

FILED

JUN 27 2016

CLERK SUPREME COURT

**In the Supreme Court of Iowa**

**In the Matter of Establishment of )  
the Iowa Access to Justice )  
Commission )**

**Order**

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The bedrock principle of our court system is that justice should be accessible to all persons. There are, however, longstanding and entrenched barriers to the access to justice for too many Iowans. To safeguard the fundamental right of access to justice requires a concerted, sustained, and strategic effort. To that end, the Iowa Supreme Court, upon recommendation of The Iowa State Bar Association (ISBA), establishes the Iowa Access to Justice Commission.

Iowa courts are seeing an increasing number of self-represented litigants, many of whom have no choice but to proceed without the assistance of counsel. Inability to afford the cost of legal representation and other barriers to access to justice unfairly impact the lives of too many Iowans. Despite the outstanding contributions from legal aid organizations in Iowa and the steadfast volunteer service of thousands of committed Iowa attorneys, Iowa must do more to assure meaningful and informed access to justice for all persons.

In August 2015, the supreme court asked ISBA to evaluate whether an access to justice commission should be established in Iowa, similar to commissions formed in 39 other states and the District of Columbia. The bar association formed a study group that ultimately recommended that the ISBA Board of Governors adopt a resolution supporting establishment of an access to justice commission in Iowa. The board of governors has unanimously approved the study group resolution. The Iowa Supreme Court thanks the ISBA Board of Governors and the ISBA study group for its thoughtful and

thorough approach to this crucial issue.

In the coming months the Iowa Supreme Court will work with the ISBA, Iowa Legal Aid, other legal aid organizations, and various stakeholder groups across Iowa to determine the structure and makeup of an access to justice commission that will best serve Iowans who may encounter barriers to or difficulties with fully accessing the Iowa justice system.

The supreme court appoints Iowa Supreme Court Justice Brent R. Appel as chair of the Iowa Access to Justice Commission.

Dated this 27th day of June, 2016.

The Supreme Court of Iowa

By Mark S. Cady  
Mark S. Cady, Chief Justice