



Judicial Council of Georgia Access to Justice Committee Meeting

February 1st, 2023
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Join us In-Person at the AOC in the David A. Ratley Conference Room!
244 Washington St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303

RSVP Here: <https://forms.gle/c4cAxDs3RsnpcFDU6>

Meeting Starts @ 12 noon

Welcome and Introductions – Justice Verda Colvin- 10 mins

Written Reports- Summary of November, 9th 2022

SAVE THE DATES – Upcoming Events

Minding the Justice Gap Webinars Series- The Faith Community's Role in Improving Justice Webinar Part 4, February 13th, 2023

GLSP Waycross Record Restriction Clinic- March 16th, Waycross, GA in Waycross Judicial Circuit

Justice Benham Portrait Unveiling and Reception- March 28th, 2pm at Nathan Deal Judicial Center

Upcoming A2J Committee Meeting Date: May 10th, 2023 at Nathan Deal Judicial Center

A2J Committee Project and Community Updates

- I. **White Paper Update** - Justice Colvin -15 mins
- II. **CALER Committee Update** – Herbert Gordon – 5 mins
- III. **SRL Forms Working Group Update (Legitimation, Landlord Tenant, and Custody)** - Vicky Kimbrell - 10 mins
- IV. **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Working Group CJCP Working Group** – Judge Jana Edmondson-Cooper - 5 mins
- V. **Eviction/ Rental Assistance Update** – Judge Cassandra Kirk – 5 Mins
- VI. **Law Library Project Update** - Gerald Williams – 10 mins
- VII. **ROI w/ Georgia State** – Michelle Barclay – 10 mins
- VIII. **A2J Webinar Series** –Tabitha Ponder – 5 mins
- IX. **Old Business**
- X. **New Business**

Meeting Expected end time 1:20-1:30pm



Judicial Council of Georgia

Standing Committee on Access to Justice

Wednesday, February 1st, 2023

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts

Ratley Training Room

244 Washington Street, S.W., Ste 300 Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Conference Call Information

<https://georgiacourts-gov.zoom.us/rec/share/YcZEB2ZLJn5Qozzm0jB6i1RnvHBvx-DLQIILFCjaxRwChOiAcfJppalf-KUuEfV4.c19T-cuCv6yh5cgp>

Passcode: ?4GmjhTP

In-Person Attendees: Judge Sara Doyle, Tracy Johnson, Judge Cassandra Kirk, Judge Tabitha Ponder, Darlene Kelly, Nancy Long, Joy Walker, Miriam Kirby, Omotayo Alli, Natalie Glaser, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, Peterson David, Michelle Barclay,

Online Attendees: Justice Charles Bethel, Judge (R) Bill Adams, Judge Cynthia Adams, Judge Clarence Cuthpert, Sharri Edenfield, Judge Jana Edmondson-Cooper, Karlise Grier, Judge Latisha Dear Jackson, Vicky Kimbrell, Mike Monahan, William Simmons, Judge Larry Mims, Andrew Zoll, Kimber Meridan, Anne Kirkhope, Jessica Farah, Lashawn Murphy, Sarah Anderson, Carole Syhes, Cynthia Clanton

Written Reports

A motion for the minutes from the November 11, 2022, committee meeting was brought to order. There were no objections, the minutes were approved. The tentative dates for the 2023 calendar year are February 1st, May 10th, August 16th, and November 15th, 2023.

Georgia Public Defender Update

Director Omotayo Ali of the Georgia Public Defenders council reports on the progress made within our Public Defender system. 12 new offices have been opened statewide with support by the state legislature. Also, state legislation was signed to increase the pay of public defenders and to hire more contractors. More attorneys are hired to travel to legal deserts within the state investing solely in their clients. The agency has created many divisions and departments to address a variety of legal issues, one department is the Social Work Department. With much support and effort, the public defender system has expanded through the years to help make justice more accessible.

CALER Committee Update

The CALER survey was dispersed to all law libraries and legal self-help centers in each of the 10 Judicial Districts. Awaiting responses from the 6th & 7th Judicial Districts.

SRL Forms Working Group Update

Vicky Kimbrell presents update on progress of the working group. All three forms - Landlord Tenant, Legitimation, and Custody Forms – are being finalized for public use. Forms will be shared with the committee for feedback and input before distribution to our courts.

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Working Group Update

Judge Jana Edmondson-Cooper shares update on the progress of the working group. The Chief Justice Commission on Professionalism awarded the AOC a grant to conduct the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Training. A 4-part series of CLE webinar classes will be offered in March. Consultant Instructors will be hired as contractors to instruct members of the bar and bench on proper accommodation and communication. In the final stage for agenda and registration of the classes.

Rental Assistance Update

Judge Cassandra Kirk presents update on State Rental Assistance. In October 2022, the portal closed for the state rental assistance applications. All funds were exhausted, and only applications that were submitted before closure are to be processed. Deonte Mayfield shares new initiatives by the Federal government on renter protection and eviction diversion. The National Center for State Courts is now accepting applications for the Eviction Diversion Initiative Grant Program. A working group within the committee was established with the following members: Judge Tabitha Ponder, Judge Cassandra Kirk, Tracy Johnson, and Deonte Mayfield. This working group, Landlord Tenant Early Resolution working group, will submit a proposal for the grant program by the April 21st deadline.

Law Library Project Update

Nancy Long shares update on the Southwest Georgia Law Library Project. A new website was created for the Legal self-help center in Albany. As an official 501c3 organization, a donation button was implemented on the website along with information for patrons. The center is partnering with Goodwill to address the need for internet connection and public transportation to the legal deserts in the area. This collaboration has contributed to the distribution of legal information and resources to patrons in nearby counties.

ROI w/ Georgia State

Michelle Barclay presents update on Return-on-Investment Analysis with Georgia State University. The analysis consisted of data from the Southwest Georgia Legal Self-Help Center in Albany, GA. The report showed the results on how much local governments may

save for every dollar spent on legal self-help centers. Our ROI will aid the White Paper Budget Proposal as it goes into this year's legislative session. We are prepared to bring forth strong evidence and data for next year's budget proposal.

A2J Webinar Series

Judge Tabitha Ponder shares update on A2J Webinar Series. We partnered with the GSU Access to Justice Center to discuss with members of the bar, bench, and courts on access to justice issues and solutions. The fourth class will be February 13th at noon. The topic of this class is *The Faith Community's Role in Improving Justice*.

Old Business

Mike Monohan presents on behalf of the State Bar's Access to Justice Committee. A new statewide volunteers advertising website will be launched shortly along with an updated pro bono page. The committee will respond to the ABA pro bono survey and will continue its work on disaster legal aid programs.

Bill Adams presents for Middle Georgia Justice. There is an upcoming Record Restriction clinic on March 4th followed by a fundraising event that evening. MGA is working with the District Attorney, Solicitor General, and the mayor to get a second chance desk for the county court.

New Business

Judge Cassandra Kirk speaks on new initiatives for Fulton County Magistrate court. Weekly clinics tailored to specific legal issues are held at local libraries for the public to get assistance.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

WEBINAR

MINDING THE JUSTICE GAP

A Class Series

**FOURTH CLASS:
THE ROLE OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY IN
IMPROVING JUSTICE**

**Monday, February 13, 2023
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm**

REGISTER



CENTER FOR
Access to Justice

SELF-HELP CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES TO GEORGIA CITIZENS

The Judicial Council of Georgia seeks state appropriations of \$500,000 to provide non-legal advice and support by self-help legal centers across the state of Georgia. These Centers would provide constituent services to citizens to help them represent themselves. Priority for grant applications will be made for parts of the state without many lawyers, also known as legal deserts.

Any Center funded by this newly created grant program would need to provide assistance for a wide range of legal matters including family law, housing, employment, veteran assistance and referrals to federal programs, probate matters and record-restriction. The grants applications will be processed, and eligibility determined by the Georgia's Judicial Council Grants Committee.

Georgia has multiple self-help centers across the state which are supported by a variety of both private and public funding. Our goal with this state funding request is to create a network of support, assist with standards, collect data on how best to serve our citizens and our courts to meet the legal needs of both. Each county applying will be expected to provide a local match.

THE NEED



1.1 MILLION

Georgia citizens go to court as unrepresented litigants.¹



10

Counties have no lawyers. 25-30 counties have ~ 10 lawyers. These counties are considered "legal deserts."



0

Georgia has statewide level of constituency services to help those citizens navigate court.



40.5%

of the biggest legal needs consist of housing (20.5%) and family (20%).²



56,763

un-legitimate children born each year—if unresolved, can contribute to inheritance and family instability. Legitimations are a great need.



PERMANENT ACCESS

to getting record-restriction paperwork started which leads to improved employment, housing and family stability



Multi-year

CASE BACKLOGS

in Georgia's Courts.

THE SOLUTION

Self-Help Legal Centers funded by a state and county partnership. An example is the Southwest Georgia Law Library and Legal Self-Help Center—started as a pilot with a federal grant years ago.



~50

people per day are served in one self-help center.



In 2021, citizens from **130 COUNTIES**

have driven to or called the SW Center seeking assistance.



32,000

citizens have been given assistance by the SW Center since 2018.³



\$1.80

A GSU study showed was saved for every \$1 spent per case and \$43.30 was saved for every \$1.00 invested.⁴



SPILLOVER BENEFITS

occur to multiple counties from self-help services provided in one county.



200

applications were received for a single day Record-Restriction Clinic held at the SW Center.⁵

1. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/publications/law_practice_magazine/2022/july-august/americas-lawyerless-courts/

2. <https://justicegap.lsc.gov/the-report/>

3. [2021 Southwest Georgia Legal Self-Help Center Annual Report](#)

4. The GSU study—to be delivered electronically to us on Jan 6

5. <https://georgiacourtsjournal.org/2022/05/25/judicial-council-committee-on-access-to-justice-record-restriction-clinic/>