



Judicial Council of Georgia
Access to Justice Committee Meeting
May 10th, 2023
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Join us In-Person at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center!
330 Capitol Ave SE, Atlanta, GA 30334
JCR, 2nd Floor

RSVP Here: <https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/ncUagLr2>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://georgiacourts-gov.zoom.us/j/88968494094?pwd=Y0w1ZUFkbko2OEVqaDIqOHJ5SSGEyZz09>

Meeting ID: 889 6849 4094

Passcode: 495732

Meeting Starts @ 12 noon

Welcome and Introductions – Justice Verda Colvin- 10 mins

Written Reports- Summary of February, 1st 2023

SAVE THE DATES – Upcoming Events

Minding the Justice Gap Webinars Series- Part 6 – June 12th, 2023

Annual Diversity Bars Meeting – June 10th, 12:30 pm

ABA Equal Justice Conference – May 2nd – 6th in Dallas, TX

Upcoming A2J Committee Meeting Date: August 16th, 2023 at the AOC

A2J Committee Project and Community Updates

- I. Opening Remarks** - Chief Justice Boggs
- II. White Paper Update** - Justice Colvin -5 mins
- III. CALER Committee Update** – Deonte Mayfield – 5 mins
- IV. SRL Forms Working Group Update (Legitimation, Landlord Tenant, and Custody)** - Vicky Kimbrell - 5 mins
- V. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Working Group** – Deonte Mayfield- 10 mins
- VI. Landlord Tenant Early Resolution Working Group** – Judge Cassandra Kirk – 10 Mins
- VII. Law Library Project Update** – Nancy Long – 10 mins
- VIII. ROI w/ Carl Vinson** – Michelle Barclay – 5 mins
- IX. A2J Webinar Series** –Tabitha Ponder – 5 mins
- X. Old Business** – State Bar ATJ update
- XI. New Business** – DOCO fundraising plan, New Order for A2J Committee

Meeting Expected end time 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.



Judicial Council of Georgia Administrative Office of the Courts

Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs
Chair

Cynthia H. Clanton
Director

MEMO TO: Committee on Improving Community Access
to Legal Resources (CALER)

FROM: Herbert A. Gordon – Program Manager

DATE: February 24, 2023

SUBJECT: Georgia Law Library Resources and Language
Assistance Survey Results

This memo reflects the results of the Georgia Law Library Resources and Language Assistance Survey. This survey was conducted across the 10 Judicial Circuits in Georgia to assess the availability of legal resources and language assistance services in each circuit.

A few key survey findings were the average law library budget and the amount spent on resources for self-represented litigants. The results are as follows:

- 1st Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget: \$32,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 29%
- 2nd Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget \$80,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 50%
- 3rd Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget \$32,500
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 50%
- 4th Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget: \$100,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 63%
- 5th Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget: \$85,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 63%

- 6th Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget: \$35,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 44%

- 7th Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget: \$100,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 38%

- 8th Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget: \$35,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 63%

- 9th Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget: \$100,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 63%

- 10th Judicial District:
 - Average Law Library Budget: \$65,000
 - Resources for self-represented litigants: 47%

In addition to the budget and resource allocation, the survey identified several other areas where improvements could be made to enhance access to legal resources and language assistance services. For example, only the 4th Judicial District, 5th Judicial District, and 10th Judicial District have bilingual or multilingual staff available for self-represented litigants. This suggests a potential gap in service provision for non-English speaking self-represented litigants in the other circuits. Additionally, some circuits could benefit from additional workstations where self-represented litigants can access forms and print them.

In conclusion, the Georgia Law Library Resources and Language Assistance Survey has provided valuable insights into the availability of legal resources and language assistance services across Georgia, and as we continue to work towards improving access, I believe that the findings from this survey will be instrumental in guiding our efforts.

Thank you,

**IN THE MAGISTRATE COURT OF
STATE OF GEORGIA**

_____,
Landlord(Plaintiff),
VS

CASE NO. _____DS

Dispossessory Affidavit & Notice **(Eviction Notice)**

_____,
and all others at: Tenant(Defendant)

Defendant(s).

To [_____]:

This is a notice that the Plaintiff(Landlord) is seeking to evict you. You must to answer, orally or in writing, **WITHIN SEVEN (7) DAYS of receiving this service,** _____. If that day falls on Saturday, Sunday, or a Legal Holiday, answer on the Court's next working day. You must file your answer at the Magistrate Court of _____. If you do not file an answer within seven (7) days, the court will (give the plaintiff possession of the property) issue a writ of possession against you.

This ___th day of _____, _____. (Deputy) Clerk

AFFIDAVIT

Landlord, or authorized agent for the Plaintiff, swears under oath
that:

- Plaintiff owns the building and/or premises located at _____;
- Tenant(s) is(are) in possession of such building and premises, the property of _____, whose address is _____;
- Tenant(s)
 - fail(s) to pay rent now due,
 - is(are) over beyond the lease term, or
 - is(are) otherwise not entitled to retain possession;
- Tenant(s) now owe(s) the owner \$_____, as rent, plus \$_____ court costs;
- The owner demanded possession of said building and premises, but tenant(s) has refused; and
- Plaintiff asks for authority to remove tenant(s) from said building and/or premises.

Plaintiff (or authorized agent):

Sworn to and subscribed before me
this ___th day of _____, _____.

MAGISTRATE COURT OF _____ COUNTY, GEORGIA

DATE FILED _____

Dispossessory Answer (Eviction Notice) CASE NO. _____

Plaintiff's(Landlord) Name & Address

vs.

Defendant's(Tenant) Name & Address

Defendant's Name & Address (If two or more Defendants)

I am the Tenant & I am filing an Answer in response to Landlord's claim in this lawsuit. I State:

I do not have a landlord tenant relationship with the Landlord.

My landlord did not give me the proper notice that my lease or rental agreement was terminated based on the terms of our lease.

The landlord did not properly demand that I move before filing this action to evict me.

My landlord terminated my lease without a valid reason.

I do not owe any rent to my landlord.

I offered and had the money to pay my rent (on or before the date it was due), but my landlord refused to accept it.

I admit to not paying my rent on or before the date it was due.

My landlord would not accept my rent, correct late fees and the court costs. I had all the money to pay.

I am a residential tenant. This is my first eviction action. I am paying all my rent, late fees and court costs to the clerk.

My landlord is not entitled to evict me or secure a money judgment for the following additional reasons: (attach if necessary)

COUNTERCLAIM (failure to include counterclaim bars one from bringing counterclaim to court)- (Please use another sheet for additional space, as needed.)

My landlord owes me \$ _____ for the following reason(s):

My landlord failed to repair my property. Due to this failure, the property's value has been reduced \$ _____ each month for _____ months.

Since my landlord failed to make requested repairs, I made the repairs. The repairs cost \$ _____. I have all my receipts. I will bring the receipts and all documents concerning these payments to my trial.

My landlord's failure to repair resulted in damages of \$ _____ to my person and/or property.

(Print name of Tenant (Defendant) filing answer & mailing address)

This ___ day of _____, 20___

Tenant (DEFENDANT)/ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT(S)

DEPUTY CLERK

EACH Tenant(DEFENDANT) MUST FILE THEIR OWN ANSWER. Attorneys may file answers for more than one defendant, Pro se (Self Represented) litigants cannot.



Access, Equity, Justice: A comprehensive nuts and bolts review for Georgia Attorneys & Judges handling cases involving persons with Disabilities

[DHH Webinar 2 of 4.mp4](#) – Class 2 “Communication Sensitivity”

[DHH Webinar Part 3 of 4.mp4](#) – Class 3 “Ethical Consideration and Legal Compliance”

[DHH Webinar Part 4 of 4.mp4](#) - Class 4 “Effective Communication”

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

