

ABA/ NLADA 2008 Equal Justice Conference

Serving the Un-served: Your Law Library as Your Partner and Your Bridge
WSR_026

Moderator: Sara Galligan

1. Judge John R. Rodenberg--(Minnesota) Judge, MN Fifth Judicial District (New Ulm), and chair for a statewide task force that studied self help/law library collaboration in MN.
2. Lisa Rush--(Texas) Law Librarian for Travis County, Austin, TX--representing law library programs that serve pro se. Lisa.Rush@co.travis.tx.us, 512-854-9290
3. Charley Dyer--(Washington), Consultant and Retired Law Library Director, Chair, SRLN Law Librarians Working Group. charlesrdyer@clearwire.net, www.charlesrdyer.com.
4. Sara Galligan --(Minnesota) Law Librarian and immediate past chair for the Amer. Assoc. of Law Libraries' Special Committee on Pro Bono Partnerships

Brief Description:

Where do Self Represented Litigants (SRLs) go when courts and traditional legal service providers can't serve them? Many end up in public law libraries. This presentation will feature collaborative law library programs that use innovations in self-help, best practices, and law library enhanced pro bono partnerships to serve SRLs.

Law libraries are acting as a bridge between SLRs and pro bono providers. Pro bono collaborations in court, county, academic, and firm libraries are relatively new and still developing. We will present results from a nationwide study that was conducted by the American Association of Law Libraries' Special Committee on Pro Bono Partnerships. Law librarians offer free resources to diverse user populations without regard to economic status, race, gender, or educational level.

Law librarians are committed to the belief that fostering the equal participation of diverse people in library services underscores one of our basic tenets: open access to information for all individuals.

Topical Outline:

- I. Introduction by Moderator Sara Galligan
- II. Partnerships, Public Libraries, and the Pro Se Litigant (Judge Rodenberg)
 - a. Expanded county law library services in a multicounty region
 - b. Public library training and staffing issues
 - c. Pro se friendly Westlaw
 - d. Library self-help resources for pro se litigants
- III. Access to Justice Initiatives via the County Law Library (Lisa Rush)
 - a. How the model developed in one county law library serves a diverse population
 - b. Description about video resources to help pro se litigants know what to expect in court
 - c. Best practices “quiz”—examples of how the law library implements recommendations
 - d. Use of reference attorneys in the law library setting

- IV. Best Practices and Roles of Law Librarians (Charley Dyer)
Law librarians and self-represented litigants (SRLs)
 - a. Best Practices in Law Libraries for assisting SRLs
 - i. Classes for SRLs
 - ii. Websites for SRLs
 - iii. Online reference
 - iv. Partnerships
 - b. Law librarians, self-help programs and SRLN connections

- V. Pro Bono Partnerships and Law Librarians (Sara Galligan)
 - a. American Association of Law Libraries Pro Bono Partnerships Committee
 - b. Pro bono partnership survey, findings, recommendations
 - c. Outreach activities, including connections with public libraries
 - d. Partnering—Summary and Conclusion

- VI. Question/Answer
 - a. Since law libraries may be perceived as a new and possibly unfamiliar partner, the Q & A should offer productive discourse on ways to strengthen connections with law librarians who serve self-represented litigants.

Notes:

Four speakers will present an area of expertise; these include innovations in law library/self help and survey results about pro bono. At least 10-15 minutes will be left for questions and answers--since law libraries will more than likely be perceived as a new and possibly unfamiliar partner, the Q & A portion should be very productive.

1. Participants will be able to identify at least three methods for partnering with law libraries to serve self-represented litigants.
2. Participants will be able to create relationships with law librarians in local areas.
3. Participants will be prepared to summarize how law libraries partner with pro bono providers

Bibliography & Website Links:

1. www.FreeTexasForms.org
2. www.TexasLawHelp.org
3. www.TravisCountyLawLibrary.org
4. www.SelfhelpSupport.org

5. Directory of Library Based Self-Help Programs,
http://www.aallnet.org/sis/sccll/docs/library_self_help_directory.pdf; also at
www.selfhelpsupport.org
6. Report of Minnesota's Statewide Law Library/Self-Help Center Project Advisory Workgroup, Jan. 2007,
<http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/StatewideLLReport.pdf>
7. American Association of Law Libraries, Special Committee on Pro Bono Partnerships, http://www.aallnet.org/committee/pro_bono.asp
8. Serving Self Represented Litigants: Planning for Action, A Workshop for the New York State Unified Court System, October 24, 2006, presented by Charles R. Dyer.
<http://www.charlesrdyer.com/NYSUCS.asp>