



LOUISIANA BAR
FOUNDATION
FUNDING CIVIL LEGAL AID

LBF: Strengthening Families, Communities, and the Legal Profession

Capital Area Pop Up



Approved for 1 hour of Professionalism CLE



LOUISIANA BAR
FOUNDATION
FUNDING CIVIL LEGAL AID



MICHAEL J. MESTAYER
2026-27 LBF PRESIDENT

Who We Are

Why We Help

How We Help

Our Impact

A grants-making organization that funds **free civil legal aid** across the state

Mission:

The Louisiana Bar Foundation exists to preserve, honor, and improve our system of justice by funding, developing or otherwise promoting efforts which enhance the legal profession, increase public understanding of the legal system and advance the reality of equal justice under the law.

The LBF is designated by the IRS as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes set forth in section 501(c)(3).

Since 1989

LBF has funded more than
for civil justice initiatives

\$162 Million



1969

LBF Charter



1985

Reactivation of
the Organization

IOLTA Program,
Fellows Program
Established



1989

First IOLTA Grants
Awarded - \$153,057
to 18 organizations



1990

Mandatory IOLTA
Program Order by
LA Supreme Court



2026

Awarded \$14.3 Million
in grants



2026

40th Anniversary
Fellows Gala

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For four decades, the Louisiana Bar Foundation has quietly transformed generosity into justice, turning the commitment of the legal community into life-changing support for people across our state.





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What is Civil Legal Aid?

A Powerful Tool!

Civil legal aid is free legal assistance provided to people who cannot afford an attorney for non-criminal legal issues.

It helps ensure that everyone—regardless of income—has access to justice when facing legal problems that impact their basic needs.



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How Louisiana Ranks Nationally

#1

highest

Poverty

#2

highest

Child Poverty

#3

lowest

Income

#2

highest

Income Inequality

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS; America's Health Rankings, 2024

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Louisiana by the Numbers

Poverty

Louisiana's poverty rate is

18.7%

with approximately

835,000

Louisianans living
below the federal poverty line.



Louisiana continues to have one of the
highest poverty rates in the nation.

Child Poverty

25.2%

of children

in Louisiana are living in poverty.

Approximately

263,608

Louisiana children
are living **below the federal poverty line.**



Income

\$60,986

median household income,
significantly below the
national median of **\$81,604.**



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Eviction → loss of housing → job instability → debt → family disruption



Domestic violence → custody issue → protective order → housing/financial issues



Disability → loss of income → benefits problem → inability to pay bills

Poverty creates legal problems—and legal problems deepen poverty.

That's where the LBF comes in.

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GRANTS



LBF is the **largest** state funder of civil legal aid, **serving all 64 parishes.**

2027-28 Grants Application Schedule

- **Annual/Sustaining Grant** applications open **October 1, 2026** and close **December 1, 2026**.
- **Loan Repayment Assistance (LRAP)** applications open **December 1, 2026** and close **February 26, 2027**.
- **LBF Kids' Chance Scholarship** applications open **December 1, 2026** and close **February 26, 2027**.

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Grants

Annual Sustaining Grants

Primarily fund salaries for direct civil legal representation for 501(c)(3) organizations.



Children's Legal Services (CLS)

Helps to provide legal assistance to needy children in areas of law which affect their safety, well-being, and future development focusing on statewide or regional services.



Domestic Violence Programs (DVP)

These agencies enable people to leave abusive relationships and seek safety for themselves and their children. Essential services provided by these agencies are legal services, education of domestic/dating violence, and establishing collaborative relationships with law enforcement, judges, clerks of court, and prosecutors.

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Law-Related Education (LRE)

Grants are awarded for law-related educational programs benefiting children and/or the public. Law-related education is the teaching of legal rights, responsibilities, and the role of the citizen by bringing together teachers, community leaders, and legal professionals.



Legal Services Corporations (LSC)

Provides civil legal services to the indigent in each parish of the state. Attorneys and paralegals, provide free legal services in many areas of the law.

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Annual Sustaining Grants

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My Community Cares (MCC)

A community-driven, neighborhood-based approach to strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect in the State of Louisiana. Services are provided to promote child and family well-being and prevent children from entering foster care. Funding is for full-time attorney positions fully dedicated to MCC work.



Other Legal Services (OLS)

Through staff attorneys and paralegals, these programs provide legal services of a special nature such as mental health and child advocacy mediation.

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Annual Sustaining Grants

Primarily fund salaries for direct civil legal representation for 501(c)(3) organizations.



Pro Bono Projects (PBP)

These programs are often operated by the local bar association. These projects utilize the local private bar to handle cases for the poor pro bono in many legal areas.



Building Capital Development (BCD)

Current LBF Grantees may apply for grants up to \$50,000, on a 50% to 50% ratio matching basis, with the purpose of assisting in the acquisition or renovation of an office building and/or property.

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Capital Area Annual Sustaining Grants 2026-27

Agencies that serve the **Capital Area** region

Baton Rouge Bar Foundation	\$316,000
Baton Rouge Children’s Advocacy Center	\$54,334
Catholic Charities – Diocese of Baton Rouge	\$217,770
Chez Hope, Inc.	\$119,500
Frontline Legal Services, Inc.	\$74,680
Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana	\$99,680
Metro Centers for Community Advocacy	\$91,000
Southeast Louisiana Legal Services	\$2,035,507
The Haven, Inc.	\$144,000
Workplace Justice Project	\$34,050

TOTAL: \$3,186,521



Valerie T. Schexnayder

Schexnayder Mediation Services, LLC
Baton Rouge Bar Foundation

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Jock Scott Community Partnership Panels

The LBF's **Community Partnership Panels** work to identify areas of need for LBF funding. The CPPs foster collaboration, respond to arising community needs, and encourage local involvement in the designation of grant funds.

A subcommittee of the Grants Committee makes Jock Scott Community Partnership Panel Grants recommendations that go to the Board for final approval.





Talya Bergeron

Directing Attorney

Southeast Louisiana Legal Services

Capital Area Community Partnership Panel Member

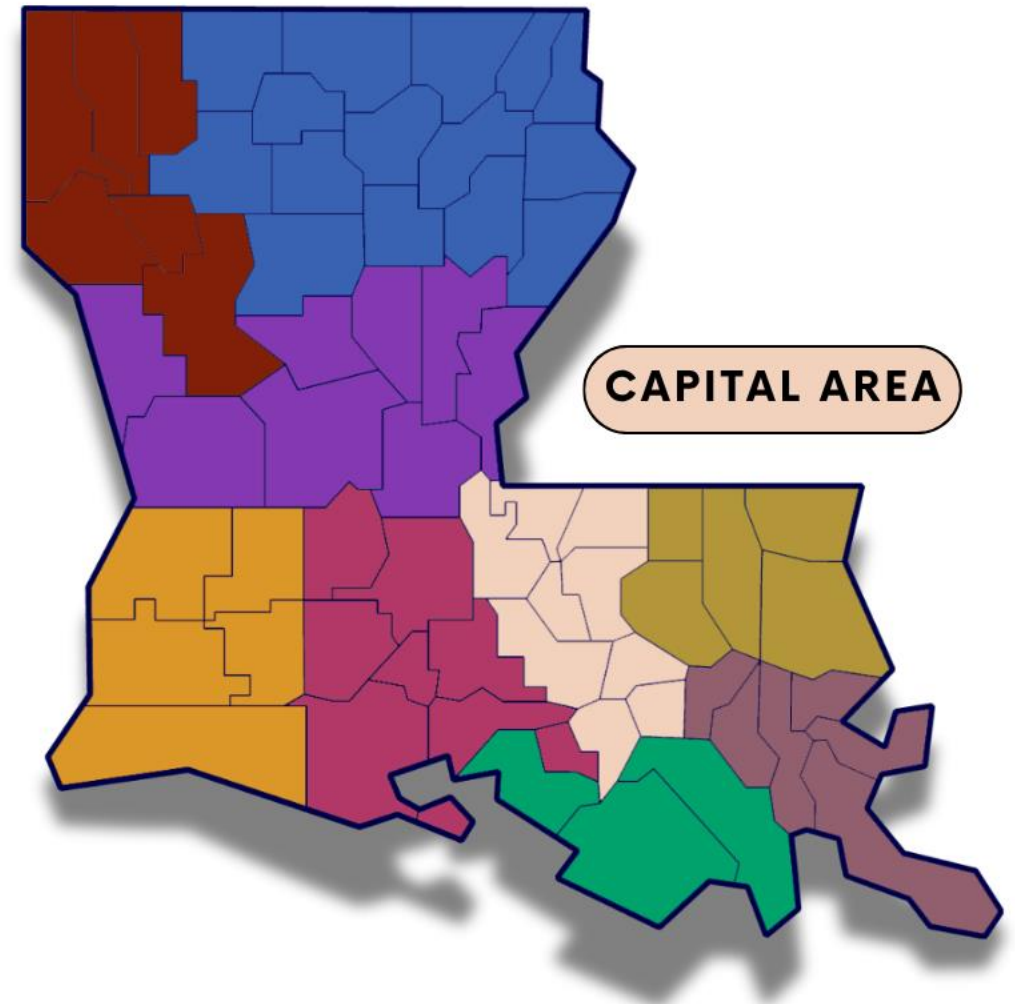
Community Partnership Panels

The **Community Partnership Panels** work to:

- identify areas of need for LBF funding
- foster collaboration
- respond to arising community needs
- encourage local involvement in the designation of grant funds

CAPITAL AREA Community Partnership Panel

Mark L. Barbre
Talya Bergeron
Hon. Erika L. Green
Deidre Deculus Robert, Chair
Michael Tipton
Alec Brendan Keane
Jeffrey S. Wittenbrink
Josef P. Ventulan
Monica Vela-Vick



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Jock Scott Community Partnership Panel Grants

Eligible nonprofits or current LBF grantees may apply for CPP funding for new services or expansion of an existing service.

CPP grant applications are accepted on a flexible, rolling period.

Fund 501(c)(3) organizations to initiate or expand an activity that meets at least 1 of 3 criteria:

1. Provides direct legal services to the poor;
2. Provides law-related education; and/or
3. Provides for the administration of justice.

\$30,000

**to be awarded for
fiscal year 2026-27**

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Capital Area Community Partnership Panel Grants 2025-26

Baton Rouge Bar Foundation	\$8,500
Capital Area CASA Association	\$10,000
CASA of the 18th JDC	\$7,500
Louisiana Organization for Refugees and Immigrants	\$4,110
Chez Hope	\$8,500
Unbound Now	\$8,500
Workplace Justice Project	\$2,500
Lagniappe Law Lab (statewide)	\$5,945

TOTAL: \$55,555

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Grants

Special Program Grants

Nearly \$5 million awarded for fiscal year 2026-27



Access to Justice (ATJ)

Promotes administration of justice and benefits Louisiana's statewide justice community. Initiatives for consideration must meet **at least one** of the following criteria:

- The advancement and maintenance of statewide technology
- The coordination of statewide intake and referral
- Disaster/emergency response



Kids' Chance Scholarship (KCS)

Provides scholarships to the children of Louisiana workers who have been killed or permanently and totally disabled in an accident compensable under a state or federal Workers' Compensation Act or law.



Lagniappe Law Lab

Purpose is to narrow the access to justice gap by ensuring the Louisiana Civil Justice System is operating at its full potential.

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Grants

Special Program Grants

Nearly \$5 million awarded for fiscal year 2026-27



Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP)

Provides forgivable loans of up to \$5,000 per year to attorneys working in a public interest position.



Louisiana Appleseed

Solves our state's toughest problems at the root cause by advocating for access to justice, opportunity, and education.



State of Louisiana Child in Need of Care and Adult Civil Legal Aid Services

Provides free legal representation to children in need of care, foster care, and non-custodial, and for the provision of adult civil legal services within the state's civil justice system.

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Access to basic needs

By providing civil legal aid, individuals navigate complex legal processes to secure essential needs such as **housing, food assistance, and healthcare**, which are critical for overall well-being.



Economic stability

Preventing **eviction, wage theft, and improper benefit deductions** through legal intervention can help individuals maintain stable employment and income, contributing to economic security.



Family stability

Civil legal aid helps families facing **domestic violence or child custody issues** access protection and stability within their households.



Community impact

When individuals resolve legal issues impacting their daily lives, it leads to a **more cohesive and functioning community**.



Reduced government costs

By proactively addressing legal issues, civil legal aid can potentially **reduce the need for costly social services later**, such as emergency housing or healthcare.

The evidence is clear—dollars spent on Louisiana's civil legal aid providers deliver unmistakable economic and societal returns to Louisiana.

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For every **\$1**

invested in Louisiana Legal Aid,
the citizens of Louisiana received

\$13.28

of immediate and long-term
financial benefits.

New Report will be released in January 2027

Statewide Social Return on Investment

Total net value: \$162,988,000

- **37,399** civil legal aid cases completed
- **\$12,277,000** total tax-based funding for civil legal aid operations
- **\$59,219,000** immediate gross direct value of services
- **\$119,621,000** long-term gross consequential value
- **1,328%** social impact return on investment

Source: LBF 2023-24 Social Return on Investment of Civil Legal Aid Services for Louisiana Analysis

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Measuring Impact Locally: **Capital Area**

People Helped

2,475 cases

5,591 people

Direct Economic Benefits

\$5,655,663

Top Legal Issues

Housing (34%), **Family** (27%), and **Consumer** (11%)

Source: Louisiana Appleseed "Civil Legal Aid Supports Louisiana" 2024

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Strategic Partners

Organizations with similar missions

● **Louisiana Supreme Court**

LBF administers the **Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA)** on behalf of the Court and reports annually on activities and progress.

● **Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA)**

LBF partners with the LSBA in many areas including access to justice efforts to improve the delivery of legal representation across the state.

● **Local and Specialty Bars**

LBF partners with local and specialty bar on speaking and educational opportunities.

● **State of Louisiana**

Through a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Office of the Louisiana State Treasurer, LBF administers funds for the representation of children in need of care and adult civil legal aid.

● **Louisiana Law Schools**

LBF works with Louisiana law schools to create a pipeline for public interest attorneys.

● **Louisiana Department of Child & Family Services (DCFS)**

LBF works with DCFS to pull down federal Title IV-E dollars and reimburse the Louisiana legal service corporations for Child in Need of Care cases.

● **Louisiana Division of Administration**

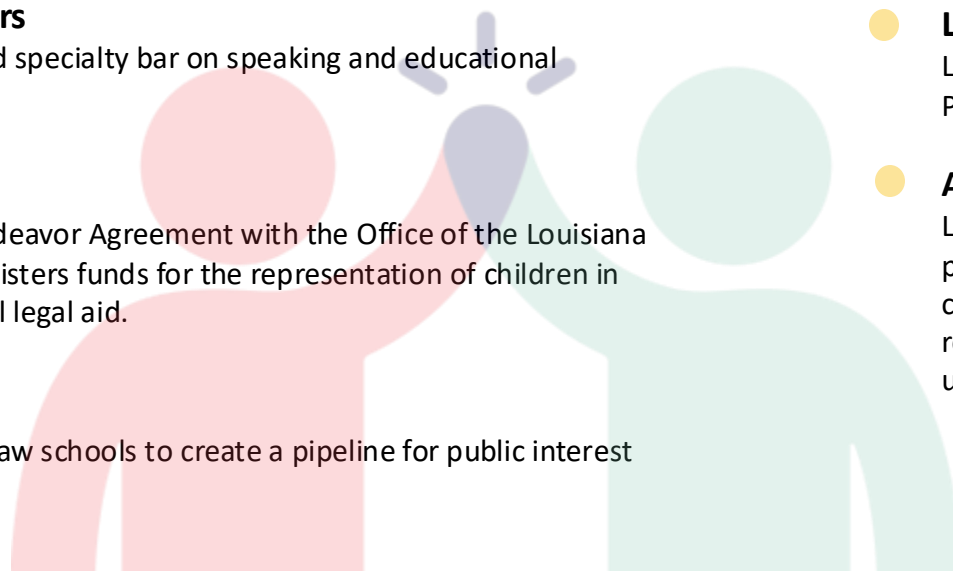
LBF works with the Office of the Commissioner on funding for Child in Need of Care and adult civil legal aid.

● **Louisiana Workers' Compensation Corporation (LWCC)**

Long standing partner and fundraiser for the Kids' Chance Scholarship Program.

● **Access to Justice Commission**

LBF partners with the Commission to “assure continuity of policy and purpose in the collaboration between the private bar, the courts, and the civil justice community to further the goal of assuring that Louisianans, regardless of their economic circumstance, have access to equal justice under the law.”



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Louisiana Law School Partnerships



The **Child Welfare & Domestic Violence Clinic** is in its second academic year.



The **Clinical Legal Education Program** hired a Clinical Legal Fellow and are actively recruiting for an Active Poverty Clinic Fellow and a Social Justice Fellow.



The **Louisiana Bar Foundation Public Interest Fellows Endowment** will inspire students to enter public interest law through exposure to and experience with providers focused on field placement experiences.

In Progress



Access to Justice

Serving the Public. Serving the Profession.



Access to Justice Framework



ATJ Department

LSBA Staff | Est. 1997

Responsible for coordination of all ATJ programs, committee facilitation, training & education development, and statewide project management.



ATJ Committee

Practice-Level Issues | Est. 1996

Legal aid providers, pro bono programs, law schools, and private attorneys to address day-to-day service delivery issues. Includes 2 active subcommittees (Disaster Response & Pro Bono).



ATJ Commission

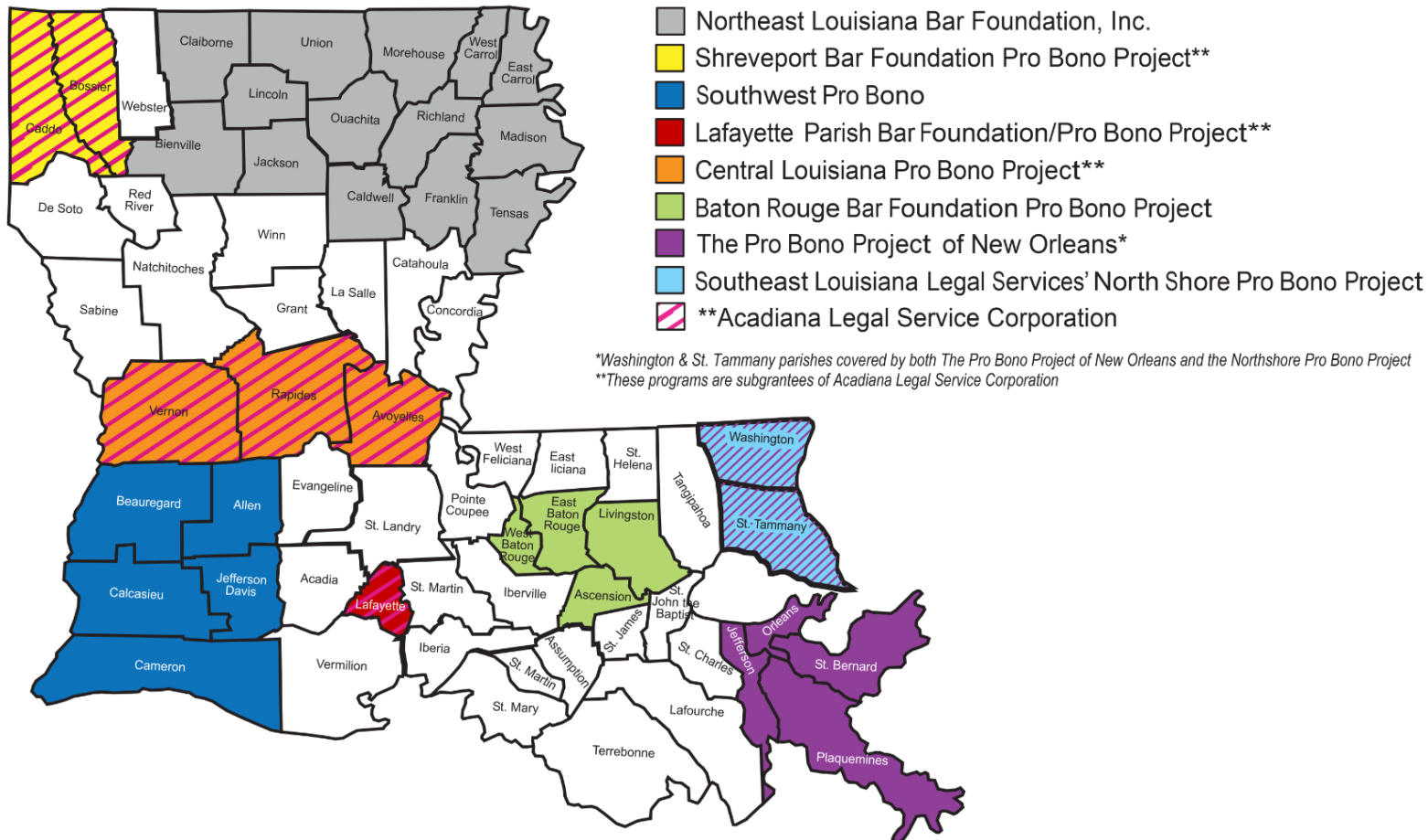
Supreme Court Order | Est. 2015

21-member body that tackles systemic, policy-level issues. Oversees several committees covering Technology, Rural Justice, Modest Means, Self-Represented Litigants & Community Outreach.

Pro Bono Coverage Area

Updated September 2026

2026 Pro Bono Coverage Area



Rule 6.1 Voluntary Pro Bono Publico Service

- Every lawyer should aspire to provide legal services to those unable to pay. A lawyer should aspire to render at least (50) hours of pro bono publico legal services per year. In fulfilling this aspirational goal, the lawyer should:
 - (a) provide a substantial majority of the (50) hours of legal services without fee or expectation of fee to: (1) persons of limited means or (2) charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters that are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means; and
 - (b) provide any additional services through: (1) delivery of legal services at no fee or substantially reduced fee to individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights, or charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters in furtherance of their organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources or would be otherwise inappropriate; (2) delivery of legal services at a substantially reduced fee to persons of limited means; or (3) participation in activities for improving the law, legal system or the legal profession.





New and
Exciting
Programs –
Court
Navigator
Project Coming
Soon to the 14th
JDC

How You Can Help

As leaders of Louisiana's legal community, you have an important role in advancing access to justice.

Answer the Call.

Volunteer. Commit to Pro Bono.

Volunteer

Take a case through the Lawyer in Libraries Program, Free Legal Answers, or a local Pro Bono Program. Your time and expertise can change a family's outcome.

www.lsba.org/ProBono

Commit 50 Hours

Rule 6.1 calls every Louisiana attorney to aspire to 50 pro bono hours annually. Report your hours — it directly protects funding for civil legal aid statewide.

lsba.org/atj

Every case taken. Every hour reported. Moves the needle.

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Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts Program

The LBF IOLTA Program was **established by the Louisiana Supreme Court in 1985.**

LBF administers IOLTA on behalf of the Court.

The IOLTA Program **requires** lawyers and law firms to establish interest bearing accounts for client deposits which are nominal in amount or expected to be short-term.

Because **IOLTA is tied to interest rates** paid by the banks holding IOLTA deposits, IOLTA income **fluctuates** as rates change in response to rates set by the Federal Reserve and other factors.

- ✓ LBF provides technical assistance to participating financial institutions and attorneys
- ✓ LBF handles establishment of IOLTA accounts, program compliance, and rate negotiation
- ✓ LBF maintains a list of eligible banks
- ✓ Resources for banks and attorneys are available on the LBF website

Resources for banks and attorneys are available on the LBF website.

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Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts Program

Increasing and **sustaining** IOLTA revenues through periods of economic recession or stress remains an imperative for IOLTA programs contending with the persistently high level of unmet legal need among persons living in poverty.

Unclaimed Funds are client or third person funds on deposit in an IOLTA account for **at least two years** that after reasonable due diligence the owner cannot be located or the owner refused to accept the funds. *A lawyer who either remits funds in error or later ascertains the ownership of remitted funds, or the owner thereof, may make a claim to the Louisiana Bar Foundation, which after verification of the claim will return the funds to the lawyer or owner, as appropriate.*

Unidentified Funds are funds on deposit in an IOLTA account for **at least one year** that after reasonable due diligence cannot be documented as belonging to a client, a third person, or the lawyer or law firm. A lawyer who learns of Unidentified Funds in an IOLTA account must remit the funds to the Louisiana Bar Foundation.

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Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts Program

Prime Partners are institutions that pay 60% of the Fed Funds Target Rate and are committed to ensuring the success of the IOLTA program and increased funding for legal aid.

Statewide Prime Partner Banks:

Chase
First Horizon
Hancock Whitney
Regions

Capital Area Prime Partner Banks:

Bank of Zachary
BankPlus
Guaranty Bank & Trust
Huntington Bank
United Mississippi Bank

Local Board Members



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Long Law Firm, LLP



Chris Hebert
Louisiana Gaming Control Board



Edmund J. Giering IV
LBF Immediate Past President
Baton Rouge Area Foundation



Paula Miles
Louisiana Public Defender Board



Sheri Morris
Degan, Blanchard & Nash



Monica M. Vela-Vick

LBF Membership Chair

Membership

Fellowship Levels

- **General Fellow (\$240 or more)**

The General Fellowship level is for working lawyers interested in promoting access and equity throughout the local justice system.

- **Judicial Fellow (\$150 or more)**

The Judicial Fellowship is for a full-time federal or state judge, magistrate, commissioner, administrative law judge, or hearing officer.*

- **Community Supporter Fellow (\$120 or more)**

This Fellowship option is for the general public, attorneys working for non-profit organizations or public service, retired legal professionals, and young lawyers getting started in the industry (first 5 years of practice).

- **New Bar Admit (Free)**

We invite newly admitted attorneys to learn more about civil legal aid and how to get involved with LBF without any obligation to donate for their first year of practice.

*The Louisiana Supreme Court clarified in 2015 that Judicial Fellow dues may be paid through a judge's judicial expense fund. If you have questions regarding dues payments, please contact us at 504-561-1046.



Join us!

Why become an LBF Fellow?



Make Justice Accessible

Your Fellowship helps provide free civil legal assistance to Louisianans who cannot afford an attorney.



Strengthen Our Profession

Support programs and initiatives that enhance the legal profession and the justice system.



Be Part of a Statewide Network

Join judges, attorneys, professors and other legal professionals working together across Louisiana.



Use Your Voice & Leadership

Participate in committees, Community Partnership Panels, programs, nominations and Foundation leadership.



Leave a Legacy

Help ensure that access to justice remains a priority for the next generation of Louisianans.



Join us!

Save the Date!

**LBF 41st Annual Fellows Gala
Friday, April 16, 2027
Roosevelt Hotel New Orleans**

The Annual Fellows Gala is our flagship event drawing 300+ attendees to celebrate and honor the Distinguished Jurist, Attorney, Professor, and Calogero Justice Award recipients.



LBF Strengthens Families, Communities, and the Legal Profession

Louisiana Bar Foundation is the state's **largest funder** of **free civil legal aid**.

Civil Legal Aid makes **Louisiana communities stronger** by helping people avoid foreclosure, gain custody of their loved ones, and safeguard their economic security.

When families are stable, housed, and safe, **communities thrive**.

LBF is the visible **public service organization** of Louisiana attorneys and brings members of our profession together, maximizing our efforts to better the profession, our communities, and ourselves.



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www.RaisingtheBar.org

Thanks for joining us!

This presentation is approved for
1 hour of Professionalism CLE.

You must register for the CLE at
the registration table to receive
the credit.

