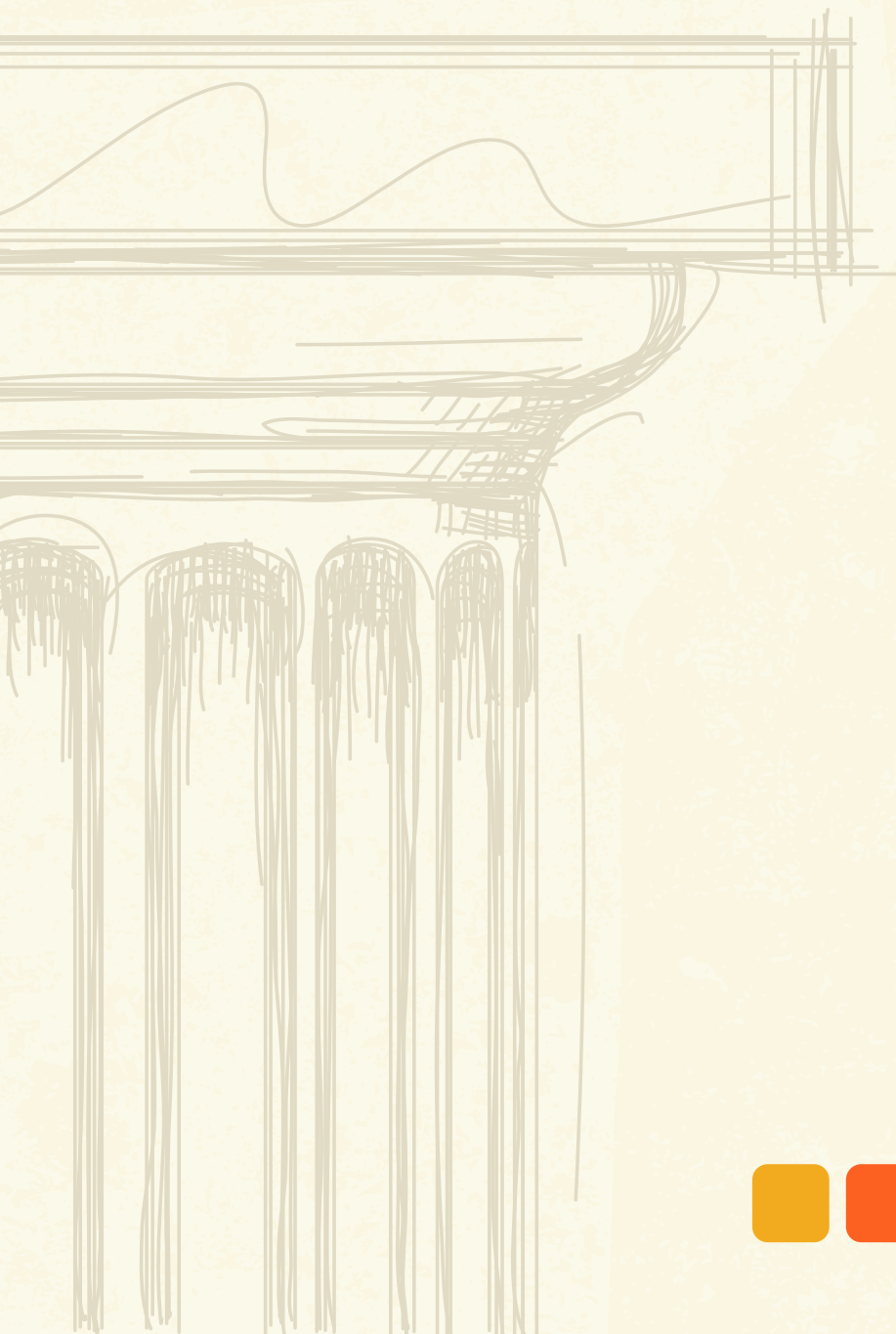




2016 Access to Justice Board Annual Report





A Message from the 2016 Access to Justice Board Chair

Dear Members of the Alliance for Equal Justice,

It gives me great pleasure to share with you the 2016 Annual Report of the Access to Justice Board.

The Access to Justice Board (ATJ Board) is fortunate to include dedicated individuals who strive for justice every day, strongly supported by an amazingly resourceful staff, and accompanied on our justice equity journey by a diverse group of committed volunteers – as evidenced by the work of the ATJ Board committees.



There is much to celebrate as we reflect on the past year's activities. The ATJ Board has been creating and supporting a broad array of initiatives including the rollout of the plain language family law forms, a six-year effort that involved a lot of incredibly tireless work; the emerging state plan, which will guide the work of the Alliance for the next three years; and the graduation of the third cohort from the Leadership Academy, meaning that 88 positional and non-positional leaders have now completed that journey with a much broader understanding of racial inequality, bias, and privilege in the justice system and throughout society.

The ATJ Board also launched its own Rules Committee last year in order to be as effective, efficient, and responsive as possible to proposed rules that impact access to justice. We are looking forward to our Technology Symposium in early fall where one topic of discussion will be to ensure the ongoing relevancy of the ATJ Technology Principles.

The ATJ Board is excited to move forward with its communication plan, which includes a quarterly e-newsletter informing Alliance partners of current and emerging issues. We are also excited about the collaborative work we are doing with the Equal Justice Coalition and the Pro Bono Council – two entities that were conceptualized by the ATJ Board and now have their own staff and dedicated volunteers.

Evaluating the success of ATJ Board initiatives is new for us, but we are determined to hold ourselves accountable for the work products we generate and thus an evaluation component is being built into our practices.

Please take the time to read all of the ATJ Board committee reports included in this document. There is much to inspire and delight you.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have served on the ATJ Board and to have been its Chair for the past two years. I look forward to serving in some capacity in the years ahead and I wish Geoff Revelle all the best when he takes on the mantle on October 1.

Best,

Ishbel Dickens, Chair, Access to Justice Board





State Plan for the Delivery of Civil Legal Services

"Will people in my position, or worse off than I, get any sort of meaningful help?" This apt question illustrates a consistent sentiment among individuals who participated in the Washington State Supreme Court commissioned 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study Update. This academically rigorous study yielded many findings, including that low-income households in Washington experience an average of nine legal problems each year, and the vast majority face them alone. Members of the Alliance for Equal Justice are working tirelessly to provide robust civil legal services to those in need. However, with just one legal aid attorney for every 11,000 potential clients in the state, we are far from achieving equity and justice for all in our state.

In October 2015, the Access to Justice Board (ATJ Board) initiated a process to update our plan for the coordinated delivery of civil legal services to low-income people and families in Washington. This three-year plan is intended to outline collective goals and strategies for the civil legal aid community to more effectively work together to provide meaningful services to the communities we seek to serve. In order to ensure that the plan is truly collaborative and statewide, the planning process is engaging legal aid providers and partners from across the state who share a common value of working towards access to justice for all.

Prior to launching the state planning process, the ATJ Board's Delivery System Committee launched a scoping workgroup to develop recommendations about the purpose, framework, roadmap, and timeline for the state plan. This group met for over the course of two months to develop the purpose and roadmap, including key considerations for developing the state plan.

The Consensus Group includes representatives from the following organizations:

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
KCBA Pro Bono Services
Kitsap Legal Services
LAW Advocates
Lewis County Bar Legal Aid
Northwest Consumer Law Center
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
TeamChild
University Legal Assistance
YWCA – Sexual Violence Legal Services

Once the scoping plan was adopted by the ATJ Board in October 2015, a Steering Committee was launched to conduct broad stakeholder outreach to educate partners about the Alliance for Equal Justice, the key findings of the Civil Legal Needs Study Update, and how to engage in the state planning process. Starting in January 2016, a Consensus Group, made up of representatives from twenty-two organizations whose predominant missions are to provide civil legal aid to low-income people and a representative of the ATJ Board, began meeting to develop the goals, strategies and implementation for a three-year state plan. The Consensus Group has met regularly since to draft the plan, while simultaneously collecting feedback on key elements from legal aid providers, community partners and low-income people through a series of focus groups and surveys.

"Everyone involved in the state planning process — from the staff to the consensus group members — have been talented and passionate advocates for equity and access to legal services and protections. The group's willingness to engage in the work, with thoughtful and courageous conversations for the good of the community, has been truly impressive."

– Tracy Flynn, Consultant and Consensus Group Facilitator

The ATJ Board has been impressed with the deep engagement of the Consensus Group and the willingness of its members to face difficult and complicated questions about our collective priorities and the most effective means to achieve them. "We're asking a lot of the Consensus Group members," says Terra Nevitt, staff to the ATJ Board, "to step away from running their programs and serving people in need to think critically about how we do this work. Not only have they showed up, but they've engaged in the process enthusiastically and courageously."

The state plan for the delivery of civil legal services will be complete by the end of 2016. For more information, please contact Terra Nevitt at terran@wsba.org or 206-727-8282.

Purpose of the 2016–19 State Plan: The principle purpose of the plan is to guide the collective efforts of the Alliance for Equal Justice in order to expand access to the civil justice system and identify and eliminate barriers that perpetuate poverty and deny justice. The plan is intended to articulate Alliance agreement about its core functions, strategic goals and existing gaps.



From the Consensus Group Perspective

Lori Bashor-Sarancik, executive director at Cowlitz Wahkiakum Legal Aid in Longview, WA, is one of the many devoted members of the Consensus Group who has been diligently developing the plan. Here is what she has to say about what motivates her to give her time to this process.

"I come to this work from the perspective of providing help directly to the people we serve. In my role as a director of a Volunteer Lawyer Program, I see the struggles of low-income people dealing with relationships, creditors, housing, abuse and injustice. The system is not friendly to non-lawyers. I volunteered to be part of the Consensus Group to develop goals for the Alliance

because I have the hope that these goals will translate into concrete improvements in client outcomes that can be seen and measured for low-income people in our entire state. Because our entire organization exists to improve access for our clients, we have to ensure that the goals we establish will eliminate barriers and make it easier for our clients to achieve their necessary results.

"I know that this Consensus Group will unite under these concepts and help set goals with these simple client service principles in mind. I appreciate that the ATJ Board is thoughtfully gathering the input from a wide range of participants so that the goals are embraced and put into motion by the entire Alliance with enthusiasm. The process has been open and professionally facilitated and all members of the Consensus Group have had the opportunity to speak, agree or disagree from their unique perspective. The conversations and ideas presented in both small and large groups have been provocative and innovative. The group is providing a foundation for positive future change. I am fortunate to have participated and I look forward to the end result of the process."

At Long Last: Debut of the New, Improved and Plain, Mandatory Family Law Forms

On May 1 of this year, all of our state family law court forms changed to a new plain language format. For the past six years, a group of volunteers, organized by the Access to Justice Board (ATJ Board) and the Pattern Forms Committee, has methodically converted over 200 forms into plain language, making them more accessible, understandable, and usable, especially for the thousands of unrepresented people navigating the court system on their own every year. Over 75 individuals have contributed over 10,000 mostly volunteer hours to this project.

Why Plain Language?

We all know that lawyers aim to write with clarity, but often fall short. Our court forms are full of "legalese." Simplifying these forms is necessary to remove access barriers to individuals who must navigate the court system on their own. Development of our new plain language forms was driven by a number of factors:

- **Readability:** The average American's reading level proficiency is generally considered to be 5th – 7th grade. People usually stop reading when the text exceeds their reading ability. Plain forms increase the chance that the reader will read and accurately complete the form.
- **Access for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Litigants:** A plain language form is much easier to translate into a different language.
- **Reduced Cost to Litigants:** A plain form is easier to fill out correctly, which means fewer trips to courthouse facilitators or document preparers. Complete forms are less likely to be rejected by court clerks. And litigants who understand a court order are more likely to comply with it.
- **Reduced Costs to Courts:** Accurate and complete forms save the court's time and the litigant's time.

Why Family Law?

In 50% of family law cases, neither side is represented by an attorney. In 80%, at least one side is not represented. About 95% of those who go to court on their own say that cost is the primary factor in deciding not to hire a lawyer. An unknown number of people simply do not file for divorce because it is too expensive and too complicated.

Our Effort

From 2009 to 2012, a small dedicated corps of volunteers translated 18 forms, with the help of Transcend, a company that works on forms translation efforts around the country. We quickly realized the complexity and daunting scope of the project. Fortunately, Laurie Garber, a staff attorney with the Northwest Justice Project's Longview office, stepped up to manage the translation effort. She organized and led three workgroups of volunteers, representing all the key justice system stakeholders, to do the actual forms translation.

As you'll see in the pages of this report, the 2015–16 Access to Justice Board has been hard at work to achieve equal access to the civil justice system for those facing economic and other significant barriers. We asked the Board members to share about their personal connections to the mission and what their experiences have been like as Board members. Flip through the pages of this report to learn more about the Board members, starting with our current chair, Ishbel Dickens.

Name: Ishbel Dickens

Organization: National Manufactured Home Owners' Association

Job title: Executive Director

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board's work?

I have always been invested in challenging the status quo and working for people who are marginalized, vulnerable, and disenfranchised. Serving on the ATJ Board allows me an opportunity to address systemic inequities from a novel perspective.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board?

The interaction between Board members and the exchange of opinions – we do not always agree but the discussions are meaningful and everyone is informing the decision-making for their unique perspective.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board?

How amazing the Board members are – stepping up and taking on incredible leadership roles within the various ATJ Board committees and donating significant time and expertise to move the ATJ priorities forward and to address the inequities in the justice system.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about?

"Washington State enacts income tax to ensure that all basic needs, including access to justice, are fully funded for all residents of this great state."

What piece of advice would you give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees?

Be prepared to roll up your sleeves and get deeply involved in work that is meaningful to you and enjoy the camaraderie and wealth of experience of your co-board/committee members.

As the forms were completed, a number of them were tested with members of the public to ensure that they made a difference with the end user. The consensus was that the forms were much easier to understand and to complete. And as the forms were completed, they were posted on the Administrative Office of the Courts' website for public comment. Many family law practitioners and judges submitted helpful comments that informed the final versions of the forms.

What's Next?

After July 1, anyone filing a family case in our state will use plain language forms. If a case is already in progress, the new plain forms will be required for any court filing after this date. Court clerks, courthouse facilitators, and superior court judges are all aware of this change. In September, WSBA offered a web-based CLE on the changes in the family law forms; approximately 1,600 participants attended this seminar.

Over the next several years, we hope to evaluate the effectiveness of the plain language forms and make further adjustments. We will rely on feedback from practitioners, judges, and courthouse facilitators, and especially unrepresented people. The Administrative Office of the Courts has agreed to translate many of the new forms into Spanish as a first step in making the forms accessible to a large segment of non-English speakers. In addition, as a complement to the new forms, we would like to see a "document assembly" feature included in the state's new case management system. Think TurboTax®, with an interactive website that retains the user's information and prompts the user to complete only relevant questions.

In sum, we're very proud of what's been accomplished through countless hours of many, many volunteers over a six-year period. The dedication of these volunteers is a testament to their conviction that the old forms were in desperate need of a "plain language" fix in order to increase access to justice for those who cannot afford an attorney. The new forms are indeed much more user-friendly and we're confident that they will be of tremendous benefit to the unrepresented folks, who continue to steer their family law case through the court system, alone.

- **To view the new forms**, which will be mandatory starting July 1, 2016, [visit the court's website](#).
- **To download the 90-minute WSBA Legal Lunchbox CLE** about the forms, [visit the CLE store online](#).
- **For questions** or to receive more information about the forms, contact Laurie Garber at laurieg@nwjustice.org.



Name: Geoff Revelle
Organization: Stoel Rives LLP
Job title: Senior Counsel

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board's work? My work with the King County Bar Association and King County Bar Foundation over the past 35 years.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board? Working with multiple people and groups trying to help solve seemingly unsolvable problems of access to justice for low-income people in Washington.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board? I can't say that anything has really surprised me.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about? That the Board is being disbanded because its mission has been accomplished.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees? Sign up for a committee that interests you and take it from there.



ATJ Communications Committee – One Year of Success

One year after its inception, the Access to Justice Board's Communications Committee has made huge strides in implementing the Board's Communication Plan. Comprised of communication and development professionals and representatives from private practice, legal service providers, law schools, and the Office of Civil Legal Aid, the Committee's first step was to affirm its purpose as highlighting the important work of the Access to Justice Board, facilitating Alliance for Equal Justice communications, and communicating with the public.

The Committee began its work with an Alliance for Equal Justice-wide communications audit survey to understand the ways the legal community reaches its audiences, including the methods and types of messaging. The survey provides a

snapshot of the Alliance communications landscape in Washington State and serves as a basis for subsequent follow up to better support small programs. The Committee simultaneously began work on, and subsequently launched, the ATJ quarterly e-newsletter to report on the work of the Board and communicate those efforts to stakeholders. The Committee will build on this foundational work as it oversees the future development of an ATJ/Alliance website.



In a collaborative role, the Committee began closer coordination with the national Voices for Civil Justice initiative that generates media coverage and tells stories to build awareness of the role of civil legal aid in advancing justice. Throughout this past year, the Committee called on Alliance organizations to share their stories with this larger national audience. Currently, 27 news stories from Washington State are available on the [Voices for Civil Justice website](#).

On a statewide level, the Committee supported the communication efforts for the Plain Language Forms rollout. Providing communications support to ATJ projects remains a priority of the Committee as it looks to the year ahead.



Name: Laura Bradley

Organization: Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals

Job title: Assistant Chief Industrial Appeals Judge

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board's work? At my agency, I have been working on access issues and am thrilled to be part of a community that supports my efforts. Administrative adjudicative agencies interact with citizens who may have no other contact with the justice system. It is incumbent upon us to ensure meaningful access to our processes.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board? I have gained incredible insight and fantastic ideas through my participation on the Board and activities association with being an Alliance member. Each

month I get several opportunities to reflect on the work of the Board and my own agency and get re-energized to continue pursuing this all important goal.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board? The range of incredible professionals engaged and interested in this work.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about? In response to the Civil Legal Needs Study, we now have enough attorneys and other assistance to provide each citizen with a legal problem access to justice.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees? It is a time commitment and the work is sometimes difficult, but if you have a passion for the issues we want to address, you will find it extremely rewarding.

Rollout of 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study Update

In 2015, the Washington Supreme Court released the 2015 Washington Civil Legal Needs Study Update, a “rigorous and methodologically sound inquiry into the type and prevalence of civil legal problems low-income families and individuals face today.” In anticipation of public release of the [2015 Civil Legal Needs Study Update](#), the Equal Justice Coalition (EJC) hired Gallatin Public Affairs — the communications firm that produced the Final Report — to help run a 90-day publicity and awareness-building campaign. The campaign, dubbed [Justice For All](#), was aimed at promoting the findings of the survey, emphasizing the vital importance of legal aid for low-income Washingtonians, and, ultimately, priming the EJC’s advocacy efforts in the state legislature. Beginning with a statewide press release to over 150 media outlets on October 29, 2015, the official report was released to the public.



During the next three months, articles, editorials, and op-eds were placed in statewide and local media outlets. This effort began by hosting five press events, each in different regions of the state, inviting members of the press to interview a legal aid attorney, a low-income person who received legal assistance, and a well-known community member who was an expert on the survey. All

five events were successful and yielded stories that highlighted the findings of the study while also including the voices of low-income people affected by civil legal issues. Continuing on the success of the initial media push, the Justice For All campaign sought the attention of editorial boards. Editorials highlighting the study and calling for substantial increases in state funding for civil legal aid were published in four major newspapers across the state. Articles were published in nearly every major media market. Op-eds were placed by a sitting Republican State Senator and a Democratic House member. Overall, the Justice For All campaign produced over 20 news stories in over 15 Washington State media outlets, including one radio piece and two TV segments. Links to all of these stories can be found at www.ejc.org/justiceforall.

In addition to the media push, the Justice For All campaign educated the public by helping legal aid providers and EJC supporters achieve fluency in the study’s findings, use the communications tools that had been developed and communicate effectively about the study and its implications. Two training workshops were held to teach legal aid programs across the state how to most effectively communicate about the study. All messaging resources were posted to the [EJC’s website](#). Alliance members were encouraged to present to their coworkers, boards, community partners, and other appropriate organizations.

Having completed the successful rollout, attention has turned to keeping the story alive and translating it into new resources for civil legal aid. Because Washington State budgets on a biennial basis, little can be achieved to address the actual funding needs prior to the 2017 legislative session. Consequently, the EJC will spend the remainder of 2016 ensuring that it is organizing its members to meet with or contact their state legislators to highlight the findings of the study and emphasize the need for additional funding.



Name: Nicholas (Nick) Gellert
Organization: Perkins Coie LLP
Job title: Senior Counsel

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board’s work? I have been actively involved in doing pro bono work

and mentoring others at my firm doing the same. I served as our firm’s pro bono coordinator for a few years and also served as a trustee for the Legal Foundation of Washington. I wanted to apply those and other experiences to further access to justice through the Board’s work.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board? The active coordination throughout the access to justice community furthered by our work.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board? How much I did not know about our access to justice system, and how many great people are working so hard to serve disadvantaged clients and to improve the delivery system.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about? “Number of poor unable to obtain legal assistance continues to decline.”

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees? Patience; improvements are incremental.



Leadership Academy Offers Innovative Curriculum to Equity and Justice Stakeholders

In early 2015, the Washington Equal Justice Community Leadership Academy (the Academy) welcomed its third cohort of legal aid providers and community partners from across the state to participate in a year-long training program. An initiative of the Access to Justice Board, the Academy offers an intentional and durable infrastructure that helps develop and sustain a broad, diverse, and deep network of leaders committed to equity and justice. Fellows are drawn from the Alliance for Equal Justice and community-based social justice organizations. The core curriculum is built on the Sargent Shriver National Poverty Law Center's "Seven Leadership Competencies" model. Taught by Shriver Center consultants and alumni from previous cohorts, Fellows learn to apply these competencies at four levels of leadership: self, organization, the Alliance, and the equity and justice movement. Cohort III Fellows Joy Williams and Katharine Nyden share their personal experiences, greatest learnings, and takeaways from the experience below.

The Academy by the numbers

- Cohorts graduated: 3
- Total number of graduates: 88

Cohort III diversity

- One-third people of color
- One-third people from community partner organizations
- One-half people from communities outside of King County

For more information about the Academy and/or to be notified of the request for applications for Cohort IV (slated to begin in early 2017), please contact Jennifer Werdell at 206-914-9406 or wa.ejcla@gmail.com.



Fellow Perspective: Joy Williams, Diversity Program Manager, Washington State Bar Association

The Academy was not what I expected it to be. My experience was rooted in learning more about myself, how I show up, and what I have to offer. The Academy forces participants to examine who they are in the greater movement, and how that individual experience can be harnessed to move the greater whole forward.

Retreat one began the preparation for learning how to tell our leadership stories. This process helped me understand how the content and delivery of a story can greatly impact the audience's ability and willingness to connect with you. This exercise helped me rethink my presentation of self and underscored why I applied to the Academy in the first place; to better understand how to move the work of racial and social justice equity forward.

Retreat two focused on communicating strategic intent. We did this by evaluating the values, vision and mission of our organizations and ourselves. This was eye opening as I was forced to critically think through my own congruency, or lack thereof, as well as examine the congruency of my organization. Having the strategic intent of achieving equal justice is a lofty goal, and the road there is fraught with challenges. The Academy was an ideal forum for dissecting these challenges. We dived deep into discussions of implicit bias, difficult conversations and working effectively across a variety of differences. I learned that to effectively communicate strategic intent is to take personal and institutional responsibility for incongruent communication and behavior and work towards congruency.

Retreat three focused on the necessity of self-care. Mindfulness and other renewal practices gave us tools to prevent burn out. Leaders are not often known for engaging in healthy self-care practices. The Academy highlighted self-care as an important element to the sustainability and effectiveness of any leader. We stopped, took deep breaths, reflected and spoke out of that place. It was an important reminder that making the time for renewal only enhances your ability to lead well.

At our final retreat the leadership stories took flight. Each cohort member shared their journey. It was riveting, compelling and beautiful. It was also hard, sad and difficult. Each journey had tears and laughter. The diversity of life experiences was absolutely breathtaking. It is said that you cannot judge a book by its cover and this was underscored during the final retreat. My respect and admiration of each participant only grew with each story. The final retreat was like a steel drum filled with people making beautiful music within a concentrated space and the resulting symphony is difficult to describe if you weren't present to hear the tuning of each instrument.

Participants in my cohort represented a variety of leadership experience, styles and positions. This created the opportunity for vibrant, creative and interesting dialogue. We didn't always agree, but the mutual respect was evident. I felt safe, and as a woman of color safety was important. I am often concerned with how much to share, what to speak and how to speak when working in a group. I am used to being the only person of color or one of a few sorely outnumbered by those represented in the dominant culture. The Academy brought together such a wide variety of leaders that social safety never became an issue for me. This is an important element because it underscores the need for leaders to engage in forums, and practices that are life-giving and supportive.

The Academy is a place of study and training. The individuals brought in to speak, train, educate and facilitate were excellent and approachable. The opportunity to actively and freely engage with participants and trainers from around the state and as representatives of the Shriver Center made learning exciting, compelling, and an active process. The Academy felt like one country being filled by each new cohort, and each cohort is focused on reframing the discussion on diversity, inclusion, equity and justice to reclaim every citizen's right to access and equal rights under the law.



Fellow Perspective: Katharine Nyden, Pro Bono Coordinator, Blue Mountain Action Council

As someone who loves working in the civil legal aid community in Washington, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to meet with and learn alongside many of the most influential leaders in our field. The Academy offers a forum for us to contemplate how we can more effectively serve communities

struggling in poverty, but also how we should consider the broader context of our work.

The message that I took from the Academy is that movements require intentionally guided actions, towards clearly identified goals. The Academy is the product of very strategic and mindful planning by some of our most tireless leaders, founded on hopes that our community can become a more deliberate and cohesive force for social justice. In speaking with other members of my cohort, I found that many of us spend our days bouncing from one crisis to the next, essentially engaging in legal triage. I know that I am guilty of existing in these silos, remaining hyper-focused on the everyday tasks that ensure our clients' immediate legal needs are being met. But the Academy points out that if we are instead focused on the structural impediments to justice for our clients- on deep evaluation of the systemic failings that have produced these crises- we can effect change on a much more fundamental level. It was so helpful to be reminded of what our collective impact can be, if we take time to consider the most effective way to exercise our leadership. Our instructors (including Academy alumni) used the Shriver curriculum to give us a tool kit to do just that. While I am still admittedly trying to fully process and engage this material, I am immensely thankful for both the experience and the deep impact this Academy will have on the delivery of legal aid in our state.

For more information about the Academy and/or to be notified of the request for applications for Cohort IV (slated to begin in early 2017), please contact Jennifer Werdell at 206-914-9406 or wa.ejcla@gmail.com.



Name: Breean Beggs
Organization: Paukert & Troppmann, PLLC
Job title: Litigation Partner

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board's work?

The belief that by acting strategically

and educating the community would create more substantive and procedural justice for people lacking in power and influence.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board?

We creatively make a huge difference to the world and provide a strong voice for both low income clients and many of the smaller organizations that serve them.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board?

How respected our voices are by the Supreme Court and the Legislature. Because we have no financial interest in decisions and are perceived as truly working for the greater good, decision makers tend to listen to our opinion.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about?

Creating more funding and better results for low income people who are treated unfairly by the status quo, especially people suffering under the burden of structural racism and poverty.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees?

Roll up your sleeves and get ready to work, because we come up with great ideas, but often have to implement them as well.



Name: Andrew N. Sachs
Organization: Neller-moe Wrenn PLLC
Job title: Attorney

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board's work? I got involved after serving on the ATJ's Task Force on Race and the Criminal Justice System. It was that experience that really opened my eyes to the disparate outcomes for people, based on race and socio-economic status. On the civil side, given my background in civil litigation, I wanted to be involved in a community of people who were thinking about how to solve these problems.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board? I most enjoy the opportunity to work with a community of smart and dedicated individuals who are working every day to try and find ways to get people the legal assistance they need. The opportunity to be a part of that community, and to see changes (even if some are only incremental) is extremely humbling and rewarding.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board? I've been surprised (in a good way) about the number of people in the community who are starting to understand the work we do, and the importance of delivering civil legal aid to those who need it.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about? I'd want it to be about how the access community came together with other stakeholders in the State to bridge the justice gap; and about the positive outcomes for racial minorities and lower income residents of our State.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees? Be prepared for change to come slowly and incrementally, and be willing to get into the weeds on rules and policy. Solving the problem of delivering civil legal aid to those who need it is a long-term project that takes patience and dedication, but can be so rewarding along the way.



Name: Lynn Greiner
Organization: Greiner Law Office
Job title: Attorney

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board's work? Former legal aid attorney, long-time private practice with a focus on disability law. My clientele has primarily been low-income people with physical and psychiatric impairments. I have extensive first-hand experience with people living in poverty.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board? I am committed to assisting low-income people with legal problems so I enjoy supporting the provider organizations through the work of the board. I also enjoy working with everyone in the Alliance who comes to the work with different perspectives but a similar strong commitment.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board? Board members have an array of experiences that are complimentary, and everyone is committed to improving the justice system for low-income people.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about? Big strides in serving low-income people through innovative ways.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees? Jump in, ask for help if you need it, attend Alliance-related events, and volunteer with a provider occasionally to better understand the client community.



Pro Bono Council – Two Years Later

The Pro Bono Council (PBC), created in 2014, provides advocacy, support, and coordination for Washington's 17 state-funded Volunteer Lawyer Programs (VLPs). The VLPs are located across the state and vary in size and structure. Prior to the creation of the PBC, it was challenging for the VLPs to coordinate with each other on projects and to participate as a whole in statewide initiatives, including much of the work done by the Access to Justice Board and its committees. However, two years later,

the PBC has given the VLP network the ability to participate in the access to justice community in a more meaningful and productive way.



"One 'first' after another! In its first two years the PBC has been effective beyond what we could have imagined in creating opportunity for cooperation between our volunteer attorney programs and bringing all of us to the table as equal partners in the Alliance — all to the benefit of those in our community who need us most."

– Laurie Davenport, Pro Bono Council Co-Chair and Director of Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association Volunteer Legal Services Program

In 2015-2016, the PBC has successfully facilitated a high-level of VLP participation in the ATJ Board's process for developing a state plan for the coordinated delivery of civil legal services to low income people. There are 11 VLPs represented in the decision-making body for the state plan, known as the Consensus Group, which is unprecedented and will ensure that the state plan will provide the pro bono community with relevant and effective recommendations and goals. The PBC also hosted a pre-conference session at the 2015 Access to Justice Conference. The session gave the VLP network a rare opportunity to meet in-person and also provided workshops that met the specific needs of programs to recruit, train, and retain volunteer attorneys. The PBC launched an online forms portal accessible by all VLP staff across the state to facilitate the sharing of policies and legal clinic materials amongst programs. The sharing of information on the portal has directly contributed to the replicating and launching of volunteer clinics across the state. For example, two programs successfully replicated Housing Justice Projects, a court-house based legal clinic that aims to stabilize housing and prevent homelessness for low-income tenants, in their local legal communities.

The PBC has made a lot of strides in supporting VLPs and the work of volunteer lawyers in Washington State over the past year. In partnership with the ATJ Board and all of the members of the Alliance for Equal Justice, the PBC looks forward to continuing its work and the importance of civil legal aid in years to come.

"Over the last 2 years, the PBC members have worked diligently to raise the profile of volunteer lawyers in WA State and their capacity to provide quality legal services to low-income Washingtonians. It has been inspiring to work with a group of such passionate advocates for justice and to support the work of both staff and volunteers across the state."

– Beth Leonard, Pro Bono Council Manager

■ ■ ■ ATJ Board Rules Committee – Ongoing Progress

Created in 2014, the Rules Committee is one of the newest standing committees of the ATJ Board. Its mission is to “make recommendations to the Board for specific action and prepare draft comments on proposed rules for the Board’s consideration and periodically report to the Board on pending or planned activities of the Committee.”



The Rules Committee plays a critical role in supporting the ATJ Board’s responsibility to “[a]ddress existing and proposed laws, rules and regulations that may adversely affect meaningful access to the civil justice system.” The ATJ Board has frequently been asked by the WSBA Rules Committee for its input on proposed rules that are under consideration by the WSBA, but until creation of its Rules Committee had no mechanism for conducting an in depth review of proposed rules or for seeking broad input from its equal justice constituency. In addition, the Rules Committee is tasked with identifying gaps or barriers to access in existing justice systems that can be effectively and appropriately addressed through the Supreme Court’s rulemaking authority.

Co-chaired by ATJ Board Member Nick Gellert and Debi Perluss from the Northwest Justice Project, the ATJ Rules Committee consists of eight members from the judiciary, legal aid providers and public interest organizations, and private attorneys concerned about access to justice needs.

To date, the Rules Committee has worked to develop its charter, created a protocol for collaborating with other ATJ Board Committees whose work may overlap on court rules, recommended comments on various aspects of the Escalating Costs of Civil Litigation Task Force Report, recommended comments on rules related to the availability of cash security in lieu of bail bonds, and liaised with WSBA’s Court Rules Committee, among other activities.



Name: Anita Crawford- Willis
Organization: Office of Administrative Hearings
Job title: Administrative Law Judge

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board’s work? I have always been committed to working for access to the justice system for all people, but especially for marginalized people. I was thrilled to join the ATJ Board and to be a part of moving the mission forward.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board? I love to hear about all the great work being done by the Alliance members. I am so impressed by the commitment and passion all of the partners bring to the work. It is very rewarding to be a part of making a difference.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board? I think I was surprised by the how vast the Alliance is.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about? I would want the story to be about our success in not only educating people about implicit bias, but that our efforts are helping eradicate implicit bias within our legal community.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees? Be ready to roll your sleeves up for the hard and rewarding work ahead.



Name: Mirya Muñoz-Roach

Organization: St. Vincent de Paul Society

Job title: Director of Hispanic Outreach

What drew you to the mission of the ATJ Board's work? Its commitment to asking the tough questions to accomplish the mission of finding, uncovering, and addressing issues of justice and lack of access to legal representation by those at the margins of society.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the ATJ Board? The quality of its members: Honest, caring, sincere, and committed to justice, equity, and access.

What has surprised you most about working with the ATJ Board? The welcoming by its members and the opportunity to express my thoughts and thus be able an advocate for those I represent and serve.

If the ATJ Board were to be on the cover of a major newspaper in five years, what would you want the story to be about? The Access to Justice Board is walking the talk. The story is about how this organizational body with its committed members is taking concrete actions to address the daily concerns that surface when communities begin to talk about issues related to access to justice, lack of equity, institutional racism. Many talk but ATJ is building a path for this type of work so that its members and the community around can take the concrete and necessary steps.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone wanting to volunteer with the ATJ Board or one of its committees? Be ready to roll up your sleeves.

Access to Justice Technology Symposium September 9, 2016

The Access to Justice Board's Tech Committee is planning a Technology Symposium for September 9, 2016. Held at the University of Washington School of Law, the event will bring together representatives from the tech community, legal aid providers, nonprofits, law firms and more to engage at the intersection of technology and justice. The goal is to drive implementation of the Access to Justice Technology Principles through conversations about the Principles and through connecting individuals from a variety of backgrounds. The full-day symposium will explore current court technology, legal tech innovation, and the Technology Principles through a series of workshops, flash talks, and small group sessions.

Want to join us? Request registration details and the final agenda from ATJ Tech Committee Co-chair, Emily McReynolds, at emcr@uw.edu.



The Access to Justice Board's mission

The Washington State Access to Justice Board was established by a Washington Supreme Court Order in 1994. Recognizing that access to the civil justice system is a fundamental right, the Access to Justice Board works to achieve equal access for those facing economic and other significant barriers.

Board members, committee chairs, and staff (2015–16)

Board Members

Hon. Lisa Atkinson, Law Office of Lisa L. Atkinson
Hon. Laura Bradley, Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals
Breean Beggs, Paukert & Troppman, PLLC
Hon. Anita Crawford-Willis, Office of Administrative Hearings
Ishbel Dickens, Chair, National Manufacturing Home Owners Association
Nick Gellert, Perkins Coie, LLP
Lynn Greiner, Greiner Law Office
Mirya Muñoz-Roach, St. Vincent de Paul of Seattle/King County
Geoff Revelle, Chair-Elect, Stoel Rives
Andy Sachs, Wrenn Law Group

Committee Chairs

Communications Committee: Lynn Greiner
Delivery System Committee Co-Chairs: Geoff Revelle and Threesa Milligan
Equal Justice Coalition Chair: Sal Mungia
Justice without Barriers Chair: Josefina Ramirez
Leadership Development Committee Co-Chairs: Hon. Anita Crawford-Willis and Catherine Brown
Pro Bono Council Co-Chairs: Eva Wescott and Laurie Davenport
Rules Committee Co-Chairs: Nick Gellert and Debi Perluss
Technology Committee Co-Chairs: Hon. Laura Bradley and Emily McReynolds

Staff

Terra Nevitt, Director of Advancement & Chief Development Officer
Bonnie M. Sterken, Justice Programs Coordinator

