



**Access to Justice Board Meeting Minutes**  
**May 1, 2020, 10:00 am – 11:30 am**  
VIRTUAL MEETING ONLY

**Present:** Sal Mungia, Judge Laura Bradley, Esperanza Borboa, Michelle Lucas, Lindy Laurence, Mirya Munoz-Roach, Judge David Keenan and Francis Adewale

**WSBA Staff:** Diana Singleton, Bonnie Sterken

**Guests:** Caitlin Davis, Janet Varon, Annie Lee, Jodi Nishioka, Emily Van Yuga, Erin Lovell, Cesar Torres, Will Livesley-O’neill, Jim Bamberger, Denise Diskin, Merf Ehman, Sara Muster Del Rio, Kirsten Barron, Natalia Fior, Reyna Rollolazo, Eloise Barshes, Melinda Mann, Elizabeth Fitzgearld, Linda Inagawa, Jen Yogi, and Teresa Norton

**Meeting Recording:** Sal announced that this meeting and future Board meetings held virtually will be recorded and shared online.

**April Minutes:** The minutes were approved without edits.

**COVID-19 Updated re: Healthcare:** Janet Varon reported on issues in healthcare in light of COVID-19. They are seeing race equity issues, particularly in Hispanic/Latinx communities and African American communities. Language access is an issue consideration, and they are trying to share information about Covid in various languages. People are not getting protections they need in employment spaces. Many are essential workers. Trying to get access to testing is difficult with language barriers. For uninsured there are programs that are rolling out to address this. The State has expanded the emergency Medicaid program for immigrants. Providers are stepping up but need more funding. They are seeing preventive care and elective surgeries being postponed. Concern that people who should be getting check-ins are not getting checked. Worried this will lead to non-Covid treatment needs. Health benefit exchange has reopened for enrollment through May 8<sup>th</sup>. Janet addressed questions.

**COVID Impacts on the Following Client Communities:**

Youth: Annie Lee reported on TeamChild’s role. Race disparities is a really important theme in the work they are doing. They are also trying to pay attention to the full spectrum of legal tools available. They are emphasizing legal education and literacy around rights to benefits and working with community partners. They are working closely with coalitions across the state in reducing the number of incarcerated youth. They are also focusing on remote learning and support for remote learning that kids need. There is a growing group of advocates across the state addressing the needs of youth with disabilities who need more support. Erin Lovell also reported on LCYC. They are working in the community with partners and

addressing their outreach and community connections as a result of Covid. She noted disproportional effect on people of color.

LGBTQ: Denise Diskin discussed the issues impacting the LGBTQ community, both generally and in light of Covid 19. The delineated known economic impacts in the LGBTQ community: disproportionately low income and living in poverty, not taking sick leave or family leave in fear of discrimination, 7x more likely to report avoiding a visit to the doctor to avoid discrimination, reporting discrimination in court system, homeless shelters are sex segregated or explicitly religious and LGBTQ people self-select out. They are seeing networks within LGBTQ communities forming to create mutual aid networks and cross referral/informational direction. The QLaw Foundation has already met clinic numbers from all of 2019.

Communities Rising: Jodi Nishioka shared about the impact on nonprofits and small business. They are seeing requests regarding the Cares Act and PPP and EILD loans. They are also seeing questions about employment issues and landlord/tenant questions. Communities of color are not getting access to federal funding. Organizations are also needing grant writing help because of new funding and fundraising plans being delayed (i.e., events). Communities Rising is launching a Covid 19 to address high demand and expand reach. Lawyers can sign up to volunteer. They are offering short term coaching for short and long term planning. They need help getting the word out about services, and ask attorneys to sign up to volunteer. Jodi addressed questions.

Farm workers: Merf presented on how farm workers are impacted by the pandemic. Many are visa workers. CLS has done class actions for these H2a (visa) workers. Many are Latinx. Many living conditions are not at all conducive to social distancing (living in congregant settings) and are at high risk. There are known outbreaks in these camps. Department of Health and Department of Labor regulate these conditions, and both departments issued fact sheets with suggestions on what to do to protect workers, but they were insufficient and not enforceable. CLS wrote a letter to the agencies and the governor, but they refused to provide better rules. CLS filed a law suit representing farm workers union to force the state to engage in emergency rule making. They have started some rule making on housing and CLS is commenting on those rules. But so far there are no rules on safety in the field. CLS continues to work through emergency rule making to keep farm workers safe and provide information in multiple languages. NJP is putting out information. Distributing documentation about their rights in multiple language. Movement to also support unemployment funds for workers who are undocumented.

Native Americans: Jen Yogi and Teresa Norton with NJP presented. Jen reported on the work of the Native American Unit, which provides legal services for Native American communities. Covid 19 is exacerbating existing inequities. Health services are already underfunded. Native clients face barriers accessing Coronavirus tax relief programs, relief programs are delayed or denied, and there is a lack of technology access. They are also seeing food security issues and unemployment issues. Tribes are attempting to respond to these needs as well. Each tribe has different challenges and various resources, and they are working to provide a range of actions and distribute information about rights.

**Equal Justice Coalition Update**: Will Livesley-O’neill shared that the EJC had a series of calls with members of congress in their office in lieu of traveling to DC last week. Advocacy was for LSC funding and the next round of federal stimulus. They received a positive response from delegation. Jayapal is circulating a sign on letter in response to the added request. On messaging side, EJC is elevating the front line role or legal aid and promoting op eds. Media pitch strategies will be shared soon.

**Federal Funding Report:** Cesar Torres reported that a component of the Cares Act included funding for LSC. LSC's request to congress included funding to address Covid. LCS is distributed the funds based poverty level as well as unemployment factors, which means NJP received more funding than they would have received. NJP received \$1.1 mil dollars to respond to the Covid crisis. Some of the costs were used to help NJP move remote. NJP is in the process of setting up an emergency hire process and enhance CLEAR capacity.

**State Funding Report:** Jim Bamberger reported that OCLA has been working to secure state and federal resources. They have received \$3mil emergency state dollars for unemployment and eviction issues. OCLA is working on getting those programs up and running. All services can be made available regardless of immigration status (other than through NJP).

**LFW Funding Update:** Caitlin reported on the work of LFW. They are working closely with OCLA and NJP on administering the new funds. They are seeing requests to support clients remotely. LFW continues to work on the race equity grant program and have assembled a panel of community experts to award funding. They are moving forward on funding opportunities to stabilize a predictable downturn in IOLTA funding.

**Campaign for Equal Justice Update:** Melinda Mann reported on the work to respond to increased grant needs. They are working with the Seattle Foundation and are considering reaching out to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. They are also reaching out to law firm supporters. There is LAFCO meeting coming up to provide resources. They are in conversation with the bar association to include a legal aid CLE.

Meeting adjourned at 11:27 am