A Conversation on Access to Justice in the Civil Courts
Course Summary

From the movement for a civil Gideon, to the adoption of resolutions by organizations of state justices and court administrators supporting “100% access to justice,” national attention has recently focused on the huge numbers of litigants in civil courts who proceed unrepresented, even on matters that put essential human needs at risk. The Conference of Chief Justices has recognized the “primary leadership responsibility” of the Judicial Branch in addressing this problem and courts across the country are grappling with what they can do to understand and appropriately address the problem, and move equal justice forward.

This session will bring together leaders from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, along with former Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman of the New York Court of Appeals, for a conversation on the civil access to justice movement both nationally and locally. Pennsylvania’s courts have been leaders in many areas, including widely praised veterans’ courts, mortgage foreclosure diversion courts, language access protocols, and attention to the needs of seniors. Locally, courts are developing strategies and implementing innovative approaches, such as help desks and other programs to assist unrepresented litigants. Chief Judge Lippman of New York has been a national leader in this effort, speaking inspirationally on the need for equal justice and implementing concrete changes in his state to address the needs of the unrepresented.

With audience participation, the panel will explore the next steps that the judiciary and the bar, working together, can take to bring us closer to achieving “100% access” to justice for all.

Introduction:
Chancellor Gaetan J. Alfano, Esq.
Philadelphia Bar Association
Pietragallo Gordon Alfano Bosick & Raspanti, LLP

Moderator:
Chancellor-Elect Deborah R. Gross, Esq.
Philadelphia Bar Association
Kaufman, Coren & Ress, P.C.

Panelists:
Honorable Debra Todd
Justice Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Honorable Jonathan Lippman
Former Chief Judge, New York Court of Appeals

Honorable Sheila A. Woods-Skipper
President Judge, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas

Course Planners:
Catherine Carr, Esq.
Co-Chair, Civil Gideon and Access to Justice Task Force
Professor Louis S. Rulli  
*Practice Professor of Law and Director of Clinical Programs*  
*University of Pennsylvania Law School*

**Joseph A. Sullivan, Esq.**  
*Co-Chair, Civil Gideon and Access to Justice Task Force*  
*Special Counsel and Director of Pro Bono Programs*  
*Pepper Hamilton, LLP*

**Merril Zebe, Esq.**  
*Public Interest Coordinator*  
*Philadelphia Bar Association*
A Conversation on Access to Justice in the Civil Courts

MODERATOR:

Deborah R. Gross, Chancellor-Elect
Deborah R. Gross is Of Counsel for the Philadelphia litigation boutique law firm Kaufman, Coren & Ress, P.C. Ms. Gross concentrates her practice on plaintiffs' securities fraud, antitrust and consumer class action cases litigated across the United States, and has also arbitrated a number of cases on behalf of investors who have disputes with their brokers. Ms. Gross often protects interested parties against big businesses especially when companies fail to accurately disclose their financials in such a way that defrauds investors and other interested parties.

Prior to becoming Of Counsel at Kaufman, Coren & Ress, Ms. Gross had been an attorney with the Law Offices Bernard M. Gross, P.C. for nearly 30 years. She focused on helping individuals, classes of individuals, hedge funds and businesses who were financially injured as a result of violations of antitrust laws, securities laws, Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) laws, consumer protection laws or another's negligence or fraud.

Ms. Gross currently serves as Chancellor Elect of the Philadelphia Bar Association and has been elected to serve as its Chancellor for 2017. Founded in 1802, the association boasts 11,000 members and is the oldest association of lawyers in the United States. Ms. Gross previously served as President of the Board of Trustees of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation in 2013 and 2014. She has been a trustee of the Foundation for ten years participating in the Grants Committee, the Finance Committee and the Development Committee.

Ms. Gross was also a member of the Third Circuit Judicial Council Bench Bar Relations Committee. She is a member of the Historical Society of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the Brandeis Law Society, the Temple Inn of Courts, the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association, and the Lawyers Club of Philadelphia. She is also involved in other nonprofit and educational organizations, including Adath Israel where she was a member of the executive committee and is currently co-chairing its Hineni Capital Campaign.

A frequent speaker, Ms. Gross has presented for various organizations nationwide, including the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, the University of Pennsylvania Law School and various Philadelphia Bar Association and Pennsylvania Bar Institute programs.

Ms. Gross earned her bachelor's degree in economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and her law degree from Boston University's School of Law. She is admitted to practice in various federal district and circuit courts throughout the United States and in the Commonwealths of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.
PANELISTS:

Honorable Debra Todd

Justice Debra Todd was born in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, the daughter of the late Harry and Blanche McCloskey. She is married to Stephan K. Todd, Esquire. Justice Todd is a 1979 Honors graduate of Chatham College and a 1982 Law Review graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. In 2004, she was awarded the LL.M. Degree in the Judicial Process from the University of Virginia School of Law.

From 1982 through 1987, she was an in-house litigation attorney for U.S. Steel Corporation. She maintained a trial practice in the City of Pittsburgh from 1987 through 1999 with an emphasis in complex civil litigation.

After serving as a Judge on the Superior Court of Pennsylvania from 2000 through 2007, Justice Todd was elected to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in November 2007, and commenced service on the Court in January 2008. Her judicial chambers are in Pittsburgh.

Justice Todd is an elected member of the Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County and the American Law Institute and is an alumna and former board member of Leadership Pittsburgh. She is a member of the Allegheny County, Pennsylvania and American Bar Associations, and is a fellow of the Allegheny County and Pennsylvania Bar Foundations. She is a member of National Association of Women Judges, the International Association of Women Judges, and the Women’s Bar Association of Western Pennsylvania. Justice Todd has been a frequent lecturer and panelist for continuing legal education programs on trial and appellate practice and procedure.

In 2007, Justice Todd was named the Outstanding Elected Democratic Woman of the year by the Pennsylvania Federation of Democratic Women. In 2008, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service by Chatham University. Justice Todd received The Legal Intelligencer Women in the Profession 2007-2008 Woman of the Year Award. In 2009, Justice Todd received the Cornerstone Award in Law from Chatham University. In 2010, she was awarded the Philip Werner Amram Award for professional excellence and commitment to the ideals of the Allegheny County Bar Association as well as the betterment of the greater community. In 2012, the University of Pittsburgh Law Alumni Association honored Justice Todd with its Distinguished Alumni Award. In 2013, Justice Todd received the University of Pittsburgh’s 225th Anniversary Medallion, recognizing alumni who have built better lives through their life’s work. Also in 2013, Justice Todd received the Tribute to Women Leadership Award in Business & Professional Services from the Greater Pittsburgh YWCA, as well as the Pitt Law Women’s Association’s Marjorie Matson Woman of the Year Award. In 2015, Amen Corner awarded Justice Todd The Judge Robert E. Dauer Award for Judicial Leadership and Excellence. In 2016, Pittsburgh Action Against Rape awarded Justice Todd with their first Visionary Award recognizing individuals who have made a significant impact in the lives of survivors of sexual violence.

Justice Todd presently serves as a board member of the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera and recently served as Chair of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Elder Law Task Force. She serves as the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Liaison Justice to the Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts, The Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Fairness and to the Pennsylvania Veterans Courts. She is a former President of
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape. She volunteers her time as a high school musical judge for the Pittsburgh CLO Gene Kelly Awards and, for over ten years, coached the Seneca Valley Intermediate High School Mock Trial Team.

**Honorable Jonathan Lippman**
The Honorable Jonathan Lippman, former Chief Judge of New York and Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, is Of Counsel in the New York office of Latham & Watkins and a member of the firm's Litigation & Trial Department. He provides strategic counsel to clients on New York Law and appellate matters nationwide, and is a leader of the firm’s pro bono practice.

Judge Lippman served as Chief Judge of the State of New York and Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals from February 2009 through December 2015. During his tenure on the Court of Appeals, Chief Judge Lippman authored major decisions addressing constitutional, statutory, and common law issues shaping the law of New York, the contours of state government, and the lives of all New Yorkers.

As the state’s Chief Judge, he championed equal access to justice issues in New York and around the country and took the leadership role in identifying permanent funding streams for civil legal services. Chief Judge Lippman made New York the first state in the country to require 50 hours of law-related pro bono work prior to bar admission and established the Pro Bono Scholars and Poverty Justice Solutions Programs to help alleviate the crisis in civil legal services. He strengthened the state's indigent criminal defense system, addressed the systemic causes of wrongful convictions, created Human Trafficking Courts across New York State, and led efforts to reform New York’s juvenile justice, bail and pre-trial justice systems. Judge Lippman championed the commercial division as a world class venue for business litigation, reformed the state’s attorney disciplinary system, adopted the Uniform Bar Exam, and succeeded in the creation of a statewide salary commission for judges.

Chief Judge Lippman has served at all levels of the New York State Court system in a career spanning more than four decades, including service as a staff attorney, administrator and judge. From January 1996 to May 2007, he served as the longest-tenured Chief Administrative Judge in state history, playing a central role in many far-reaching reforms of New York’s judiciary and its legal profession. From May 2007 to 2009, Judge Lippman served as the Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Department, dramatically reducing the court's pending backlogs.

In 2008, Judge Lippman received the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence, presented each year by the nation’s Chief Justice to a state court judge who exemplifies the highest level of judicial excellence, integrity, fairness, and professional ethics. Judge Lippman was selected for his “unparalleled ability to promote and achieve reform in the state courts. His leadership in the New York courts contributed to numerous improvements in that state’s justice system and served as an example for courts across the country.” In 2013, the *American Lawyer* named Chief Judge Lippman one of the Top 50 Innovators in Big Law in the Last 50 Years. A *New York Times* article in December 2015, stated that Judge Lippman had left an altered legal profession in New York by using “his authority to promote an ideal of lawyering in public service.”
This year, Judge Lippman was named Chairman of the Independent Commission on New York City Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform, a 27 person blue ribbon commission, formed to examine the future of the Riker’s Island jail facilities in the context of systemic criminal justice reform.

Honorable Sheila A. Woods-Skipper

On November 4, 2013, Judge Woods-Skipper was unanimously elected by her colleagues to serve as President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. From November 2008, until her election, she served as Supervising Judge of the Criminal Trial Division where her assistance was instrumental in implementing the zoning of court cases and the creation of innovative programs in the Criminal division that have fostered public safety, reduced prison population and increased efficiency in the processing of criminal cases. One of her many significant accomplishments is her assistance in the creation of the First Judicial District Mental Health Court over which she presides. Mental Health Court began as a small pilot program in 2009, and now serves thousands of offenders, providing substantial assistance and oversight to facilitate their re-integration into society as productive citizens.

President Judge Woods-Skipper was formerly assigned to the Homicide Unit and served as the coordinating judge for the Waiver Program. She is a member of the Judicial Education Committee, providing guidance and support to the newly elected judges and those transferred from other assignments. Appointed by Governor Rendell in 2008, she served as a member of the State Interstate Compact for Adult Offenders until 2012. In 2006, President Judge Woods-Skipper was appointed by the late Justice Cappy to the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing, and now serves as Vice Chair having been re-appointed by Justice Castille for several additional terms. She was also selected to serve on the Mental Health Advisory Commission (MHAC) of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD).

President Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper is a native Philadelphian who attended Philadelphia High School for Girls, the University of Pennsylvania, and Temple University School of Law. She was a Judicial Law Clerk to the late Honorable Charles Wright, Court of Common Pleas and served as an Assistant District Attorney for Philadelphia County for eleven years.

President Judge Woods-Skipper participates in numerous professional activities including the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges (Zone Representative), Pennsylvania Bar Association House of Delegates, American Judges Association (Board of Governors), National Association of Women Judges, (District 3 Director) Immediate Past Chair, Clifford Scott Green Chapter, National Bar Association Judicial Council, Philadelphia Bar Association, National Bar Association Women’s Lawyer Division, Barristers Association, the Criminal Inn of Courts, the University of Pennsylvania American Inn of Court and Temple University American Inn of Court. She has participated as a panelist for professional organizations, such as the Philadelphia Bar Association, Meet the Judges Forums and Pennsylvania Bar Association, among others. President Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper has organized and participated in forums about the criminal justice process, and served as a mentor to high school, college and law school students.
COURSE PLANNERS:

Catherine C. Carr, Esq.

Catherine C. Carr is the Executive Director of Community Legal Services, Inc., the largest civil legal aid provider in Philadelphia. She is co-chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Task Force on Civil Gideon and Access to Justice, an Adjunct Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and provides consulting to organizations across the country on the provision of civil legal aid to the indigent. Ms. Carr is the recipient of numerous awards for her work on civil legal aid issues including the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Sandra Day O’Connor Award.

Ms. Carr received her J.D. *cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where she was an editor of the *Law Review*. She received her B.A. *cum laude* from Yale University.

Professor Louis S. Rulli

Louis S. Rulli is a practice professor of law and clinical director at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. In 2006, Prof. Rulli received the Provost’s Award of the University of Pennsylvania for Distinguished Teaching, one of two university-wide provost’s awards bestowed each year on faculty for teaching excellence. In 2012, he was the recipient of Penn Law School’s Beacon Award for exemplary faculty commitment to pro bono service, and in 2015 he received the Praxis Award in Professional Ethics from Villanova University.

Prior to joining the Penn Law faculty in 1995, Professor Rulli was the executive director of Community Legal Services in Philadelphia. He is a founding member of Pennsylvania’s Lawyer Trust Account Board (IOLTA) and a past chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention. He currently serves in the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s House of Delegates and on the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Board of Governors where he is the Association’s Pro Bono Advisor to the Chancellor. He recently served on Pennsylvania’s Ad Hoc Judicial Ethics Committee which drafted a revised code of judicial conduct that was adopted by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. In 2015-16, he served on the transition team of Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney.

Professor Rulli received his J.D. and B.A. (with high honors) from Rutgers University. He has served on the board of directors of many non-profit organizations, including Community Legal Services, Philadelphia Legal Assistance, Philadelphia VIP, Friends of Farmworkers, and the Women’s Law Project. He is the recipient of many awards, including the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award, the Champion of Justice Award from Community Legal Services, and a Citation from the City of Philadelphia for leadership on behalf of the legal needs of the City’s poor. His published writings focus on access to justice, civil forfeiture, and ethics, and include such recent articles as *Roadblocks to Access to Justice: Reforming Ethical Rules to Meet the Special Needs of Low-Income Clients*, 17 U. OF PA. J. LAW & SOC. CHANGE 347 (2014); *Justice Gap: Money Well Spent, The Value of Civil Legal Assistance to the Poor*, 75 THE PHILADELPHIA LAWYER MAGAZINE 24 (2012) (Cover Article), and *On the Road to Civil Gideon: Five Lessons from the Enactment of a Right to Counsel for Indigent Homeowners in Federal Civil Forfeiture Proceedings*, 19 JOURNAL OF LAW & POLICY 683 (2011).
Joseph A. Sullivan, Esq.
Mr. Sullivan, an experienced litigator and pro bono attorney, is Special counsel and Director of pro bono programs at Pepper Hamilton LLP in Philadelphia. He manages Pepper’s firm-wide pro bono program and supervises and coordinates all aspects of the delivery of pro bono legal services, including the internal reach and effectiveness of the programs, as well as outreach to bar associations, public interest law firms, business entities and community organizations. Mr. Sullivan also actively participates in pro bono engagements. He serves on the boards of Community Legal Services, Philadelphia Legal Assistance, the Homeless Advocacy Project (ex officio and as past president), and Inn Dwelling (a community development organization for which he is board chairman).

Mr. Sullivan is also an active board member of the Pennsylvania Innocence Project, and Friends of Farmworkers. He is a past counsel to the Board of Governors of the Philadelphia Bar Association, and he has served as an independent counsel to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and as a legal advisor to the Philadelphia School Reform Commission. In 2010, Mr. Sullivan was presented with the Philadelphia Bar Association Fidelity Award, recognizing significant accomplishments in improving the administration of justice. He is a recipient of the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Louis J. Goffman Award (the highest honor for pro bono service) and its Pro Bono Award for Philadelphia County.

Mr. Sullivan joined Pepper from Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis in Philadelphia, where he was counsel and served as an administrator of that firm’s Litigation Services Department and director of its pro bono program. Mr. Sullivan is a 1987 graduate of Columbia Law School, where he was editor-in-chief of the Columbia Human Rights Law Review. After law school, he spent two years clerking for the Honorable Anna Duggs Taylor of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Mr. Sullivan received his undergraduate degree from Columbia University in 1980.

Merril L. Zebe, Esq.
Since 2003, Merril L. Zebe, has served as the Public Interest Coordinator for the Philadelphia Bar Association. Merril provides staff support for the Delivery of Legal Services Committee and the Civil Gideon and Access to Justice Task Force. Ms. Zebe also provided significant staff support for the Pennsylvania Civil Legal Justice Coalition, which organized statewide hearings in 2013 and produced a report on the civil justice gap crisis in 2014. In March 2014, she received the Excellence Award from the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network in recognition of her outstanding commitment to equal justice for all.

Ms. Zebe received a B.S.W. degree from Temple University in 1976 and a J.D. degree from the University of Santa Clara Law School in 1980. She is an experienced public interest attorney and previously worked as a legal advocate at Community Legal Services Society, Inc., in Wilmington, Delaware, for thirteen years. Ms. Zebe also served as a Director of Development for several nonprofit agencies in the greater Delaware Valley area.
2016 BENCH BAR & ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A Conversation on Access to Justice in the Civil Courts
Friday, September 23, 1:30 to 2:30 P.M.

RESOURCE LIST

PENNSYLVANIA RESOURCES

Recent Reports and Studies:

Pennsylvania Elder Law Task Force Report and Recommendations
In November 2014, the Elder Law Task Force, a 38-member task force chaired by Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Debra Todd, issued a comprehensive 284-page report, *Pennsylvania Elder Law Task Force Report and Recommendations*, which contains 130 recommendations to enhance the way Pennsylvania elders interact with the state court system and are protected in cases involving abuse, neglect, guardianship and other matters. Two critical recommended actions were immediately implemented by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania: the creation of a new Office of Elder Justice in the Courts, which is within the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, and the establishment of an Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts to work with the office to advance the Task Force’s 130 recommendations. The Elder Law Task Force Report is available at [http://www.pacourts.us/courts/supreme-court/committees/supreme-court-boards/elder-law-task-force](http://www.pacourts.us/courts/supreme-court/committees/supreme-court-boards/elder-law-task-force).

Civil Legal Justice Coalition Report and Articles
Pennsylvania IOLTA Economic Impact Study

**Websites:**

2016 Justice Index: Pennsylvania’s Rankings
The 2016 Justice Index, published by The National Center for Access to Justice (NCAJ) at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, measures the degree to which an array of selected best practices for ensuring equal access to the civil justice system are being performed by all states throughout the country. Four legal subject indexes are ranked on a 1-100 scale to come up with a state’s overall composition score. These subjects include: attorney access, self-represented, language access, and disability access. The 2016 Justice Index is available at

The 2016 Justice Index ranks Pennsylvania 14th from the bottom with an overall composite score of 31 out of 100. In the category of providing support to self-represented litigants, Pennsylvania is ranked 4th from the bottom, with a score of 26.25 out of 100. Pennsylvania’s rankings on support provided for self-represented litigants are available at http://justiceindex.org/2016-findings/self-represented-litigants/. More information about all of the category rankings for Pennsylvania is available at http://justiceindex.org/2016-findings/findings/

Overview of Pennsylvania Right to Counsel Law and Developments
For an overview of major developments and breakdown of right counsel law in Pennsylvania, visit the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel (NCCRC) website at http://www.civilrighttocounsel.org/major_developments?jurisdiction=Pennsylvania. NCCRC website also contains an interactive map that tracks the status of the right to counsel in every state of the nation, and allows you to filter information by issue, jurisdiction, and activity. The website also contains a searchable bibliography listing thousands of resources about civil right to counsel, including law review articles, study, reports, news stories, social media pieces, and briefs from key cases and is available at http://www.civilrighttocounsel.org.

Philadelphia Bar Association's Civil Gideon Corner
This online resource developed by the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Civil Gideon and Access to Justice Task Force contains information about the Task Force’s work and activities. The Civil Gideon Corner is available at http://www.philadelphiabar.org/page/CivilGideon?appNum=5.
NEW YORK RESOURCES

New York City Housing Right to Counsel Legislation and Creation of Office of Civil Justice

- A New York City Council bill (known as Proposed Int. No. 214-A) was introduced in 2014 that would guarantee a right to counsel for low-income individuals in eviction and foreclosure proceedings in New York City. Proposed Int. No. 214-A is available at http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1687978&GUID=29A4594B-9E8A-4C5E-A797-96BDC4F64F80

- A report prepared for the New York City Bar Association by Stout Risius Ross, Inc., entitled The Financial Cost and Benefits of Establishing a Right to Counsel in Eviction Proceedings Under Intro 214-A (March 16, 2016), found that the pending New York City legislation known as Intro 214- A, which would provide a right to counsel in NYC eviction and mortgage foreclosure cases, would save the city a total of approximately $320 million from reducing shelter costs, preserving regulated, affordable apartments, eliminating city services that are often provided because of evictions, such as emergency room care and law enforcement. The study estimates that providing counsel to eligible New Yorkers would cost $191 million annually. The report is available at http://www2.nycbar.org/pdf/report/uploads/SRR_Report_Financial_Cost_and_Benefits_of_Establishing_a_Right_to_Counsel_in_Eviction_Proceedings.pdf. A summary of this report is available at https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/righttocounselnyc/pages/23/attachments/original/1460160961/SRR_report_two_pager_FINAL.pdf?1460160961.

- New York City Office of Civil Justice: In June 2015, the New York City Council approved legislation creating an Office of Civil Justice in the Mayor’s Office that is responsible for overseeing all aspects of civil justice programs. The office is charged with advising and assisting the mayor in each area as it relates to civil justice, including, but not limited to, the planning and implementation of civil justice programs, coordination of agencies that implement these programs, reviewing and advising the mayor on the budgetary costs associated with civil programs as well as developing, studying and making recommendations in all civil justice matters that affect New York City. A copy of the legislation is available at http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2253270&GUID=023D2B73-AEF0-4B03-AE14-61167A8431C8&Options=&Search=

- For more information, visit the website of the Right to Counsel Coalition of NYC at http://www.righttocounselnyc.org/ or the website of the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel at http://www.civilrighttocounsel.org/major_developments/894. See also New York City Press Release (January 28, 2016) announcing the creation of the Office of Civil Justice available at http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/108-16/mayor-bill-de-blasio-city-council-speaker-melissa-mark-viverito-creation-office-of

The New York Permanent Commission on Access to Justice (formerly known as Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services in New York); New York State Courts Access to Justice Program; and New York State Legislative Resolution Supporting Concept of Civil Right to Counsel


ARTICLES AND ESSAYS:


Alan W. Houseman, Civil Legal Aid in the United States: An Update for 2015 (Dec. 2015), a summary of last year’s activities and developments available at [https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/761858/Houseman_Civil_Legal_Aid_US_2015.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/761858/Houseman_Civil_Legal_Aid_US_2015.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).


NATIONAL RESOURCES

American Bar Association’s Access to Justice Initiatives Resource Center
The Resource Center for Access to Justice (ATJ) Initiatives serves judicial, private bar, and legal aid leaders who work together to provide people of low and modest income with meaningful access to their justice systems. This online resource contains a wide variety of materials, including information about individual state Access to Justice Commissions. http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_aid_indigent_defendants/initiatives/resource_center_for_access_to_justice.html.

American Bar Association’s Commission on the Future of Legal Services Report on the Future of Legal Services in the United States
The American Bar Association’s Commission on the Future of Legal Services recently published a report, The Future of Legal Services in the United States, which provides a dozen recommendations on how to improve the delivery of legal services, which are addressed to courts, bar associations, law schools, legislators, and the legal profession as a whole. The Report is available at http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/2016FLSReport_FNL_WEB.pdf

American Bar Association’s Directory of Law Governing Appointment of Counsel in State Civil Proceedings
The American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants recently published a new resource detailing the existing rights to counsel and discretionary judicial powers to appoint counsel in civil cases, in each state and the District of Columbia. The ABA Directory of Law Governing Appointment of Counsel in State Civil Proceedings, developed in conjunction with the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel, can be found on the ABA website at www.ambar.org/civilrighttocounsel.

Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators Resolution 5 (COSCA) and the Justice For All Project
In July 2015, the CCJ and COSCA passed Resolution 5 Reaffirming the Commitment to Meaningful Access to Justice for All, which sets an aspiration goal of 100 percent access to effective legal assistance for essential civil legal needs. Resolution 5 is available at http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Microsites/Files/access/5%20Meaningful%20Access%20to%20Justice%20for%20All_final.ashx. In February 2016, the Public Welfare Foundation and the National Center for State Courts announced the creation of the Justice for All (JFA) project, which will provide funding to selected states to support efforts to move toward implementing the Resolution 5 in support of Meaningful Access to Justice for All. “Justice for All” Project Announcement and Strategic Planning Guidance Materials are available at http://www.ncsc.org/jfap.

National Center for Access to Justice and the 2016 Justice Index
The National Center for Access to Justice (NCAJ) at the Benjamin N. Cardozo Law School is dedicated to achieving reform that helps people obtain justice in the courts and maintains a variety of resources available at http://ncforaj.org. The NCAJ also created the Justice Index, an online resource developed by the National Center for Access to Justice that contains data about
the performance of state-based justice systems in assuring access to justice, which is available at http://www.justiceindex.org/.

**National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel (NCCRC)**
The National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel (NCCRC) website is a central repository focused on information and data about the national civil right to counsel movement. The web site contains an interactive map that tracks the status of the right to counsel in every state of the nation, and allows you to filter information by issue, jurisdiction, and activity. The web site also contains a searchable bibliography listing thousands of resources about civil right to counsel, including law review articles, study, reports, news stories, social media pieces, and briefs from key cases and is available at http://www.civilrighttocounsel.org.

**Richard Zorza's Access to Justice Blog**
This online resource contains information and links to other resources related to access to justice issues, including innovations in courts, the bar, legal aid and community that make it easier for people to obtain access to justice institutions, and to just results within those institutions. http://accesstojustice.net/.

**Self-Represented Litigation Network**
Self-Represented Litigation Network offer an online collection of resources to help courts, legal aid and the private bar better serve the self-represented. These resources are available at http://www.srln.org/.