

President's Message

Technology is the Key to Doing More with Less

By President Valerie Briggs Bargas

Technology is a key tool in affording support and resources to the civil legal aid community. As the largest state funder of civil legal aid, the Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF) has often taken the lead in assisting civil legal providers and grantees with technological resources and information so they can continue to be more accessible and efficient with their limited resources.

Check Out Our Redesigned Website

The LBF's online presence is a primary component to increasing awareness and providing information and resources. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to check out the LBF's "new look." We have done a full redesign of the website, logo and tagline. The new logo and tagline were unveiled at our Annual Fellows Gala in April. The LBF's new website went live in June. The design was based on current, leading technologies incorporating the fundamentals of civil legal aid funding. The website has a clean, modern look and includes photos, stories and videos highlighting women, children, families, the disabled and the elderly showing the tremendous, life-changing impact of civil legal aid.

From a resource standpoint, the website includes microsites for our Kids' Chance Scholarship Program, the Fellows Gala and the Campaign to Preserve Civil

Legal Aid. The website also features a Fellow resources section where Fellows can stay up-to-date with their membership, make a donation, update contact information, RSVP for a meeting, nominate someone for



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Fellowship, or join a committee. We also have incorporated, through Donor Perfect software, online donations for real-time online transactions. Finally, just in time for grant applications, we have updated our online grants management system with a new user-friendly program that makes it easier to submit applications, populate and summarize data, and provide for the submission of electronic reports. We invite you to visit our new website at: www.raisingthebar.org.

Connect with Us on Social Media

Recognizing that information is no longer solely contained in a website, we also have incorporated social media as a means to keeping our grantees, Fellows and the public up-to-date on the civil legal aid work being done across the state. Take a moment to like us on FaceBook, visit our Twitter page, and view our YouTube channel. You can link into each of these at the bottom of our website homepage.

Upgrade of the Statewide Case Management System

In order to receive LBF funding, our grantees must meet rigorous reporting guidelines specifying the work they are doing and the clients being assisted. Many years ago, to facilitate statewide collaboration and consistent reporting, the LBF supported and assisted in implementing a Statewide Case Management System. Technology, however, has moved quickly

and we found that an upgrade was essential for our grantees. The LBF would prefer our grantees spend time doing great work, not trying to figure out antiquated reporting software. We expect to launch the upgraded system and software on April 1, 2018. In conjunction with the upgrade, the system will finally be moved to the cloud, under mandated secure technology. We are currently working with a consultant and the civil legal aid community, including LSCs and Pro Bono Projects across the state, to ensure that the upgraded system and software meets their current and expected future needs.

The Future Network for Civil Legal Aid Providers

When resources are limited, time is of the essence. The LBF is in the initial research phase of creating a technological platform for civil legal aid providers to allow for live, immediate referrals, provider status on case acceptance, eligibility criteria, list of available services, and notification/tracking of each referral made into the provider network reflecting outcome. We plan to do a pilot project for one area of the state initially, then statewide and eventually expand to including social service providers, who are key players when the clients are domestic violence victims or abused and neglected children. Allowing for consistent, timely communication between civil legal aid providers ensures little to no overlap of and better access to legal services.

Funding for the civil legal aid needs of our state falls short every year. The LBF recognizes that providing grantees tools to do more with less is a necessity in today's world. We are excited about our innovative, technological initiatives and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will have on providing access to justice to our most vulnerable citizens.

Louisiana Bar Foundation Announces New Fellows

The Louisiana Bar Foundation announces new Fellows:

- Karen J. King..... Lafayette
- K. Scott Kirkpatrick Baton Rouge
- Gregory L. Landry..... Lafayette
- Mary E. Roper Baton Rouge