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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2021

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Louisiana Access to Justice Commission receives \$100,000 grant from National Center for State Courts in Justice For All Project

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) is proud to announce that the Louisiana Access to Justice (ATJ) Commission has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the National Center for State Courts' (NCSC) Justice for All (JFA) Project, funded by The JPB Foundation. This is one of two grants the Commission has received from NCSC under the JFA Project, with the first awarded in October 2019.

The ATJ Commission will use the funds to increase access to civil legal resources in areas with high poverty rates, limited internet access, and long drive times to the nearest legal aid office or self-help center. These areas, termed "civil legal resources deserts," impact approximately 600,000 Louisiana residents, as uncovered through a [Geographic Information Systems Project](#) during the JFA Project in 2020.

"Through the support of NSCS's Justice for All Project, the Commission was able to identify the greatest challenges people in Louisiana face to accessing civil legal aid," LSBA President Alainna Mire said. "Now we will use this information to expand access to civil legal resources through community-led initiatives thanks to this invaluable opportunity."

NCSC created the JFA grant program in an effort to implement two advanced resolutions promulgated by the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators: 1) meaningful access to effective assistance for essential civil legal needs and 2) for traditional and non-traditional stakeholders to collaborate and develop a comprehensive approach to achieve meaningful access to justice. The JFA Project is housed by NCSC and operated in partnership with the Self-Represented Litigants Network.

In the first grant, the Commission completed the Inventory Assessment and Strategic Planning phases of the JFA Project, which entailed a thorough statewide examination of people's access to in-person civil legal resources in Louisiana. The findings show that one in three people potentially income eligible for civil legal aid are required to travel long distances for in-person legal help. [The final report with recommendations is available here.](#)

“When the ATJ Commission received the initial JFA grant, we did not envision having to navigate through a pandemic.” Jeffrey Coreil, Co-Chair of the ATJ Commission said. “But it gave us a great opportunity to understand the impact of civil legal aid and take a deeper dive into mapping what justice for all could look like in Louisiana. We are grateful for the opportunity to continue this work and support the people of Louisiana by creating access points, expanding services, and establishing partnerships.”

Louisiana’s Justice for All leadership includes active participation from the Louisiana Supreme Court, Louisiana ATJ Commission, the Louisiana State Bar Association, legal aid providers, public libraries, and local community leaders in areas where access points will be implemented. The Louisiana ATJ Commission is a Louisiana Supreme Court created standing committee of the LSBA tasked with ensuring all people have access to equal justice under the law regardless of economic circumstance. The Louisiana Justice for All Grant will be administered through the Louisiana Bar Foundation.

The Louisiana State Bar Association assists its more than 22,000 members in the practice of law. The statewide association, as part of its multi-faceted mission, promotes and maintains access to justice initiatives for the state’s residents, assists the Louisiana Supreme Court in its regulation of the practice of law, upholds the honor of the courts and the profession, and supports programs that increase public understanding of and respect for the law.