

# Focus on *Access to Justice*

For more information, visit [www.lsba.org/atj](http://www.lsba.org/atj).

## Self-Represented Litigants Service Providers Summit Held in Baton Rouge

The Louisiana Access to Justice Commission's Self-Represented Litigants Committee held its fourth Self-Represented Litigants Service Providers Summit in Baton Rouge on Jan. 13. Held at the law firm of Taylor, Porter, Brooks & Phillips, LLP, the summit was a one-day program that brought together judges, clerks of court, court staff, legal aid and pro bono providers, local bar organizations, and domestic violence organizations that provide support and services to assist self-represented litigants (SRLs).

Self-Represented Litigant Committee Co-Chairs Judge Jeffrey C. Cashe of the 21st Judicial District Court and Judge Patrice W. Oppenheim of the 22nd Judicial District Court led the day's programming. Both stressed that, nationally, the number of SRLs is on the rise and unrepresented litigants face significant access issues due to poverty, language barriers or mental illness. Thus, they are often unable to navigate the court system and fail to have their issues properly heard by the court. Judges Cashe and Oppenheim reiterated the importance of the roles summit attendees play in assisting SRLs to address their civil legal needs and in assisting the courts to help run more efficiently.

Summit sessions provided resources and direct assistance to courts and organizations serving SRLs. Topics included a review of best practices for working with SRLs; different self-help center models and how to establish one; an overview of court forms and new technologies; and available services and resources for attorneys and judges assisting SRLs. During the summit, all participants had an opportunity to discuss issues and share ideas on how to better assist SRLs.

The summit was made possible by the Louisiana Access to Justice Commission's SRL Committee; the Louisiana District Court Judges Association; Judge Jeffrey C. Cashe, 21st Judicial District Court; Judge Patrice W. Oppenheim, 22nd Judicial District Court; and Mariarenee Contreras and Stephanie M. Beauth with the Louisiana State Bar Association. 📺



Judge Jeffrey C. Cashe and Amanda Brown discussed court forms and technology.



Judge Patrice W. Oppenheim discussed "How You Can Help SRLs" and gave the Summit's closing remarks.



Mariarenee Contreras explained the Louisiana State Bar Association's Find Legal Help Portal.



Kathryn F. Lafrentz and Robin Kay discussed self-help desks models and best practices.



William C. Snowden discussed "Promoting Excellence-Implicit Bias Insights."



Judge Lisa M. Woodruff-White discussed domestic violence SRLs initiatives.

# LIFT Partners with Modern Juris for Business Development Trainings, Resources for Solo Practitioners

**L**egal Innovators For Tomorrow (LIFT), the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) legal incubator program for public interest attorneys, has partnered with Modern Juris to offer business development training and resources to help new solos develop their practices while in the program.

On Feb. 3, Modern Juris founder and former Texas Opportunity and Justice Incubator Director Anne-Marie Rábago presented an interactive and hands-on business development training on finances and client-centered services for solo practitioners with the current LIFT Fellows. Modern Juris provides tools, training and support to help lawyers build sustainable businesses designed to serve the latent legal market. By cultivating a collaborative learning community, Modern Juris seeks to break down barriers to legal



access, build new business models in law, and create systemic change.

“Business development tools and resources for the attorneys in LIFT who are just starting out are essential to support the sustainability of their solo practices. While many new solos have the schooling that they need to practice law, running a business requires a completely separate set of skills. Through this partnership, I am proud that the LSBA can support the participating LIFT Fellows to develop the entrepreneurial skills that they need, sustain their practices, and increase access to legal services for years to come,” said LSBA President Stephen I. Dwyer.



The LIFT program currently runs two projects to increase access to legal representation by supporting new solos in developing their public interest solo practices. The Disaster Title Clearing Project, operated in partnership with Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, works with Hurricane Ida victims to obtain clear title and other heirship property matters to help victims repair and rebuild their homes and communities. Operated in partnership with Acadiana Legal Service Corp., the Rural Justice Incubator Project works with attorneys in rural parts of the state to increase access to legal representation in these underserved communities.

For more information on LIFT, go to: [www.lsba.org/LIFT](http://www.lsba.org/LIFT).

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

[LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org](http://LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org)



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*LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org* allows volunteers to:

- Log in whenever/wherever
- Choose the question you answer and respond anonymously
- Receive training and access to resources
- Be covered by malpractice insurance

For more information or to volunteer, contact Rachael Mills, ATJ Projects Counsel, by emailing [rachael.mills@lsba.org](mailto:rachael.mills@lsba.org) or calling 504.619.0104.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
**[WWW.LSBA.ORG/ATJ](http://WWW.LSBA.ORG/ATJ)**  
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