

# Focus on Access to Justice

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

## Courts, Community, and Collaboration: 6th Annual Self-Represented Litigant Summit Recap

The 6th Annual Self-Represented Litigant (SRL) Collaborative Summit was held on May 2, 2025, at the 22nd Judicial District Court in Covington, drawing over 50 legal professionals from across Louisiana. The event served as a dynamic platform for sharing innovative tools, strategies, and best practices for improving services to self-represented litigants in courts statewide.

The summit featured CLE-accredited sessions on a range of critical topics including:

- ▶ In Forma Pauperis (IFP) Procedures
- ▶ Ethical Engagement with Self-Represented Litigants
- ▶ Self-Help Center Models and Best Practices
- ▶ Artificial Intelligence and Court Form Development
- ▶ Systemic Barriers to Justice

Participants included judges and court staff from City and Judicial District Courts across the state—including representatives from the Louisiana Supreme Court—as well as members of legal aid and pro bono organizations, community partners, and private practitioners. This diverse group of attendees reflected the broad-based commitment to building a more inclusive, responsive, and user-friendly legal system.

Speakers and attendees alike shared practical insights for improving court navigation and support for SRLs, emphasizing the importance of collaboration across sectors. Discussions focused not only on current challenges but also on solutions that can be scaled and sustained.

The summit reaffirmed Louisiana's Access to Justice Commission and its Self-Represented Litigant Committee's dedication to ensuring that all residents—regardless of income or representation status—can meaningfully engage with the legal system. ♦



Lauren Kirichkow of the Justice & Accountability Center shares insights during a session about In Forma Pauperis at the SRL Summit. Photo by LSBA Staff.



A lively breakout session during the SRL Summit where participants shared challenges, exchanged ideas, and explored practical solutions to improve outcomes for self-represented litigants. Photo by LSBA Staff.



Hon. Patti Oppenheim of the 22nd Judicial District Court welcomes attendees to the SRL Summit and shares a judge's perspective. Photo by LSBA Staff.

## Attorney Volunteers Needed for Statewide Pro Bono Events in October

Volunteers needed for the LSBA's Lawyers in Libraries 2025 events, which are taking place October 20-25, 2025 in conjunction with National Celebrate Pro Bono Week. During this week, libraries will be hosting 2-hour "Ask-a-Lawyer" sessions where patrons can ask legal questions in a one-on-one setting. These sessions will be offered in person at libraries across the state and by phone for those who may be unable to participate in person. This year, Lawyers in Libraries needs volunteers for the following:

### Ask-A-Lawyer Sessions

- ▶ In person at participating libraries
- ▶ By phone
- ▶ "On Call" volunteers

"Ask-A-Lawyer" consultations are in 2-hour time slots. Individual events are scheduled based on attorney preference and library availability. To volunteer, go to <https://lil.ivolunteer.com/2025>. The deadline to register is Sept. 12, 2025.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** To volunteer, please select the library branch from the drop-down menu, then select date(s) and time(s) to volunteer, and provide the required information. If volunteering for a virtual event, please select the "Virtual Calendar" from the drop-down menu. Please note that additional library schedules are forthcoming. For more information, go to [www.LouisianaLawyersinLibraries.org](http://www.LouisianaLawyersinLibraries.org). or contact Bridget.Berins@lsba.org. ♦

## Developing Leaders in Legal Service: 2025 ATJ Interns Begin Six-Week Immersion

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Access to Justice (ATJ) Developing Leadership Intern Program began its ninth year on May 12. The six-week program places interns with nonprofit legal aid organizations and district judges, while also inviting them to numerous LSBA ATJ Department-related meetings to provide a bird's-eye view of Louisiana's civil legal aid network. The idea for this program was developed during an ATJ Summit where participants concluded that cultivating the next generation of access to justice leaders should not only be a priority, but is essential as part of succession planning to ensure continued efforts within Louisiana's justice community. This year's interns are working with the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation, Louisiana Appleseed, the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV), Lagniappe Law Lab, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, the New Orleans Pro Bono Project and the Parole Project. The interns also will observe Judge Bernadette G. D'Souza, Orleans Parish Civil District Court, and Judge Jeffrey C. Cashe, 21st Judicial District Court. In addition to their experiences with legal aid providers, interns are sponsored by law firms and organizations with a commitment to supporting access to justice in Louisiana. This year's sponsors are Entergy Services LLC; Butler Snow LLP; the LSBA's Civil Law & Litigation Section; and Phelps Dunbar LLP. Anyone interested in learning



Pictured from left to right: Stashia Liegl (LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Ctr.), JD Deming (Tulane Law School), Jasmine Bellard (Southern Univ. Law Center), Ryn Neucere (Loyola College of Law).

*Photo by LSBA Staff.*

more about the program or wanting to become a sponsor for 2026 should contact Rachael M. Mills at (504)619-0104 or by email at [rachael.mills@lsba.org](mailto:rachael.mills@lsba.org). ♦

# OCTOBER 20-25, 2025

Make a real impact in just **2 hours**. Volunteer with Lawyers in Libraries to offer brief, one-on-one legal consultations to library patrons across Louisiana — either **in person** or **by phone**.

**Bring Justice to Your Local Library!**  
**Sign up at [lil.ivolunteer.com/2025](https://lil.ivolunteer.com/2025)**



## LAWYERS IN LIBRARIES