



By Alainna R. Mire

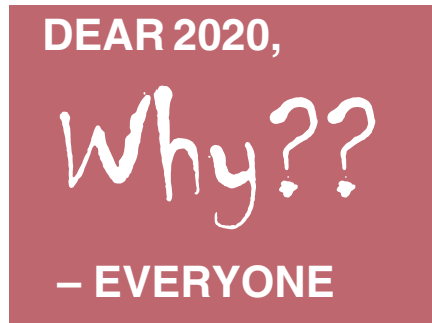
Hurricane Laura and How the LSBA Can Help

“Even a bad day is a luxury” – Libby Christensen (@libbychristensen)

Being from Scott in South Louisiana, I am very familiar with hurricanes. It actually is my specialty if I must say so myself. One of my favorite things to do as a child was to track the path of a hurricane. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I could map the coordinates using latitude and longitude, but to this day I am no good with people giving me driving directions using east and west. I guess that means we can't all be good at everything. Now that I live in Alexandria, I don't think about hurricanes as much. It just isn't as much of a threat here; yet if a hurricane does have the force to impact Central Louisiana as a hurricane, then that means it was a very strong one. That is exactly what happened with Hurricane Laura (“Laura”). August 27, 2020, is a day to remember. Laura's impact on Calcasieu and Cameron parishes is unlike any that area has seen. Laura then proceeded through Alexandria in Rapides Parish.

As attorneys, we are used to relying on our own grit and ingenuity to get us through, but I am urging anyone who could use extra support right now to reach out. The LSBA SOLACE Program is accepting assistance requests for non-monetary needs from those affected by the hurricane. Requests can be for gift cards, furniture, office space, temporary housing, food, and more. Whatever the need, I'm sure one of the 17,000+ SOLACE members can help. In addition, the message board on the LSBA Disaster Response website can be used to post offers of assistance or request assistance from others. The website also provides valuable information on court closures, resources, and legal assistance for those affected by the storm.

The anxiety and strain of facing



rebuilding efforts on top of everything else that 2020 has thrown at us can be incredibly disheartening. If you begin to feel exhausted and overwhelmed, know that you are not alone. The Louisiana Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (JLAP) provides direct and confidential assistance for all mental health issues that members of the legal profession may be encountering in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura. Please reach out.

If you are from a parish that was spared the hurricane's destruction or you are otherwise in a position to assist others, there are plenty of volunteer opportunities available. If you would like to begin volunteering immediately, consider registering as a volunteer with LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org; the website is a virtual legal walk-in clinic where low-income individuals can request brief advice and counsel about a specific civil legal issue from anonymous lawyer volunteers. Pro Bono and legal aid organizations are also in need of volunteers to assist with disaster-related legal services, which often appear days or weeks after the event. Contact information for the pro bono programs across the state can be found on the LSBA's Find Legal Help webpage. If you'd like to offer monetary support for displaced families and individuals experiencing a variety of legal needs, consider donating to the Louisiana Bar Foundation's Hurricane Laura Disaster Fund.

The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season

Disaster Resources

Statewide Resources

- ▶ SOLACE
www.lsba.org/goto/solace
- ▶ LSBA Disaster Reponse website
www.lsba.org/DR
- ▶ JLAP
louisianajlap.com
- ▶ Acadiana Legal Service Corporation
www.la-law.org/home/disaster-recovery-resources
- ▶ LSBA Disaster Planning Handbook
www.lsba.org/goto/disasterhandbook

Volunteer Opportunities

- ▶ Louisiana Free Legal Answers
LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org
- ▶ Pro Bono Organizations
www.lsba.org/public/FindLegalHelp
- ▶ LBF Hurricane Laura Disaster Fund
www.raisingthebar.org/about-us/newsroom/80-lbf-news/549-lbf-establishes-hurricane-laura-disaster-fund

has been one of the most active in recent history and it won't officially be over until November 30. We must remain vigilant and prepared to mitigate the effects of future storms. For general disaster preparedness tips and information, visit www.getagameplan.org, created by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. The LSBA's free e-book, “Disaster Planning: It's Not Just for Hurricanes,” also has practical tips, checklists and resources to help you create a plan for your office in case of an unexpected practice interruption; the e-book can be downloaded at www.lsba.org/goto/disasterhandbook.

Hurricane Laura's devastating impact will be felt for a long time to come. If you need support, there are resources and many people willing to help. If you want to offer support, there are many ways to reach out to those in need. Let's get to work.