

Focus on *Access to Justice*

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

LSBA Access to Justice Program's success praised at March Summit

"The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Access to Justice (ATJ) Program has made Louisiana into a national leader when it comes to providing services and resources for those without the means to hire counsel," said consultant John Tull at the March 27 Access to Justice Summit in Baton Rouge.

Tull, a private consultant with more than 40 years of experience working with various aspects of civil justice across the country, facilitated the Summit, which was coordinated by the LSBA to build on the program's success and to identify and plan future initiatives.

The Summit — attended by a broad range of stakeholders including Louisiana Supreme Court representatives, LSBA leadership, district judges, the Louisiana Bar Foundation, legal aid and pro bono organizations, law schools, local bar associations and private practitioners — provided an opportunity to identify and celebrate justice community accomplishments and to recognize areas for increased collaboration and communication among courts and service providers.

Prior to the Summit, Tull conducted interviews with Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson and other local and state leaders who provided practical insight regarding the challenge of meeting the state's legal needs.

Louisiana "is in the top four or five" states when it comes to access to justice programming, Tull said. But, he added, "though there is certainly awareness of the importance of various access to justice initiatives in the state, there is not a collective appreciation of the magnitude and quality of what has been accomplished since the ATJ Committee began its work."

A portion of the Summit was devoted to a discussion of the delivery model through which access to justice efforts are made, in particular, the Access to Justice "Commis-



Louisiana Bar Foundation Vice President E. Jane Sherman, left, and facilitator John Tull participated in the March 27 Access to Justice Summit in Baton Rouge.

sion." Other states have created commissions to expand the role of the Supreme Court in access to justice initiatives. Tull discussed the benefits of this model as displayed in other states but stressed that Louisiana's current structure is producing great benefits and leaders should be conscious of how alterations would affect that progress.

Additionally, the Summit covered several other issues including disaster response preparedness, cultivating new leadership, resources for courts to assist self-represented litigants, statewide and local strategies to secure funding, and training opportunities for legal aid attorneys. The Summit also offered networking opportunities for participants.

Based on the success of this event, the Access to Justice Committee will conduct additional Summits in the future.

For more information, email LSBA Access to Justice Director Monte T. Mollere at mmollere@lsba.org.

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: <https://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.