

Access to Justice Commission 2008 Subcommittee Goals

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 committee will develop a bench-book for Colorado judicial officers modeled on the 2007 Benchguide for Judicial Officers recently produced by the Administrative Office of the [California] Courts. The Committee will recruit judicial officers and law clerks to the committee who can re-work the California guide to reflect Colorado law and court procedure. In the longer term the committee will work with the Colorado Supreme Court's Judicial Officer Education Committee to disseminate the Colorado bench-book and offer training for judicial officers. The committee sees this as being especially important given the large number of new judges who will be appointed under House Bill 07-1054. The committee will also continue to explore what other improvements need to be made in the courts to expand access for pro se litigants. Specifically the committee will complete a survey of court facilitators, district staff and local access to justice committees in order to make a statewide need assessment by mid-year 2008.

Local ATJ Support Committee

This committee plans to maintain and increase the network of local access to justice support committees. Members of the committee will assist in implementing the recommendations of the 2008 Colorado Access to Justice Commission justice crisis report. The committee may also consider hosting a statewide access to justice conference in fall 2008 or spring 2009, for both local ATJ committees and the statewide commission, to follow up on the success of the conference held in 2006.

Public Information Committee

The Public Information Committee focuses on educating the public, the Bar, client groups, and corporate and political leaders regarding the importance of ATJ, availability of legal services, and pro bono programs. It works closely with the DU and CU law schools to increase student awareness of public service opportunities and commitment to public interest legal work. Again this year, the committee will arrange for BarBri scholarships to be awarded to one DU and one CU third-year student who intend to practice public interest law. The committee will also work to disseminate information regarding the findings from the 2007 ATJ hearings.

Resource Development Committee

The committee plans to continue to support the efforts to secure a long-term funding solution for civil legal services in Colorado, primarily through increased state funding. The committee will also consider an effort to increase awareness of the potential to utilize so-called cy pres funds for civil legal needs, and continue working with COLTAF to determine whether Colorado should enact formal "comparability" rules.

Second Season of Service Committee

The committee has accomplished its primary objective, which was to help the supreme court draft a pro bono/emeritus rule (adopted by the court last summer) that would encourage retired and inactive lawyers to provide pro bono services by waiving registration fees for those who limit their practice to such services. The remaining task is to publicize the rule and ensure that those who sign up for pro bono/emeritus status have the support and training they need and are put in touch with the providers who need their services. This year the committee will work with another group of volunteers, led by Stanton Rosenbaum, to achieve these ends. Among other things, the committee is discussing having a reception for the lawyers who've signed up.

Supreme Court Pro Bono Initiative Committee

The Committee will honor those law firms and solo practitioners whose Colorado-licensed attorneys on average during 2007 performed fifty hours of *pro bono* legal services primarily for indigent persons and/or organizations serving indigent persons. A recognition ceremony is planned for March or April 2008 and it is expected that the Chief Justice Mullarkey will again present certificates of recognition to qualifying firms and solo practitioners at a reception at the Colorado Supreme Court. The Committee will also continue its outreach efforts to increase the number of firms and solo practitioners participating in the *pro bono* commitment portion of the Supreme Court's Pro Bono Initiative.