

# Focus on *Access to Justice*

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

## LSBA Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee organizes Special Education Workshop

Families often experience challenges related to educating their children with disabilities and ensuring that their children receive appropriate educational support, resources and services. Many parents are unaware of the positive obligations placed upon schools to assist children with disabilities. Often, these families turn to Louisiana attorneys for help in understanding and enforcing their children's educational rights. To support the education of both attorneys and members of the public on these issues, the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee organized a Special Education Workshop on Oct. 19, 2019.

The free program hosted by Southern University Law Center gave attendees training on different areas of special education law, including rights and administrative processes, accessing mental health services, dispute resolution and IEPs (Individualized Education



The panelists participating in the Special Education Workshop, organized by the Louisiana State Bar Association's Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee and hosted by Southern University Law Center, were, from left, Debra J. Weinberg from the Advocacy Center/Disability Rights Louisiana; Wayne T. Stewart from Hammonds, Sills, Adkins & Guice, L.L.C.; Cynthia Chesterfield from Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge; Victor M. Jones from Southern Poverty Law Center; and Parris A. Taylor from the Louisiana Department of Education.

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the Advocacy Center/Disability Rights Louisiana — provided highly informative and engaging presentations. The workshop also afforded the opportunity for questions and robust discussion, which helped attorneys and members of the public to better understand special education laws, policies and procedures. 📺

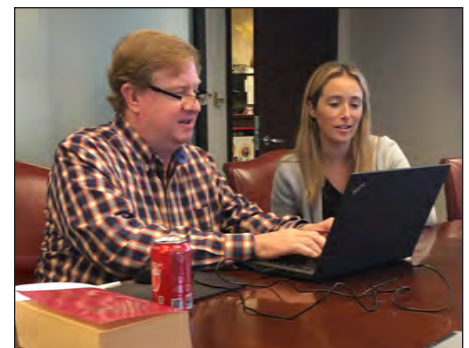
## Entergy hosts second Free Legal Answers clinic

Entergy L.L.C.'s New Orleans office hosted its second [LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org](http://LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org) (FLA) clinic on Oct. 22, 2019. At the clinic, corporate counsel volunteers answered civil legal questions submitted to the site by low-income Louisiana residents.

The online pro bono site, [La.FreeLegalAnswers.org](http://La.FreeLegalAnswers.org), allows qualifying users to submit civil legal questions that are then answered by attorney volunteers. FLA is an additional mechanism to assist individuals with civil legal needs while also conveniently providing pro bono opportunities for volunteer attorneys.

The impact on FLA site users can be profound, and Entergy multiplied that impact by hosting Free Legal Answers clinics in Louisiana and Mississippi and supporting their attorneys to volunteer in Free Legal Answers events in Texas and Arkansas. The impact of Entergy attorneys on Oct. 22 was made even more significant in that these events were held in conjunction with National Celebrate Pro Bono Week.

For more information about volunteering with [LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org](http://LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org), contact Rachael Mills at (504)619-0104 or email [Rachael.mills@lsba.org](mailto:Rachael.mills@lsba.org). 📺



Entergy's New Orleans office hosted its second [LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org](http://LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org) (FLA) clinic on Oct. 22, 2019. From left, Mark G. Otts, Entergy assistant general counsel; and Joanna S. Laidler, Louisiana State Bar Association Access to Justice projects counsel.

# LSBA Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee hosts educational seminar

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities (LSPD) Committee hosted a seminar on Nov. 22, 2019, to educate attorneys on how to best represent clients with disabilities and to provide greater understanding of the legal needs and rights of people with disabilities. The seminar was supported by Judge Jay C. Zainey and conducted at the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana.

Organizers said most, if not all, Louisiana attorneys will represent a client with a disability. However, attorneys who do so infrequently may not recognize that a person's disability can impact all aspects of the case — from obtaining instructions, to advising on outcomes and drafting settlement documents. Special training can ensure that attorneys provide appropriate representation for clients with disabilities.

The seminar, titled "Representing Clients with Disabilities: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You," dealt with issues including attorney obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, capacity



Gwynne K. Mashon and Steven D. Reed from Southeast Louisiana Legal Services were two of the presenters for the "Representing Clients with Disabilities" seminar.

issues and public benefits.

Seminar presenters included Garret S. DeReus of Bizer & DeReus, L.L.C.; Dayna M. Ryan of Theus, Grisham, Davis & Leigh, L.L.C.; Gwynne K. Mashon and Steven D. Reed from Southeast Louisiana Legal Services; Sean M. Morrison from the Sean Morrison Law Offices, L.L.C.; and Christopher H. Sherwood from the Law Offices of Warren A. Forstall Jr., L.L.C.

Because of significant interest in the event from attorneys, the LSPD Committee will host a follow-up seminar in 2020. 📺



Dayna M. Ryan of Theus, Grisham, Davis & Leigh, L.L.C., was one of the presenters for the "Representing Clients with Disabilities" seminar.

## Support civil legal aid training: Sponsor the 2020 Louisiana Justice Community Conference

Every October for nearly two decades, civil legal aid attorneys from all corners of the state meet in Baton Rouge for the annual Louisiana Justice Community Conference. For two days, conference attendees hear from speakers on best practices and updates to the law, network with others in the field, convene substantive law task forces, and more. The educational opportunities offered ensures that civil legal aid attorneys remain well-equipped to tackle pertinent legal challenges faced by those most in need.

To provide the most relevant and cutting-edge poverty law-related trainings, conference sponsors are being sought. Download the sponsorship form at: <https://bit.ly/38DhASW>. The deadline for submission is March 31. Any questions can be directed to Access to Justice Administrative Assistant Jordan Maier at [jordan.maier@lsba.org](mailto:jordan.maier@lsba.org). 📺

## Recognize an unsung hero with a 2020 Pro Bono Award

Facing a legal problem without any means to afford assistance in solving it can be stressful or even life-shattering. Pro bono attorney volunteers and law firms often help guide their clients out of some of these most trying times, with no expectation of compensation. This year, help recognize these unsung heroes with a 2020 Pro Bono or Children's Law Award.

Awards recognize outstanding achievement in several categories — Children's Law Award, Law Student Award, Friend of Pro Bono Award, Pro Bono Publico Award, Career Public Interest Award and the David A. Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award. Also, attorneys who have provided more than 100 hours of volunteer services are recognized with the LSBA Century Club Award.

Nominations can be made online at [www.lsba.org/ProBono/ProBonoAwards.aspx](http://www.lsba.org/ProBono/ProBonoAwards.aspx) and must be received by 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7. Award recipients will be honored at a May 5 reception hosted by the Louisiana Supreme Court.

For additional assistance, email Access to Justice Administrative Assistant Jordan Maier at [jordan.maier@lsba.org](mailto:jordan.maier@lsba.org). 📺