

Focus on *Access to Justice*

For more information, visit www.lsba.org/atj.

What do pro bono volunteers and pajamas have in common?

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) new online pro bono program allows attorneys to provide pro bono services anytime and anywhere – even at home in their pajamas. Each day, thousands of individuals with legal problems might be assisted by a short answer from a knowledgeable attorney.

A new project from the American Bar Association (ABA) will connect individuals with attorneys. Through the website, LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org, attorney volunteers will be able to log in whenever and wherever they like to anonymously respond to legal questions submitted by individuals who could not otherwise afford to consult an attorney. The volunteer's involvement is limited and the individual will receive sufficient help to know whether to proceed or whether it would be best to obtain the services of an attorney.

Louisiana will be one of the 38 states participating in this new project. The ABA will run the site, maintain the software and provide liability insurance. The LSBA, through its Access to Justice Department, will be responsible for recruiting volunteers to answer the online submissions and making the public aware of the services when the website launches in late August.

"LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org provides us with an opportunity to match the needs of an individual with an appropriate legal response on the continuum of services provided by Louisiana's justice community. I encourage you to volunteer," said LSBA President Darrel J. Papillion.

It's simple, and you can volunteer in your pajamas! To get involved, contact Rachael Mills, email rachael.mills@lsba.org or call (504)619-0104. 

Yes, it really is important to report your pro bono hours!

Pro bono and civil legal aid organizations do benefit from Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) members who report their pro bono service hours. It helps the organizations answer questions from funders, such as: "What are attorneys doing to help poor people?" Each year, thousands of volunteer hours of legal services to poor people go unreported by attorneys because attorneys think it doesn't matter or because they think it is self-aggrandizement to report. Support your local public interest organizations by reporting your hours and providing them with a response to that question.

Complete the online "Voluntary Pro Bono Reporting Form" at: www.lsba.org/ATJ/ProBonoVoluntaryReporting.aspx. If you need assistance, contact Nicole Louque at (800)421-5722, ext. 106, or email nicole.louque@lsba.org. 



LAWYERS IN LIBRARIES October 27, 2016



Louisiana lawyers are proud to partner with Louisiana libraries to help address the legal needs of our communities.

On October 27, 2016, the Louisiana Library Association and the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) will sponsor "Lawyers in Libraries" events across the state in support of the National Pro Bono Celebration. Attorney volunteers will provide "Ask-a-Lawyer" sessions, or educational presentations, free of charge to library patrons.

WE NEED YOUR HELP to be the Lawyer in your local Library.

To participate in a "Lawyers in Libraries" event, contact the LSBA Access to Justice Department at (504)619-0106 or (800)421-5722, ext. 106, or email Nicole.Louque@lsba.org. More info on the project can be found at: www.LouisianaLawyersinLibraries.org

Special thanks to all the participating attorneys helping to make this project a success.

ATJ LIFT Collaborative Incubator Project at Family Justice Center Welcomes Second Class

The Louisiana State Bar Association's Access to Justice Department is introducing the newest class of Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) Fellows participating in the incubator project at the Family Justice Center. Through a collaborative project between the LIFT program, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) and the New Orleans Family Justice Center, LIFT Fellows are working to help address the unmet civil legal needs of domestic violence survivors.

The LIFT Incubator Project at the Family Justice Center is for new or transitioning attorneys starting their own solo, small firm or nonprofit practice. During the 18-month program, incubator attorneys receive subsidized office space, support and resources. The attorneys also receive training and mentorship as they work alongside experienced SLLS legal practitioners. In exchange for the training and incubation of their practice, the participating attorneys agree to provide pro bono representation to domestic violence victims.

Initially launched in January 2015, the project began as a pilot program and, due to the success of its first class, is now an official incubator program. The inaugural class — Erica L. Andrews, James A. Graham and Nicholas J. Hite — provided legal representation in more than 550 cases, approximately 100 of which were pro bono, all within the 18-month period. Additionally, 75-100 percent of the attorneys' paying clients fell into the modest means category, i.e., 200-400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The inaugural class will remain in a collaborative environment, moving to shared office space available in the building where the Family Justice Center is located. Each attorney will "pay it forward" by men-



Three attorneys comprise the second class of Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) Fellows, from left, Shawon J. Bernard, Jerry L. Harrell and Coby A. Venable.

toring the incoming class of attorneys.

This year, the program welcomes three new attorneys — Shawon J. Bernard, a recent graduate of Southern University Law Center with nearly two years of practice experience; Jerry L. Harrell, a graduate of Southern University Law Center with one year of practice experience; and Coby A. Venable, a graduate of Emory University admitted to practice in Louisiana in October 2015.

"There is a great need for legal services for victims of domestic violence. The pro

bono and low bono representation provided by the incubator attorneys have made great strides to increase access to legal representation," said Laura Tuggle, SLLS executive director.

"The incubator project provides a unique opportunity for new attorneys going solo soon or shortly after graduating law school to work in a collaborative environment with many agencies and organizations providing holistic services to FJC clients," said Mary Claire Landry, executive director of the New Orleans Family Justice Center.

LOUISIANA JUSTICE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

Civil Legal Aid Awards to be distributed at the Conference

Submit your nominations at www.lsba.org/ATJ

Save the date! **BATON ROUGE • OCTOBER 13-14, 2016**

