

Access to Justice Commission
Standing Committee on Self-Represented Litigants
June 11, 2013 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Minutes

1. Attendance

Members and staff:

Patricia Fain	Yes	Kim Dumon	No
Erin Farris	Yes	Ed Higgins	No
Hon. David Ortley	Yes	Robin McGuire	No
Hon. Michele Snowberger	Yes	Phyllis Smith	No
August Swanson	Yes	Randy Snyder	No
		Janice Doggett	No
		Kate Kuykendall	No

Members of the public in attendance: Chris Manos, Kaitlin Lamb.

2. Public comment on non-agenda items.

None.

3. Minutes from April 23, 2013 meeting

Motion from Judge Ortley to approve minutes, seconded, and passed.

4. Forms subcommittee

On May 10, 2013, the forms subcommittee held a phone conference to discuss their work plan. The subcommittee determined 4 main forms or form sets for immediate focus.

These forms are:

- Answer to dissolution or parenting plan
- Dissolution with kids petition
- Guardianship packet
- Consumer debt materials

Erin posted a first draft of these forms on the central desktop. The subcommittee members are to review the forms and make “comments” within central desktop for possible revisions to these forms.

Form development is a time consuming and never-ending process. Revisions addressing substantive law and revisions addressing formatting or readability issues are often intertwined. It is sometimes difficult to know the best first step.

Also, posted on central desktop are forms the MLSA is requested to be approved by the SRLC that have been in a holding pattern after the Self-Represented Litigant Commission disbanded.

The Committee members expressed a lack of training and knowledge to best utilize central desktop and the revision process.

The subcommittee will finalize the process for form review. The SRLC will then vote to approve this process at our next business meeting.

The subcommittee will come up with a process to keep the judiciary, attorneys, State Bar, and the public informed when forms are revised. Chris Manos suggested some type of written update on the SRLC activities be presented at each school and at the annual bar meeting. August 30th is the deadline to include an update or information packet for the annual meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Erin Farris to distribute the Form Revisions-Round One overview to the forms subcommittee. (This will most likely be posted to central desktop)

ACTION ITEM: Erin Farris to schedule next forms subcommittee meeting. Hopefully, the subcommittee will meet before the end of June.

ACTION ITEM: Form subcommittee to approve form review process at its next meeting.

ACTION ITEM: August Swanson to schedule a training for central desktop for general orientation to the program and to suggest ways to utilize the program to track proposed changes from many members to a single document.

ACTION ITEM: Michele Snowberger will contact the MMA and COLJ Clerk Association to find best email list.

ACTION ITEM: Michele Snowberger will send out an email to the SRLC about the new courts website and how to access the form section.

5. Data Gathering

a. Questionnaire subcommittee

The judicial questionnaire was distributed to all district and court of limited jurisdiction judges today. We have already received approximately 50 responses. (Note: later this was determined to be both partial and fully completed questionnaires)

The Clerk of District Court questionnaire is ready for distribution. Michele Snowberger and Erin Farris will be presenting to the clerks on Tuesday, June 18, 2013. They will discuss the questionnaire to the clerks and gather feedback to make any revisions prior to distribution.

The Clerk of Court of Limited Jurisdiction questionnaire is ready for distribution. We do not have a good list for all COLJ clerks. It was suggested to contact the Montana Magistrates Association and the COLJ clerk association to determine the best contact method.

Patty Fain believes it is likely the best responses will come in almost immediately. We will need to follow-up with the various groups to encourage the greatest level of response. It was suggested that Justice Baker or Chief Justice McGrath to send out a reminder email to the judges.

b. Clerk of District Court Training

On June 18, 2013, Erin Farris and Michele Snowberger will attend the Clerk of District Court training to present and gather information from the clerks.

c. COLJ Judge Training

Michele Snowberger requested and was granted one hour on the 2013 Fall COLJ judges training.

d. COLJ Clerk Training

Michele Snowberger will confirm that the SRLC is presenting at the 2013 Fall COLJ clerk training.

e. District Court Training

ACTION ITEM: David Ortley will request time at the next district court judges training.

6. Scope of Work, Goals, and Objectives

Once we have more data (from questionnaires and attorney feedback) we will be in a better position to assess the full range of options for the SRLC. The work of setting goals and objectives is a difficult task and is made more difficult by a telemeeting.

ACTION ITEM: Michele Snowberger will send out a request for a ½ day meeting in August focused only on visioning for the SRLC. We are hoping that everyone will attend this meeting in person.

7. Report to the Access to Justice Commission

The next AJC meeting will be held on June 26th. The SRLC has 15 minutes for an update on our work. Michele Snowberger will be submitting a written report to the AJC.

The SRLC report will include identifying our members, a statement of our committee philosophy, our form review process and the length of time to create good product, a review of the form subcommittee work and a tally of our questionnaire process. And, request the AJC to give guidance and feedback for our work.

8. Next Meeting Date

We tentatively scheduled our next regular business meeting to Tuesday, July 23, 2013, from 1:00 to 3:00.

ACTION ITEM: members to inform the chair if this date will work for their schedule.

9. Meeting adjourned