

Focus on *Access to Justice*

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

Innovative CLE builds a bridge between civil and criminal justice

The Louisiana State Bar Association Access to Justice Commission's Building Bridges and Modest Means Committees hosted a CLE, "Successful Re-Entry: Addressing Legal Needs after Incarceration," to recruit and educate attorney volunteers of the New Orleans Re-Entry Legal Clinic and attorneys listed on the Modest Means Directory. The CLE programming was designed to provide information on how to assist formerly incarcerated clients with their most pressing civil legal issues, such as obtaining a driver's license and handling consumer debt collection matters.

The New Orleans Re-Entry Legal Clinic is operated by the Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana, The First 72+ and Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) and offers walk-in civil legal assistance once a month to people who have recently returned from incarceration. This free legal aid helps ensure that returning citizens get back on their feet quickly and avoid becoming mired in legal issues and debt that could ultimately return them to incarceration.

The Modest Means Directory is an online directory that connects attorneys with clients whose income falls in the gap between eligibility for legal aid and ability to afford a full-cost attorney. Attorneys who choose to be listed on the directory offer affordable legal options with sliding scale payment, flat fees or limited-scope representation. Because many of the patrons of the Re-Entry Legal Clinic fall into this income eligibility gap and require legal assistance beyond what is provided on site at the clinic, the directory is used as a resource for these individuals to obtain affordable legal assistance.

Overall, the session fits into the Building Bridges Committee's larger goal of "trying to get both sides of the justice system, the civil and criminal side, to come together to better address the legal issues folks



Laura Tuggle, executive director of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, gave opening remarks at the "Successful Re-Entry: Addressing Legal Needs after Incarceration" CLE.

caught up in the system face," SLLS Executive Director Laura Tuggle explained in her opening remarks. In this way, legal professionals can respond "as a coordinated system to break down policy issues, address systemic barriers, and include direct services to individuals," with the ultimate goal of ensuring that returning citizens successfully reintegrate into the community rather than returning to incarceration.

Both the Re-Entry Legal Clinic and the Modest Means Directory are seeking attorneys to participate in the programs. Attorneys interested in volunteering for the clinic should email Vanessa Spinazola at vanessa@jaclouisiana.org. Attorneys interested in being listed on the Modest Means Directory can



Louisiana State Bar Association Access to Justice assistant Jordan Maier displayed the educational materials associated with the "Successful Re-Entry: Addressing Legal Needs after Incarceration" CLE.

sign up at www.lsba.org/ATJCommission/ModestMeans.aspx. 

Legal professionals offer training to area librarians

The Legal Education and Assistance Program (LEAP) is a collaborative effort between the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA), the Law Library of Louisiana and the Louisiana Library Association. LEAP's goal is to provide training and resources to help empower public librarians to serve the legal reference needs of their patrons.

The New Orleans Public Library system requested training for its library staff at the Algiers Regional, Norman Mayer and Mid-City library branches. Rachael M. Mills and Joanna Laidler from the LSBA's Access to Justice Department and Sara V. Pic from the Law Library of Louisiana provided librarians with practical information and best practices for assisting self-represented litigants

and highlighted the LSBA initiatives offering legal resources to the public. The librarians were also provided with handouts detailing statewide legal resources, reference materials and referral information.

The LEAP partners are currently organizing additional trainings in regional library branches. Further, LEAP will record the training so it can be made available to all public libraries in Louisiana. 📺



Right: Providing legal resources training to librarians in the New Orleans Public Library system were, from left, Joanna Laidler, Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Access to Justice Department; Sara V. Pic, Law Library of Louisiana; and Francie Trimble, LSBA Access to Justice intern.



LAWYERS IN LIBRARIES

October 21-26, 2019

In support of National Celebrate Pro Bono Week, the Louisiana Library Association and the Louisiana State Bar Association are sponsoring Lawyers in Libraries events across Louisiana, where libraries host attorney volunteers for educational workshops and "Ask a Lawyer" sessions. *Your volunteerism at these events helps ensure that justice is available to all, regardless of income.*

**Make a difference and ensure justice:
volunteer in your local library!**

To participate in a **Lawyers in Libraries** event, sign up at www.lil.ivolunteer.com/2019.