



2017 Access to Justice Board **ANNUAL REPORT**



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2016-2017 Access to Justice Board Members

- Francis Adewale
- Judge Laura T. Bradley
- Hon. Anita Crawford-Willis
- Nicholas P. Gellert
- Lynn Greiner
- Lindy Laurence
- Salvador A. Mungia
- Mirya Muñoz-Roach
- Geoffrey G. Revelle, *Chair*
- Andrew N. Sachs

Staff

- Diana Singleton
Access to Justice Manager
- Bonnie M. Sterken
Justice Programs Coordinator



A Message from the 2017 Access to Justice Board Chair

Dear colleagues and friends,

It gives me great pleasure to share with you the 2017 Annual Report of the Access to Justice Board (ATJ Board).

The ATJ Board and the Alliance for Equal Justice (Alliance) have had a very busy year.

The most time and resource-intensive effort in the last year has been the development and adoption of the 2018-2020 State Plan for the Coordinated Delivery of Civil Legal Services to Low Income People. This broad-based effort involved collaborative drafting by a Consensus Group of 23 legal aid organizations with extensive outreach to the many individuals and groups that provide services to low income clients and communities. The ATJ Board looks forward to working with all stakeholders to assist in their efforts to implement the Plan.

The other highlight of the year was the 19th Access to Justice Conference, “Racing to Justice: Community Lawyering to Bend the Arc,” in June. Over 300 people gathered in Yakima to learn, strategize, partner, collaborate, renew and recharge. The race equity theme of the conference is consistent with the new State Plan and it was a well-received event.

We all can be proud of our work over the past year. We are particularly proud of the very successful and well-attended Technology and Justice Symposium where many came together to discuss the intersection of access to justice and technology, held at the University of Washington last September. The symposium jump-started our work to update the ATJ Technology Principles. We also support the important work of the Pro Bono Council, the Equal Justice Coalition and newly formed JustLead which now houses the Leadership Academy.

Looking forward, the ATJ Board is dedicated to growing its connections to legal services providers, including those in the criminal and juvenile justice systems and low bono community, as well as better connecting with social services agencies serving low income populations. Together, we look forward to continued progress on the issues impacting the communities we serve.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have served on the ATJ Board for the past five years and to have been its Chair for the past year. I look forward to serving as Chair for one more year and then passing the mantle to Sal Mungia on October 1, 2018.

Best,

Geoffrey G. Revelle
Chair, Access to Justice Board



GEOFFREY G. REVELLE
Chair, Access to Justice Board



State Plan for the Delivery of Civil Legal Aid to Low Income People

In October 2015, the Access to Justice Board (ATJ Board) extended an invitation to the Alliance for Equal Justice (Alliance) to help develop a new [State Plan for the Coordinated Delivery of Civil Legal Aid to Low Income People](#) (State Plan). The [State Plan](#) is intended to guide the collective efforts of the Alliance for the next three years to expand access to the justice system and identify and eliminate barriers that perpetuate poverty and deny justice. Twenty-three legal aid organizations from across the state agreed to work intensively on the project by joining the Consensus Group. Collectively they contributed nearly 1,000 hours to create a draft plan that, after input from many constituencies, was adopted by the ATJ Board on May 12, 2017. The plan responds to many of the key findings of the [2015 Civil Legal Needs Study](#):

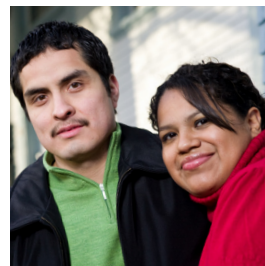
- Seven in ten households face at least one significant legal problem each year for which most will not get the help they need.
- Many low income Washingtonians do not understand that the challenges they face have legal remedies.
- The nature of legal problems people face is changing and they intersect and compound.
- The Alliance and the legal system are far from delivering on our vision of equitable justice for all.

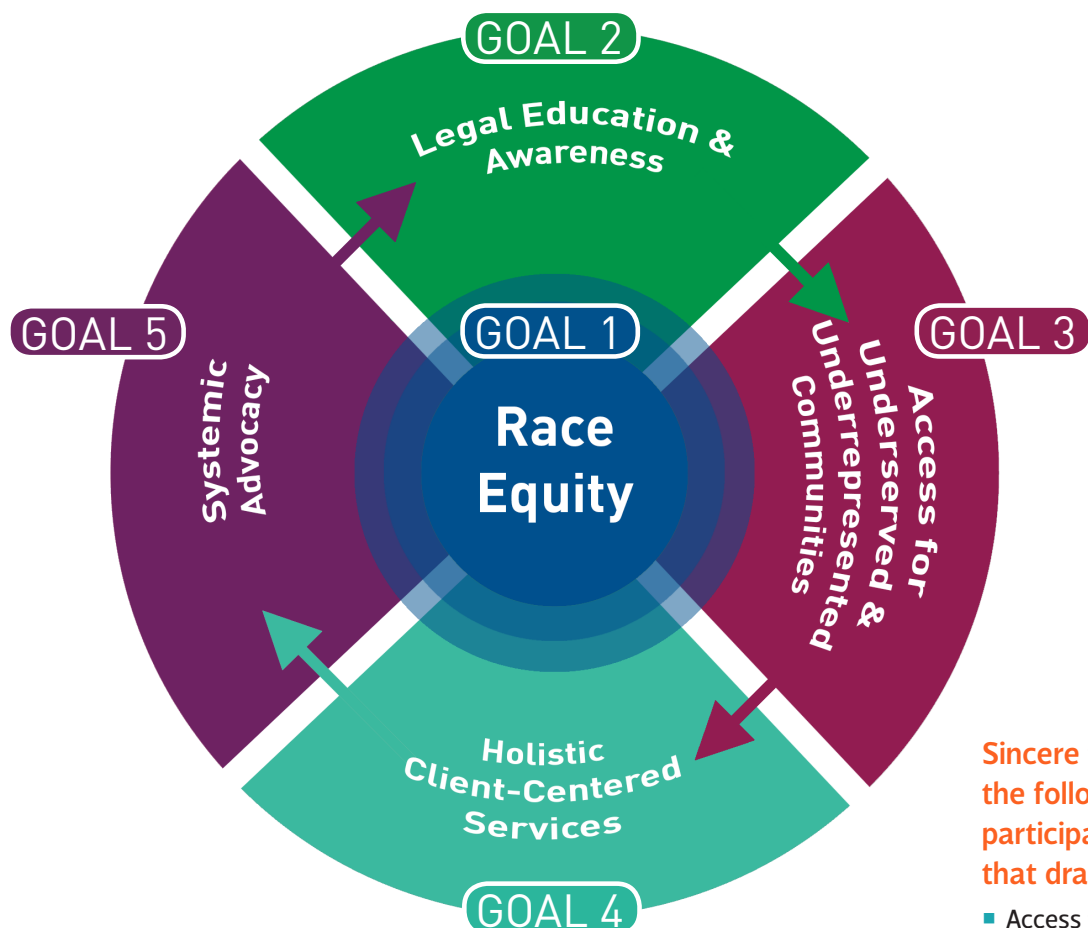
The [State Plan sets forth five goals](#) intended to reflect the universal commitment of the Alliance for an equitable legal system:

1. Promote and foster **race equity**
2. Provide clients with **legal education** to understand when their problem is legal in nature
3. **Increase access** for underserved and underrepresented communities
4. Develop and increase **holistic client-centered services**
5. Engage in **systemic advocacy**

The plan sets forth specific strategies and implementations steps, along with our shared visions for success, which are intended as useful guidance, examples of action steps and direction. It is our hope that everyone in the Alliance and justice system will read the plan and participate, both individually and organizationally. Our work thrives when everyone is involved: lawyers, judges, legal workers, volunteers, community leaders—all committed to the fair, effective, and inclusive administration of civil justice in Washington State. Everyone has a role to play in this important work. With the commitment and participation of everyone in the justice community, we will collectively achieve these five goals over the next three years.

7 in 10 households face at least one significant legal problem each year for which most will not get the help they need.





After all the work developing the plan, the real work of achieving equity and justice for all begins. This plan is not about adding new work, it is about prioritizing and informing the way we do our work. The State Plan offers a framework for the Alliance to work together to achieve our common goals. Our work is richer, stronger, and more fruitful because we are united in our efforts.

We are grateful for the continued engagement of the Alliance. We hope that by working together we can find ways to work more strategically with the resources we have and make even more of a difference for our communities. ■

Sincere thanks and gratitude to the following organizations who participated in the Consensus Group that drafted the State Plan:

- Access to Justice Board
- Benton Franklin Legal Aid Society
- Blue Mountain Action Council
- Center for Justice
- Clark County Volunteer Lawyer Program
- Columbia Legal Services
- Cowlitz Wahkiakum Legal Aid
- Eastside Legal Assistance Program
- King County Bar Association Pro Bono Services
- Kitsap Legal Services
- LAW Advocates
- Lewis County Bar Legal Aid
- Northwest Health Law Advocates
- Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
- Northwest Justice Project
- Rita R. Dermody Legal Help Center at the Public Law Library of King County
- Seattle Community Law Center
- Skagit Volunteer Lawyer Program
- Snohomish County Legal Services
- Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association Volunteer Legal Services
- TeamChild
- University Legal Assistance
- YWCA – Sexual Violence Legal Services





2017 Access to Justice Conference

Racing to Justice: Community Lawyering to Bend the Arc

The 2017 Access to Justice Conference theme “Racing to Justice: Community Lawyering to Bend the Arc” inspired us to do things a little differently this year. Inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr., we went on a journey to determine how we as a justice community could take bold action to bend the arc of our moral universe towards meaningful equity particularly given today’s political climate. On June 2-4, 2017, we welcomed over 300 civil and criminal justice professionals, members of the judiciary, community partners and social justice advocates to Yakima to work towards aligning our equity and justice community. Highlights included:

- Large-group learning as well as small break-out opportunities where we strategized on how we can repudiate and resist policies that are oppressing our client communities.
- Capacity-building sessions featuring best practices, skills, and tools that can help us all work more effectively and efficiently.
- Keynote addresses from Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal and Solicitor General Noah Purcell serving to inspire and inform us about local and national efforts to set policy and advocate for access to justice.
- Opportunities to network, relax and recharge with like-minded colleagues.

“The ATJ Conference is a wonderful opportunity to gain a bigger-picture perspective. The day-to-day work can be overwhelming, it’s a privilege to have the opportunity to think about really changing the way we do things—including using a race equity lens.”

ATJ Conference Participant

Goal 1: Race Equity

Recognizing that race equity is integral to our work, the conference planners embraced this as a core theme of the conference. A number of sessions highlighted varying aspects of race equity, implicit bias, and how we can move the needle on systemic change. We kicked off the conference with an engaging presentation of the brand-new [State Plan for the Coordinated Delivery of Civil Legal Aid to Low Income People](#). Some of the Plan’s drafters shared about the State Plan’s first goal for the Alliance to “promote racial equity both systemically and within its organizational practices.” In pursuit of this goal, the

opening conference plenary “*Racing to Justice: Now What?*” addressed concrete steps and tools that conference attendees and their organizations can use to overcome implicit bias and enact change. The thread of race equity was carried throughout the conference as we discussed critical and emerging issues facing the marginalized communities we serve. Examples included initiatives in Spokane to break the school to prison pipeline that disproportionately effects students of color and regional justice reform efforts on race and community justice. We heard from representatives from immigrant and refugee communities, Native American and tribal communities, religious minorities as well as gender justice and environmental justice advocates for another group plenary. This panel focused on the intersectionality of the issues our communities are facing and how we can align more effectively to advance equity.

“I was so impressed how all the sessions, all the speakers, and the topics, united around the conference theme. So often this is not the reality, but this conference was true to its theme and it was fantastic! Great execution by the folks who planned and staffed this event. Attention to detail is clearly a strength of the conference planning team! Well done, all!”

ATJ Conference Participant

Breaking Down Silos and a Call to Action

The conference planners infused the conference with a clear message that in order to change the course of equity and access to justice, we need to change how we as a community operate. This year’s conference placed a significant emphasis on breaking down the silos that we often find ourselves working within: criminal/civil, liberal/conservative, urban/rural, nontraditional partners/usual suspects, non-legal/legal communities. The conference concluded with a conversation about how to avoid missing opportunities to collaborate between these various groups and to better leverage our work to serve the greater good. After a panel shared their perspectives on these various silos, conference attendees broke into small groups to strategize real steps to strengthen the equity and justice community so they could take ideas back to their organizations, find new partnership opportunities and join networks that serve similar communities. Our call to action was to take these conversations beyond the conference and to join together in solidarity to advance equity and justice in Washington State through stronger collaboration and a shared vision. ■





The Conference by the Numbers:

304
total
attendees

15
criminal justice
attorneys
attended

15
low bono
attorneys
attended

**Over
115**
organizations
represented

- civil legal aid organizations
- volunteer lawyer programs
- courts and government agencies
- private law firms
- law schools
- community partners
- limited license legal technicians



Upper left: Justice Steven González and Hon. Ann Schindler at the Friday reception

Upper right: Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal's keynote address

Middle left: Conference panelists Terra Nevitt, Lindy Laurence, Jorge Barón and Alex Doolittle discuss the State Plan

Middle right: Solicitor General Noah Purcell's keynote address

Bottom left: Conference attendees Leah Medway, Christopher McCauley and Jodi Nishioka at the Friday reception



For more information on the 2017 Access to Justice Conference:

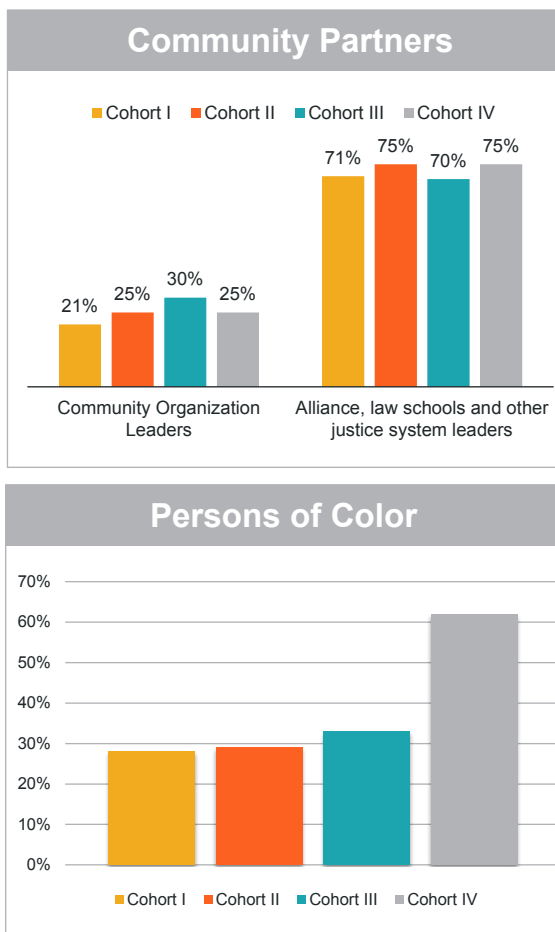
- Session materials from the conference, such as PowerPoints and handouts, can be found on the conference website at www.wa-atj.org.
- View recordings of Chief Justice Fairhurst's remarks and the keynote addresses from Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal and Solicitor General Noah Purcell at <https://goo.gl/1XTnnj>.
- Photos from the conference can be found on the ATJ Board's Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/wastatebar.atj/.



JustLead Continues the ATJ Board's Legacy of Leadership Development

The Leadership Academy has become a key way to encourage the development of new and adaptive skills and collaboration across systems and sectors. The ATJ Board first piloted the Equal Justice Community Leadership Academy in 2013 and shepherded three cohorts through the Academy. After a visioning and planning year in 2016, the Leadership Academy's Steering Committee decided to transform the program into a staffed nonprofit organization. It officially rebranded and launched as JustLead Washington in January 2017, with Jennifer Werdell assuming the role of Executive Director in February and Ada Shen-Jaffe providing additional core support as Senior Education Consultant and lead faculty for the Leadership Academy. Now that core infrastructure is in place JustLead has started to offer additional capacity- and leadership-building services to equity and justice partner organizations, such as one-time leadership and race equity trainings, board and staff retreat facilitation assistance, and strategic planning support.

The fourth Leadership Academy launched in March 2017, welcoming 32 new Fellows into its growing network of now over 110 legal and community leaders dedicated to advancing equity and justice in Washington State. The new class of Leadership Academy Fellows includes attorneys and advocates working within the civil, criminal, and juvenile justice systems as well as community organizers, social service providers, and other leaders from community-based organizations across the state. Cohorts are intentionally designed to include diverse perspectives from across the state, and this year's group has been no exception: Approximately 40% of the cohort are drawn from outside of King County, including participants from Chelan, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Spokane, Thurston, and Yakima Counties; for the first time a group of criminal justice advocates and two attorneys from the Attorney General's office are participating; and this year people of color make up the majority of the cohort. ■



Cohort IV Leadership Academy Fellows at the Justice for Charleena Rally



The Technology and Justice Symposium

The Access to Justice Board through the work of its Technology Committee organized and hosted the first Technology & Justice Symposium on September 9–10, 2016, at the University of Washington School of Law. Nearly 100 people gathered together for the two-day event that focused on legal technology innovation, current court and legal system technology, and the Access to Justice Technology Principles. Then-Washington State Supreme Court Chief Justice Barbara Madsen gave the opening remarks and was followed by Judge Don Horowitz (ret.) and Office of Civil Legal Aid Director Jim Bamberger who presented the history of the Access to Justice Technology Principles and how they have been implemented to date.

Later, through a series of panel discussions and flash talks, members of the community presented their current efforts to work towards legal empowerment using technology to access justice. Executive Director of Pro Bono Net Mark O'Brien and Georgetown Law Professor Tanina Rostain provided a national prospective on technology and justice on a panel moderated

by Technology Committee Co-Chair Emily McReynolds. The distinguished list of speakers included Washington State Supreme Court Justice Steven González, Internet co-founder Vint Cerf, Self-Represented Litigation Network founder Richard Zorza, Director of the Legal Services Technology Assistance Project Sart, and University of Washington Information School Professors Bob Boiko and Adam Moore. Many of the attendees walked away with inspiration for innovative ways to address the justice gap, create new networks among legal professionals and technologists, and opportunities to update and better implement the Access to Justice Technology Principles.

In response to the symposium, the ATJ Board's Technology Committee launched a workgroup to review and update the ATJ Technology Principles. They are gathering together legal professionals and technologists to survey a variety of stakeholders and update the nearly 13-year-old principles. The Technology Committee plans to present an updated version of the ATJ Technology Principles in 2018. ■





Equal Justice Coalition A YEAR IN REVIEW

Advocacy



STATE

Thanks to the steadfast and effective advocacy of the EJC and our community, the Washington State Legislature **increased funding for civil legal aid by \$4.8 million** for the Fiscal Year 2017–2019 budget.

The EJC and our community advocated for a roughly \$12 million increase based on the profound findings of the 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study Update. While the request was not fully funded, this increase is a much needed step towards ensuring access to justice for low-income Washingtonians.

The highlight of our advocacy efforts was the **2017 Legal Aid Lobby Day**. In February 2017, we brought over 100 people—representing 30 legislative districts—to Olympia for a day of grassroots lobbying. Our group met with more than 90 members of the Legislature to advocate for increased funding for legal aid.



Advocates from Pierce County during Legal Aid Lobby Day

FEDERAL

Each spring, the EJC participates in the **American Bar Association's Advocacy Days**, a national effort to lobby for federal legal aid funding. We compile a team of leaders from our legal community and travel to Washington, D.C. to meet with the members of our state's Congressional Delegation. Our 2017 team included: Then-WSBA President Robin Haynes, WSBA Past-President Bill Hyslop, former Washington Attorney General Rob McKenna, Washington Supreme Court Justice Steven González, EJC Chair Salvador Mungia, LFW Executive Director Caitlin Davis, and EJC staff Jay Doran.

Our meetings were successful, and nearly every member of our Congressional delegation is supportive of increasing legal aid funding, despite the Administration's proposal to eliminate it. Shortly after our trip, Congress passed a FY 2017 spending bill that included flat funding for legal aid—\$385 million.



EJC Team with Rep Derek Kilmer

Outreach & Media

Along with grassroots advocacy and lobbying, we work to increase public funding for legal aid through community outreach and media efforts.

45+

Presentations and CLEs to community organizations, county bars, and law firms across the state

20+

Educational meetings with targeted state legislators to teach about the importance of legal aid and build support for increased funding

16

From January 2016 - July 2017, placed 16 pieces of earned media (op-eds, editorial, articles) in outlets across the state

[The Justice Gap: The Case for Civil Legal Aid](#)

Op-ed by Congressman Adam Smith | South Seattle Emerald | July 17, 2016

[At the Mercy of the Court](#)

by Marilyn Napier | Skagit Valley Herald | December 18, 2016

[Washington Must Recommit to Justice for All](#)

Op-ed by Rob McKenna | Tacoma News Tribune | March 18, 2017

[Justice Out of the Trump Budget](#)

by Editorial Board | The Wenatchee World | March 27, 2017

[State Should Bolster Civil Legal Aid](#)

Op-ed by Peter Grabicki and Judge Gregory Tripp | The Spokesman-Review | May 21, 2017





Pro Bono Council Continues Momentum

The Pro Bono Council was created as a committee of the Access to Justice Board in 2014 to address the important goal of engaging the pro bono community, as a whole, in key policy initiatives affecting our statewide system of delivering civil legal aid. In the three years since its inception, the Pro Bono Council has served 17 volunteer lawyer programs (VLP) across the state to provide strategic coordination, leverage resources, and strengthen the pro bono community. We celebrate the highlighted achievements of the Pro Bono Council over this past year:



Pro Bono Trainings and Gatherings:

The pro bono community gathered together in June in Yakima for the Statewide Legal Advocates Training, Pro Bono Council pre-conference meeting, and Access to Justice Conference. Highlights included a panel about best practices for Housing Justice Project models across the state, a networking happy hour among VLP staff and Northwest Justice Project CLEAR advocates, and a workshop led by VLP staff and board members about how to optimize volunteer engagement.

The pro bono community gathered on February 23, 2017 for their annual in-person meeting to coincide with the Goldmark Luncheon. They enjoyed this time to connect with one another, develop Pro Bono Council priorities, and frame their collective input about the State Plan.



Serving Our Immigrant Communities:

In response to the recent heightened legal needs of immigrant families, the King County Bar Association, Eastside Legal Assistance Program, Yakima County Volunteer Attorney Services, Skagit Volunteer Lawyer Program, LAW Advocates, Snohomish County Legal Services, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Legal Aid and other pro bono programs engaged private attorneys to provide free legal assistance for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status cases, Family Safety Planning help, and other legal services for immigrant families across Washington.



Alliance Collaboration:

VLP staff and board members participated in state planning as members of the Consensus Group, the State Plan Scoping and Steering Committees, and stakeholder feedback gatherings.

The Council worked with the Office of Civil Legal Aid to incorporate additional state funding for our pro bono infrastructure as part of the Civil Legal Aid Reinvestment Plan. ■



Pro Bono Council Members at the ATJ Conference



A Year of Equity and Justice Work

Driven by its commitment to equity and justice in Washington for low income and marginalized communities and individuals, the Access to Justice Board has had a busy year. Here are some highlights of the Board's projects, convenings and initiatives over this past year.

**9–10
September
2016**

Technology and Justice Symposium

Legal professionals, community members and technologists gather at the University of Washington to discuss the intersection of access to justice and technology and to begin the process of updating the ATJ Technology Principles.

**2
December
2016**

Joint Meeting on “Race, Equity and Access to Justice”

The Access to Justice Board, Minority and Justice Commission, Gender and Justice Commission, and Interpreter Commission hold a historic joint meeting at WSBA to share about their respective race equity work and identify areas of potential collaboration.

**25
January
2017**

JustLead Washington Launches

After the Access to Justice Board first pilots the Equal Justice Community Leadership Academy in 2013 and shepherds three cohorts through the academy, JustLead Washington, a new nonprofit, is formed to house the Leadership Academy and a sustainable network of community leaders committed to equity and justice for low income and marginalized communities.

**17
February
2017**

“The Road Ahead: Strategizing for Justice in a New Political Landscape”

Following the annual Goldmark Luncheon, the Access to Justice Board convenes members of our civil, criminal, and juvenile justice communities to join together to dialogue, coordinate and strategize to protect and stand for justice.

**9
March
2017**

Website Redesign Project Begins

After a website redesign workgroup spent the Fall evaluating our website needs, the Access to Justice Board begins work with a web developer to overhaul the Alliance for Equal Justice website. With plans to launch in late 2017, the website will significantly improve the web presence and communications of both the Alliance and the Board.

**23–24
March
2017**

ATJ Board Meets with Alliance Members in SW Washington

The Access to Justice Board meets with staff from the Northwest Justice Project's Longview and Vancouver offices, the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Legal Aid, the Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program and local leaders to learn about how they are working with their communities to effect change and advance justice.



**12
May
2017**

ATJ Board Adopts the New State Plan

The Access to Justice Boards adopts the 2018-2020 State Plan for the Coordinated Delivery of Civil Legal to Low Income People.

**12
May
2017**

ATJ Board Renews its Commitment to Race Equity

The Access to Justice Board signs on to the Race Equity and Justice Initiative's Acknowledgments and Commitments. By becoming a partner to this work, the Board joins an initiative that is collectively creating ongoing learning opportunities and a process for accountability with those working to achieve racial equity in the justice system.

**2
June
2017**

ATJ Board Meets with Alliance Members in Yakima

The Access to Justice Board meets with Yakima legal services providers from the Northwest Justice Project, Columbia Legal Services, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, TeamChild, and the Yakima Volunteer Attorney Services to learn how they are partnering with communities to combat injustices. The ATJ Board also meets with representatives from the WSBA's Low Bono Section and Moderate Means Program to learn about the impact they are making for middle income people with unmet legal needs.

**2
June
2017**

ATJ Board hosts the 19th Access to Justice Conference "Racing to Justice: Community Lawyering to Bend the Arc"

Over 300 people gather in Yakima to learn, strategize, partner, collaborate, renew and recharge.

The Access to Justice Board is not able to accomplish its work without the dedication and support of its many committee volunteers. The Board is grateful for the support and guidance of its standing committees over the past year.

Committees and Chairs

- **Communications Committee:**
Lynn Greiner
- **Conference Planning Committee:**
Ishbel Dickens and Beth Leonard
- **Delivery System Committee:**
Geoffrey G. Revelle and Threesa Milligan
- **Equal Justice Coalition:**
Salvador A. Mungia
- **Justice Without Barriers:**
Judge Laura T. Bradley and Josefina Cerrillo-Ramirez
- **Leadership Development Committee:**
Hon. Anita Crawford-Willis and Catherine Brown
- **Pro Bono Council:**
Ben Haslam, Eva Wescott and Threesa Milligan
- **Rules Committee:**
Nicholas P. Gellert and Deborah Perluss
- **Technology Committee:**
Emily McReynolds and Francis Adewale



Notes

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