



## MINUTES

Access to Justice Board

October 26, 2012

12:45 – 3:30

Washington State Bar Association

**Present:** **ATJ Board members** Chair Kirsten Barron, Chair-elect Ishbel Dickens, Breean Beggs (by phone), Hon. Anita Crawford-Willis, Ishbel Dickens, Nick Gellert, Lynn Greiner, Geoff Revelle, Andy Sachs, Aiko Schaefer; **ATJ Board committee chairs and members** Jim Bamberger, Jorge Baron, Caitlin Davis-Carlson, Alex Doolittle, Eric Gonzalez-Alfaro, Josefina Ramirez, César Torres; **Liaison(s)** WSBA Diversity Programs Manager Joy Eckwood; **Guest(s)** Columbia Legal Services Executive Director Aurora Martin; **ATJ Board staff** Allison Durazzi, Joan Fairbanks and Charles Dyer (contractor for the Pro Se Project).

Approval of September 28, 2012 ATJ Board Meeting Minutes: The minutes were approved as submitted.

### Funding Report:

*King County:* Jorge Barón reported that from 2007 to the present, King County revenues for human services programs have decreased from \$26 million to \$800,000. There is a structural deficit and it is likely that these decreases will continue. The King County Alliance for Human Services is attempting to address this problem by working with policy makers to obtain a .03% increase in sales tax approved by the state legislature. The Equal Justice Coalition has been involved in the conversations as these decreases impact funding for King County Alliance providers. The EJC is seeking ATJ Board approval to continue these efforts so that the EJC can also be part of the discussion about the allocation of the funds. At its October 25 meeting, the EJC discussed potential conflicts with OCLA funding; the dynamics of working in a coalition with human services providers; and the use of resources for this effort. The EJC concluded that this initiative fits within the ATJ Board guidelines and that EJC can effectively provide behind-the-scenes logistics. Moreover, this is a unique opportunity to realize a significant increase in funding that carries few restrictions. It is expected to raise an additional \$50 million over the next few years. The EJC will develop careful messaging so as not to confuse legislators. This is a one-time opportunity and the County Executive and several Council Members are very supportive. Eric Gonzalez-Alfaro reported that the King County Alliance programs are slated to receive the same level of funding from King County as last year.

*State:* Jim Bamberger reported that the Supreme Court has completed its review of the Judicial Branch budget and concurred in proposals developed by OCLA (the Office of Civil Legal Aid) in conjunction with the Alliance. The proposal will maintain the Northwest Justice Project at current levels and will seek \$2.8 million in new money for the next biennium based on conversations in May to buy back 12 of the 18 positions that have been lost since 2009. The proposal seeks \$200,000 per year to provide state support. The state budget outlook is a \$1.7 billion deficit with an additional amount unknown after compliance with *McCleary v State* (Washington Supreme Court, January 2012).

ATJ Board Annual Committee Chairs Meeting: Ishbel Dickens reported on this session, held from 9:30 to noon. This year's meeting was facilitated by Laura Pierce on the topic of moving the ATJ Board mission forward through strong committee leadership. Each ATJ Board committee was represented by either a chair/co-chair or a member. Ishbel noted that she and other committee chairs would like to be able to expand this training beyond committee chairs to committee members. The training was very well received by those who attended.

ATJ Board Chair's report:

Kirsten Barron reported that the Supreme Court has included \$25,000 annually (\$50,000 for the biennium) in its budget. There are no restrictions on the funding. The ATJ Board will develop a proposal for the funds once the budget has been approved by the legislature.

A task force will meet twice in November to develop programming for the morning and afternoon of the February 15, the day of the annual Goldmark Awards Luncheon.

The ATJ Board will make awards this year but because there is no annual conference, will find appropriate venues or events for their presentation.

Advocacy Report: Columbia Legal Services Executive Director Aurora Martin provided the Board with an update on her organization's strategic planning and restructuring. In 2011, CLS undertook long-term strategic planning, resulting in the reorganization of CLS's programs and offices. This process will allow CLS to remain true to its mission and to the *Hallmarks of an Effective Civil Legal Services Delivery System* while responding to the drastic funding cuts since 2008.

Aurora noted they evaluated CLS's role statewide, its litigation and policy work, and the partnerships it uses to leverage broad-based client outcomes. One example is CLS's work in farmworker advocacy: advocating for safe uses of pesticides was done through (a) partnership with state agencies to develop policy; (b) litigation to enforce the policy, which resulted in a change in state law; and (c) and interdisciplinary panel to oversee implementation of the new law.

CLS's work over its 15-year history has been to create systemic change, including:

- Youth in adult prison establish constitutional right to an education.
- Foster kids have constitutional rights to reasonable safety and care.
- Low-income tenants gain procedural protections, assert civil rights in public and subsidized housing, secure economic assistance and other protections to remedy habitability and displacement.
- Displaced low-wage workers successfully challenge unfair, discriminatory labor practices.

CLS's strategic planning involved board members, clients, and staff, and has resulted in clarity in program decision-making; improved professional development opportunities; support at all levels of the organization; and improved advocacy coherence, consistent with its mission and role in the Alliance.

CLS has had to reduce staffing and facilities in response to the ongoing economic recession. Between 2009 and 2012, staff has been reduced 30% through attrition and from closing its Moses Lake office. Now, instead of operating a statewide organization through regional offices, the CLS staff operate in four teams of advocates across their five office locations.

Assignment of ATJ Board Members to Legal Community Events: ATJ Board members volunteered to attend upcoming events in the legal community.

Leadership Academy Update: Academy Advisory Committee Chair Breean Beggs reported that the agreements for the first year have all been signed. The Advisory Committee is currently at work on recruiting applications for the first cohort, which is designed to be a “train-the-trainers” program comprised of existing leaders from within the Alliance for Equal Justice. A challenge the Committee anticipates is the time commitment required of Academy participants may present problems for current organizational leaders.

ATJ Board Nominating and Leadership Development Committee retreat: Committee Co-Chair Breean Beggs updated the Board on the Committee’s October 12 retreat. The Committee will continue its charge to help identify and recruit leaders for the Alliance, including ATJ Board and Committees; and will build upon its work to articulate qualities and traits for effective ATJ Board membership. The Committee anticipates presenting a recommendation to the ATJ Board that there will always be two non-attorneys on the Board. The Order provides a minimum of one but not more than two non-attorney positions. The goal is to build and strengthen community partnerships.

ATJ Board Justice Without Barriers Committee retreat: Hon. Anita Crawford-Willis reported this Committee’s October 5 retreat. Twenty-five people attended the full day-retreat, which purpose was to revitalize the Committee and to set priorities. It was facilitated by Tim Jaasko-Fisher. The Committee will focus on three initiatives: (1) Continuation of the Pro Se Project, with a goal of transitioning the project to the Administrative Office of the Courts after the family law forms have been converted to plain language; (2) Courthouse facilitator issues; and (3) Administrative Justice.

Board for Judicial Administration: ATJ Board Liaison Ishbel Dickens reported that she attended the BJA’s Governance Retreat on September 21-22, 2012. The general focus was the sufficiency of the current governance structure. A significant concern is that the BJA is not undertaking budget development for the courts in a proactive way. With 146 separate entities in the Judicial Branch, there is a lack of coherence.