



ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Access to Justice Commission: 2006 Report

by JoAnn Vogt

The Colorado Access to Justice (ATJ) Commission was formed in 2003 with the support of the Colorado Supreme Court, the CBA, and the Statewide Legal Services Group. The mission of the ATJ Commission is to “develop, coordinate, and implement policy initiatives to expand access to and enhance the quality of justice in civil legal matters for persons who encounter barriers in gaining access to Colorado’s civil justice system.”¹ This report highlights efforts undertaken in 2006 by the Commission, working through its committees, to carry out that mission.²

Courts Committee

The Courts Committee is charged with proposing improvements to state court rules and policies that will assist pro se litigants and lawyers who provide pro bono services for indigent clients. To advance these ends, the Courts Committee collaborated with the Colorado Supreme Court on development and dissemination of a recommended model pro bono policy for Colorado lawyers and law firms, and on a program to recognize law firms that have made a commitment to pro bono work. The Courts Committee also continues to work with the State Court Administrator’s Office on projects such as negotiating waivers of e-filing fees for lawyers who provide representation to indigent clients; improving signage to make courthouses more accessible to persons who cannot read English; and ensuring the availability of interpreters for hearing-impaired or non-English-speaking litigants in civil cases.

Resource Development Committee

The Resource Development Committee has embarked on an ambitious, multiyear program to increase private and public

funding for civil legal services for low-income Coloradans. Colorado’s current level of funding for such services is approximately half of the national average and ranks thirty-sixth among the fifty states. This committee has compiled information regarding successful efforts in other states to increase the funding available for civil legal services for low-income persons. These include legislative appropriations; fundraising by the Legal Aid Foundation and various bar associations (an area in which Colorado has excelled, presently ranking tenth among all the states); and the creative use of other potential funding sources, such as interest paid on IOLTA or lawyer trust accounts, court filing fees and surcharges, and cy pres awards. The Resource Development Committee will work with the Public Information Committee to make legislators and other public officials aware of unmet needs in this state and of potential ways to address those needs. This committee also continues to work with the CBA and, especially regarding proposals that might require rule changes, with the Colorado Supreme Court.

Public Information Committee

Formerly known as the Education Committee, the Public Information Committee focuses on creating programming to educate the public, the Bar, client groups, and corporate and political leaders regarding the importance of access to justice and the availability of legal services and pro bono programs. It works closely with the University of Denver and University of Colorado law schools—both of which have representatives on the committee—to increase student awareness of public service opportunities and commitment to public interest legal work. To help ensure that the commitment is not forgotten upon graduation from law school, the Public Information Committee provides materials about opportunities for pro bono and public interest work to new admittees to the Colorado Bar.

To further its goal of educating the general public about access to justice issues, the Public Information Committee is so-

The Access to Justice column provides information about poverty law and other areas of the law as they relate to low-income clients; reports on the Access to Justice Commission and local and national Access to Justice Committees; and testimonials from lawyers about their pro bono experience. Readers interested in contributing an article on legal services, pro bono, and Access to Justice topics should contact Kathleen Schoen at kschoen@cobar.org.

JoAnn Vogt, Denver, is a judge on the Colorado Court of Appeals and 2006 Chair of the Access to Justice Commission.

liciting input from individuals with expertise in developing a communications strategy. The committee also is developing local legal services directories for use in areas outside the Denver metropolitan area, and is working with CBA staffers to make the ATJ Commission website a more useful resource for persons interested in providing pro bono legal services.

Local ATJ Support Committee

The Local ATJ Support Committee is responsible for establishing and supporting local ATJ committees around the state. There are presently eleven active local committees, and efforts are under way to establish local committees in five additional judicial districts. The committee's focus this year has been on supporting and encouraging local committee projects—which range from production of DVDs and pamphlets for pro se litigants to efforts to place pro bono cases with local bar members—and on facilitating communication among the local committees. To that end, the Local ATJ Support Committee hosted a conference in Denver in May 2006 for representatives of the local committees. The conference featured speeches by ABA President Karen Mathis and former Texas Supreme Court Justice Deborah Hankinson; presentation of five CBA pro bono awards; and opportunities for participants to share their experiences and learn of projects they might implement in their own communities.

ATJ Commission in 2007

The Commission looks forward to 2007 under the leadership of its new officers—Chair, Connie Talmage; Vice-Chair, Fred Baumann; and Secretary, Dave Butler—and with the participation of new commissioners Inga Causey, Simon Mole, and Janet Price, all appointed by the CBA. Among the anticipated highlights during 2007 will be the National Equal Justice Conference. Hosted by the CBA, the conference will be held in Denver from March 22 to 24, 2007.

As in the past, the ATJ Commission is proud of what has been accomplished, but recognizes the significant work that lies ahead. The Commission thanks the CBA and the other entities and individuals who have supported it during the past year, and welcomes anyone who would like to support its efforts by signing up for one of its committees. Information about the ATJ Commission and its committees can be found online at <http://www.cobar.org/group/index.cfm?EntityID=dpwaj>.

Notes

1. Colorado Access to Justice (ATJ) Commission, Bylaws, Article I, available at <http://www.cobar.org/group/index.cfm?EntityID=dpwaj>.
2. See the sidebars beginning on this page for the following: (1) the 2006 ATJ officers and commissioners, and their appointing entities; (2) ATJ pro bono coordinators; (3) how to obtain information about local bar programs; and (4) local ATJ Committees. ■

2006 Access to Justice Officers, Commissioners, and Appointing Entities

For a complete list of the 2007 Access to Justice Officers, Commissioners, and Appointing Entities, contact Kathleen Schoen, CBA Director of Local Bar Relations and Access to Justice, at kschoen@cobar.org.

JoAnn L. Vogt, Chair Colorado Court of Appeals	Darla Benford Colorado Bar Association	Barney Iuppa Colorado Supreme Court
Pamela A. Gagel, Vice-Chair Colorado Bar Association	Ilene Bloom Colorado Bar Association	James J. Peters Colorado House of Representatives
David Butler, Secretary Colorado Bar Association	Ryan Call Colorado Governor's Office	Diana M. Poole Colorado Lawyers Trust Account Foundation
William D. Alexander Colorado Bar Association	Aaron R. Clay Colorado Bar Association	Constance C. Talmage Colorado Bar Association
Angela R. Arkin Colorado Supreme Court	Mary Ann Corey Colorado Bar Association	Daniel M. Taubman Colorado Bar Association
Jonathan D. Asher Colorado Legal Services	Karen H. DuWaldt Colorado Bar Association	John S. Zakhem Colorado Senate
Frederick J. Baumann Legal Aid Foundation	Gregory J. Hobbs Colorado Supreme Court	



Pro Bono Coordinators

Hon. William D. Alexander
City of Pueblo Municipal Court
(719) 553-2467

Maggie Atkinson
NE Colorado Legal Services
(970) 522-6391

Brenda J. Bellonger
North American Indian Legal Services Inc.
(720) 840-5438

Patty Bennett
Uncompahgre Volunteer Legal Aid
(970) 249-7202

Dwight D. Brummet
Ball Easley Wabeke Brummet & Johnson
(970) 667-2131

Mary A. Corey
Colorado Legal Services
(719) 471-0380

Patricia Craig
NW Colorado Legal Services
(970) 668-9612

Karen Detmers
Pro Bono Project of Mesa County
(970) 243-7940

Sherri Ferree
NW Colorado Legal Services
(970) 276-2161

Erica Martinez-Trumm
Adams-Broomfield Bar Association
(303) 596-8672

Thomas Nelson, Jr.
(970) 252-8491

Kyla Norcross
Colorado Legal Services Inc.
(970) 247-0266

Jonathan Shamis
Alpine Legal Services
(970) 945-8858

Candace Sparks
NW Colorado Legal Services Project,
Gunnison Office
(970) 641-3023

Myrna Stevens-Reese
Weld County Legal Services
(970) 351-7300

Debora Wagner
Metro Volunteer Lawyers
(303) 830-8210

Barbara Williams
NW Colorado Legal Services,
Leadville Office
(719) 486-3238

Heather Zadina
Murane & Bostwick
(307) 634-7500



Local Bar Programs

For a listing of Local Bar Programs, please refer to the Colorado Legal Services Directory at:
<http://www.coloradolegalservices.org/CO/StateDirectory.cfm>.



Local Access to Justice Committees

Second Judicial District

Ilene Bloom
(303) 389-4651

Fourth Judicial District

Steve Flynn
(719) 471-0380

Fifth Judicial District

Inga Causey
(970) 949-6776

Sixth Judicial District

Lynne Sholler
(970) 375-7756

Seventh Judicial District

Aaron Clay
(970) 874-9777

Eighth Judicial District

Jennifer Rice
(970) 494-1700

Ninth Judicial District

Jonathan Shamis
(970) 945-8858

Tenth Judicial District

Bill Alexander
(719) 553-2467

Sixteenth Judicial District

Michael Schiferl
(719) 384-4051

Nineteenth Judicial District

Betty Strobel
(970) 356-4010

Twentieth Judicial District

Christine Hylbert
(303) 440-4758