. Working with the Michigan Center for Civic Education, lawyers, judges and teachers throughout the state, come together to teach the concepts of due process, equal protection, individual rights and justice as they apply to the importance of jury service and the value of diverse jury pools. The curriculum has been presented to school districts in Kent, Genesee, Berrien and Wayne Counties; most recent programs were held in Benton Harbor and Detroit. Recently members of the project team and staff met with Dan Pappas, Executive Director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) to discuss working with that group to introduce the Jury Curriculum to more teachers statewide.

Additional EAI work The Michigan Bar Journal for December 2011 will be a theme issue focused on diversity.

Future Goals and Activities: The Diversity Project will continue to act as the program implementation group for activities identified as moving the diversity and inclusion forward. The disabilities WorkGroup is interested in developing an Annual meeting program. The Jury Curriculum program is looking into more programs with the schools.

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EAI will continue to review the list of recommendations that are the result of the work done by the Access to Justice Committee of the State Bar Judicial Crossroads Task Force and the ADR Task Force for future projects.

Other Information: