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CLERK SUPREME COURT

2022 Commission Report

IOWA **ACCESS** TO **JUSTICE**



**The Iowa Access to Justice
Commission serves Iowans
by promoting and advancing
innovative strategies
for ensuring equal access
to justice.**

Members of the Commission

Justice Brent Appel, Chair, Ackworth
Susan Barta, Sioux City
Marvin DeJear, Des Moines
Kristin Esche, Johnston
Anthony Farrell, Des Moines
Brian Farrell, Toddville
Katie Hall, Ames
Henry Hamilton, West Des Moines
Kim Hess, Clinton
Kristi Holzer, Norwalk
Leslie Kilgannon, Davenport
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Daniel Mart, Polk City
Luana Nelson-Brown, Johnston
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Chantelle Smith, Des Moines
Megan Srinivas, Des Moines
Jennifer Tibbets, Marion
Elizabeth Van Arkel, Des Moines
Michael Wells, Hamburg
Shelley Witcher, Vice-Chair, Council Bluffs

*The **mission** of the Iowa Access to Justice Commission is to find solutions that will best serve Iowans who may encounter barriers to or difficulties with fully accessing Iowa's civil justice system.*

“Access to justice means having a fair chance to be heard in a court or other forum that can help find a solution to the problem you face, regardless of who you are, where you live, or how much money you have. Access to justice means that, at a minimum, a person should be able to learn about her rights and then give effective voice to them in a neutral and nondiscriminatory, formal or informal, process that determines the facts, applies the fair rule of law, reaches a resolution, and enforces the result.”*



*From the National Center for Access to Justice, the “Justice Index,” <https://ncaj.org/state-rankings/2021/justice-index/about-justice-index>.

Purpose and Values



Purpose Statement

The Iowa Access to Justice Commission serves Iowans by promoting and advancing innovative strategies for ensuring equal access to justice.

“Elevator Speech”

The foundation of democracy is a fair system for resolving legal issues that is accessible to everyone. The Iowa Access to Justice Commission works to build awareness of the civil legal system and to identify barriers Iowans often face when accessing and navigating our courts. Barriers include financial, technological, and cultural obstacles. The Commission works to find ways to break through those barriers.

Commission Values Statement

Change agent

We motivate change, acting with vision and boldness to break down barriers that prevent access to the civil justice system.

Education

We identify barriers and promote solutions impacting access.

Collaboration

We respect all viewpoints and value the diverse perspectives and experiences of our commission members, partners, and stakeholders, recognizing that all persons should have a voice and deserve to be heard.

Equality of access

We promote equal access to civil justice for all.

Leadership

We act as the voice of equal access to civil justice for all, and hold ourselves accountable by measuring progress through established benchmarks.

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Introduction

The 2022 Iowa Access to Justice Commission Report highlights the Iowa Access to Justice Commission’s (Commission) sixth year of work towards improving the civil justice climate in the State of Iowa.

The Iowa Supreme Court established the Commission in 2016 to help address the unmet civil legal needs of Iowans. In the order establishing the Commission, former Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark Cady wrote:

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

Iowa must do more to assure meaningful and informed access to justice for all persons.

assistance of counsel. . . . Iowa must do more to assure meaningful and informed access to justice for all persons.

Chief Justice Cady’s words ring true this day as clearly as they did six years ago.

From when the Commission submitted its last report to the Iowa Supreme Court in August 2021, Iowans and the Iowa Judicial Branch together have reached a “new normal” of maintaining court services in safe and effective ways following the disruptions the Covid-19 pandemic wrought. In

meeting the challenge of providing timely delivery of justice under unprecedented circumstances, the judicial branch has adopted numerous practices and utilized innovative technologies that proved effective during the height of the pandemic. Many challenges remain, however, in providing comprehensive access to justice for all.

The Justice Gap

The Legal Services Corporation, in its 2022 report, *The Justice Gap: The Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans*, states that 74% of low-income households experienced at least one civil legal problem in the past year, and for those with problems that substantially impact their lives, 92% of

Introduction



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low-income Americans go without any or enough legal help. But we know that in the United States barriers to justice do not solely result from a person's low income. An estimated 78% of Americans with higher incomes go without any or enough legal help for problems with substantial impact on their lives.

World Justice Project

The access to justice problem is not unique to Iowa or the United States. The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index (WJP) measures the accessibility and affordability of civil justice systems for ordinary people in 139 countries. The overall civil justice ranking for the United States is number 27. That ranking is just behind Portugal (26th), Uruguay (25th), and Latvia (24th). Our neighbor to the north, Canada, ranks 12th. Gauging whether people are able to access and afford civil justice, however, the WJP found the United States ranked an abysmal 126th out of 139 countries. Measuring whether civil justice in the United States is free of discrimination, the WJP ranked the United States a lowly 122nd. Another WJP measurement considered the accessibility, impartiality, and effectiveness of the country's alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and ranked the United States number 39.

The overall score of the United States dropped 2.9%, for a fourth straight year of decline.

Iowa Access to Justice Commission members

Twenty-seven Iowans, whom the chief justice has appointed, currently serve as members of the Commission. Iowa Supreme Court Justice Brent Appel served as chair of the Commission until his retirement on July 13, 2022, and attorney Shelley Witcher serves as vice-chair of the Commission. Henry Hamilton served as liaison to the ISBA as the organization's president-elect. The Commission continues to work closely with the ISBA, which provides invaluable support to the Commission with financial assistance and conference facilities for Commission meetings. Timothy Eckley, Assistant Counsel to the Chief Justice, serves as secretary to the Commission. ⚖️

Commission Meetings

The Commission held its regular quarterly meetings featuring educational programs, work group breakout sessions, and Commission-wide discussions.

September 8, 2021 special orientation session

Commission Chair Justice Brent Appel hosted a special virtual orientation session primarily for new Commission members but of interest to all members. Justice Appel provided a history of the Commission and insightful comments on the contours of access to justice challenges and the importance of meeting those challenges.

First quarterly meeting

The Commission held its first 2021–2022 quarterly meeting remotely on September 24, 2021, via GoToMeeting. The meeting opened with Chief Justice Christensen addressing the Commission. In addition to welcoming 11 Iowans as new members of the Commission, the chief justice emphasized the importance of the Commission in furthering access to justice for all Iowans.

The first educational component of this meeting, “Providing legal services in a Covid world,” included Iowa Legal Aid presentations on the national perspective on Covid-specific housing issues, ILA’s Eviction Help Desk, and the Covid-19 Legal Advice Hotline. The second component included an update on the People’s Law Library project.

The Commission has scheduled its quarterly meetings for the 2022–2023 year on the following dates:

- **Friday, September 23, 2022, in person at the Judicial Branch Building**
- **Friday, December 2, 2022, via remote technology**
- **Friday, March 3, 2023, via remote technology**
- **Friday, June 2, 2023, in person at the ISBA headquarters**

The last session of the meeting included updates and plans for the coming year of the Commission’s work groups: Community Outreach, Corporate Involvement, Libraries, Limited Licensure, and Rural Access.

Commission members discussed the makeup of the work groups and determined no changes were needed at that time.

Commission Meetings



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Second quarterly meeting

The Commission held its second meeting December 3, 2021, via the Zoom video conferencing platform. Justice Appel welcomed the meeting to order. Commission Vice-Chair, Shelley Whitcher, provided a recap of the successful 2021 Iowa Access to Justice Summit. The Commission viewed a series of “Tiny Chat” videos from the National Center of State Courts, including “Navigators,” “Street Outreach Court,” “Salt Lake City Kayak Court,” and “Making Friends—A2J Commissions.” The informative and thought-provoking Tiny Chat videos contributed to the Commission forming two additional work groups: Community Courts and Court Navigators. University of Iowa College of Law students presented research conducted on behalf of the Commission on limited licensure efforts in other states and general information on veterans’ access in Iowa.

Third quarterly meeting. The next Commission meeting was March 4, 2022, again via the Zoom video conferencing platform. The meeting included a report from Iowa State Court Administrator Bob Gast. The Commission also viewed additional Tiny Chat videos: “Sea Captains and Kiosks,” “Justice for All,” “Tiny Chats Goes to the Movies,” and “Social Workers and Self Help.” The Commission received an update from the People’s Law Library project and updates from each Commission work group.

Fourth quarterly meeting

The June 3, 2022 Commission meeting was the first in-person meeting of the Commission since December 6, 2019.

The meeting occurred at the ISBA headquarters. The meeting included reports from the Iowa Volunteer Lawyers Project, the ISBA, and Iowa Legal Aid. A distinguished panel of access to justice commission chairs presented virtually and included: Justice Lynne Boomgaarden, Chair of the Wyoming Access to Justice Commission; Michael Figgins, Chair of the Oklahoma Access to Justice Commission; and Judge William Ossmann, Chair of the Kansas Access to Justice Commission.

The Commission work groups also presented their 2021–2022 reports. Shelley Whitcher presented the Community Outreach Work Group report. Bruce Walker presented the Limited Licensure Work Group report. Kristin Esche presented the Corporate Involvement Work Group report. Mandy Easter and Carissa Vogel presented the Libraries Work Group report. Judge Kevin McKeever presented the Veterans Work Group report. Brian Farrell presented the Rural Access Work Group report. Kim Hess presented the Court Navigators Work Group report. Shelley Whitcher presented the Community Courts Work Group report.

The Commission approved all work group reports, which are discussed in more detail in these pages. ⚖️

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee oversees the Commission's general operation, progress, and long-term goals. The Executive Committee comprises no less than five and no more than seven members, including the chair and vice-chair of the Commission. The Committee also includes the ISBA liaison to the Commission. Other executive work group members, including current and past members of the Commission, must be familiar with the Commission's structure, history, and activities. The Executive Committee has been holding regular monthly meetings. ⚖️

Executive Committee members

Justice Brent Appel, Commission Chair
Brian Farrell
Henry Hamilton
Carol Phillips
Megan Srinivas
Shelley Witcher, Commission Vice-Chair

Community Courts

I. Community Courts Overview

The Community Courts Work Group was formed after the December 2021 Commission meeting highlighted the work of a Salt Lake City program that brings the court system and service providers into the community to reach unhoused community members along a river. Community courts are neighborhood-focused court programs that combine the power of the community and the justice system to address local problems. They bring the judicial system to the people, instead of the people making their way to the courthouse. These programs often revolve around criminal court, providing alternative sanctions and other community-based services to those charged with misdemeanors. Determining whether similar civil courts are needed in Iowa is the first objective of the work group.

The Community Court Work Group includes members of the judiciary, court administration, private and legal aid attorneys, and representatives of several community and state programs. This new work group has met approximately monthly since January 2022.

The Community Courts Work Group has made significant progress but is still in a research and deliberation phase. Work group meetings have included brainstorming ideas, sharing research and experience, and a presentation from Iowa Legal Aid’s Employment Barriers and Collateral Consequences Program.

The work group has focused on a few types of community programs, all of which bring attorneys, social workers, and community providers together to holistically serve individual Iowans.

The programs include:

- A clinic-style program focused on one area of law, such as expungement and collateral consequences or pro se divorce and custody. This program would be at a community location, such as a library or Iowa Workforce Development office.
- A school-based program aimed at reducing truancy and family issues for teens and youth. Misdemeanor acts or ordinance violations could be heard at the school, while community services provide support to the families.
- A program based on a specific group of marginalized residents, such as ex-offenders or unhoused individuals.

II. Looking Forward

Objective: *Evaluate the need and feasibility of a community courts program in Iowa*

The Community Courts Work Group will continue to research and discuss the need for community courts in Iowa into the 2022–2023 session of the Commission. The group is mindful of limited judicial branch resources and recognizes the challenge of efficient use of resources for these types of specialty courts. The work group has discussed other approaches, such as dedicated dockets for specialty clinics, which often process cases more efficiently

Community Courts

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while continuing to be valuable to community members. The group will investigate these alternative approaches and ensure that any recommendation to the judiciary is realistic and attainable.

The work group also recognizes that community courts and clinics can be excellent avenues for corporate and private attorneys to get involved. Such efforts often require little specialized legal training and minimal oversight for attorneys providing services to individuals accessing the program. Any recommendation will be sure to include a clear path for attorney involvement.

During 2022–2023, the work group’s goal is to report to the judiciary whether civil community courts are needed in Iowa and, if so, recommend potential pilot programs. ⚖️

The work group also recognizes that community courts and clinics can be excellent avenues for corporate and private attorney involvement

Work group members

Susan Barta
Mandy Easter
Kristin Esche
Robert Gast
Leslie Kilgannon
Kevin McKeever
Dan Mart
Shelley Witcher, chair

I. Community Outreach Overview

The Community Outreach Work Group works to promote access to justice as an Iowa value. Communication is a key element of the work group's purpose and values. The pandemic made the dissemination of information more challenging and at the same time opened up many new and more accessible avenues of communication. As such, the work group shifted its focus away from a traditional communications plan to a method of concentrating the dissemination of information in a single, online platform providing ability to reach a statewide audience with little to no economic barriers. Recognizing that community outreach involves challenges of reaching those with the most need, the work group believes this new view and method of communication will allow the Commission to better reach all who are in need.

The work group realized that there are many organizations that have already developed and are offering significant resources. The work group determined that it should not focus on creation of more resources, but on greater awareness and support of existing legal access options throughout the state. The work group recommends that the Commission continue to research available resources and determine the best support and use of those resources to help individuals understand their legal rights and identify options for assistance.

Along these lines, the Community Outreach Work Group has continued to explore available legal services resources, technological tools, and potential collaborative efforts to promote education and awareness of access to justice issues. In its monthly meetings, the work group focused its attention mainly on organizing and holding a broad-based education summit to help service providers learn about existing legal options for those they serve.

II. Update from the 2021 Commission Report

On November 4, 2021, the Commission held the 2021 Iowa Access to Justice Summit (Summit), the second summit of its kind. Organized primarily by the Community Outreach and Libraries Work Groups, the Summit was an all-day, virtual event aimed at educating service providers regarding available legal and social resources and providing insight into navigating the legal system. Over 300 people registered for the event, representing nearly 40 agencies and public libraries from across the state, and many sessions had over 100 people in attendance. The Summit was held virtually in order to reach diverse groups of individuals throughout the state resulting in nominal expense to the Commission. Promotion of the Summit was focused on service providers who would likely work with those individuals seeking legal access, instead of focusing on the specific issues faced by individuals themselves. The Summit brought

Community Outreach



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together public service organizations, academics, and advocates and allowed them to learn more about available resources in Iowa so they can better serve their constituents.

Many organizations presented at the Summit, including the Iowa Judicial Branch, the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa, the Attorney General's Office, the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, the Iowa Office of Ombudsman, Iowa Legal Aid, Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice, the State Library of Iowa, and the Pottawattamie County Attorney's Office. Speakers covered a wide-range of topics, including how to use interactive court forms, navigating domestic violence cases, social determinants of health, collateral civil consequences for criminal matters, emerging housing issues, and how to access available agency resources.

Summit feedback was overwhelmingly positive. All responding attendees rated the Summit as good, very good, or excellent, and reported they were extremely likely to attend this event again and recommend it to friends and colleagues.

III. Looking Forward

Objective one: 2022 Iowa Access to Justice Summit

Given the positive feedback from the Summit attendees and Commission members, the Community Outreach Work Group intends to hold a 2022 Iowa Access to Justice Summit in the

fall of 2022. The work group will collaborate with other Commission work groups to plan, implement, and promote the Summit.

The 2022 Summit will highlight legal and social resources, expand the knowledge and reach of community organizations and service providers, and support the work of those organizations and service providers. Using lessons learned from the pandemic, the work group proposes that the Summit again be offered virtually in order to reach a wider audience and make it easier and more cost effective for providers to attend the

The 2022 Summit will highlight legal and social resources, expand the knowledge and reach of community organizations and service providers, and support the work of those organizations and service providers.

Summit. The targeted audience for the Summit will again be community organizations and service providers. By targeting these groups, the work group expects to expand the reach of the Commission's work and utilize existing community resources.

Objective two: Communications strategies

Over the past years, the work group has developed a plan to enhance communication with the community. The pandemic brought new challenges and new opportunities that forced the work group, like

Community Outreach

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everyone else, to reconsider how it communicates. In 2022–2023, the work group will continue to grow and develop this plan.

In these efforts, the work group collaborated with the Libraries Work Group and discussed communication issues, particularly the issue of a general lack of knowledge of existing legal resources. The work groups discussed that creation of more legal resources—which has been noted in the past—may not be needed as many resources already exist. The issue, the work groups concluded, is connecting people to existing resources. The work groups agreed that organizing and promoting existing legal access options—a clearinghouse or directory of the information—would improve access.

The State Library of Iowa is funding and developing the “People’s Law Library of Iowa.” While this website is not a Commission project, the work group should strive to advise the project to ensure the website promotes greater access to legal resources. ⚖️

Work group members

Anthony Allen
Marvin DeJear, co-chair
Kristie Fortmann-Doser
Glennay Jundt
Leslie Kilgannon
Luana Nelson-Brown
Chantelle Smith
Jennifer Tibbetts
Shelley Witcher, co-chair

I. Corporate Involvement Overview

The Corporate Involvement Work Group comprises members of the corporate legal community, pro bono legal community, and business community. The work group maintains three current approaches:

- *Educate* Iowa corporate counsel, business leaders, and industry groups on access to justice issues and how and why to provide access to justice solutions in Iowa.
- *Engage* business lawyers in pro bono and other access to justice initiatives and track engagement metrics.
- *Advocate* for access to justice by creating awareness and prioritization among legislative, judicial, nonprofit, and industry groups regarding resources for access to justice.

II. Update from the 2021 Commission Report

The pandemic continued to be an obstacle to the work group's outreach efforts last year as most companies worked remotely, with limited travel and prohibited in-person meetings. This year's objective will be to revitalize the work group's efforts. The materials developed in previous years will support the work group's overall objectives and provide more follow-up potential.

As presentations were not held again last year due to the pandemic, the work group set a goal for 2022 of identifying an opportunity that would permit education, engagement, and advocacy in a setting that provides for discrete

pro bono opportunities for in-house counsel.

III. Looking Forward

The overall goals of further education, engagement, and advocacy remain the work group's focus.

Objective one: *Leverage community courts concepts*


As the work group researched and brainstormed opportunities, it began tracking efforts of the Commission's Community Courts Work Group. Community courts are neighborhood-focused court programs that combine the power of the community and the justice system to address local problems. They bring the judicial system to the people, instead of the people to the courthouse. Because the Community Courts Work Group is evaluating the functionality of a few types of community programs, all of which bring attorneys, social workers, and community providers together to holistically serve individuals, the Corporate Involvement Work Group is exploring partnering with the Community Courts Work Group in this effort. Potential options for community courts would be well suited to provide pro bono opportunities for in-house attorneys.

Objective two: *Engage corporate law departments*

The work group will continue to solicit new corporate law department participants to provide support to statewide crises or other events driving increased need for legal services. The

Corporate Involvement

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work group anticipates partnering with the Iowa Association of Corporate Counsel to identify in-house legal teams able to support those efforts. 

Work group members

Steven Bradford
Kristin Esche, co-chair
Anthony Farrell
Kristi Holzer
Brynne Howard
Angela Reier, co-chair
Kevin Patrick
Travis Sheets

The work group will continue to solicit new corporate law department participants to provide support to statewide crises or other events driving increased need for legal

I. Court Navigators Overview

The Court Navigators Work Group was formed on December 3, 2021, after the Commission viewed a “Tiny Chat” video from the National Center for State Courts titled “Navigators.” The Commission charged the work group to explore the potential for a court navigator program in Iowa to assist self-represented litigants with court related matters.

A relatively new concept in Iowa, many states throughout the nation are utilizing court navigators. Court navigator programs help overcome many barriers to justice experienced by self-represented litigants. Clerk’s office staff also benefit from court navigators relieving them of time-consuming tasks assisting self-represented litigants.

Court navigators are typically non-attorneys trained to answer questions and provide legal information to guide self-represented litigants through the judicial process. Nonattorney navigators can provide legal information to self-represented litigants; explain court rules and procedure; refer parties to court forms, manuals, and guides; offer information on how to fill out forms; provide technology support; connect with language assistance; give referrals for additional help; and provide information on a litigant’s case—for example, providing a printed copy of the chronological case summary and the date of the next hearing.

Nonattorney court navigators do not provide legal advice.

The work group has met four times. The work group reviewed navigator programs throughout the country via the Justice Lab at Georgetown Law Center’s 2019 report Mary McClymont authored, “Nonlawyer Navigators in State Courts: An Emerging Consensus.” Thereafter, with the assistance of law students from the University of Iowa College of Law, the work group conducted a survey of Iowa clerks of court to identify areas of law where self-represented litigants are most in need of assistance. Most recently, the work group held a Zoom session with Ms. McClymont to assist with identification of next steps for this effort.

II. Looking Forward

Objective: *Development of a court navigator pilot program in Iowa*

Based on the work group’s research and feedback from the Iowa clerks of court, the work group has determined that development of a court navigator pilot program in Iowa should be pursued. The work group recommends appointment of a supreme court task force or committee to formalize parameters of a court navigator pilot program.

The work group has also determined that the likelihood of a court navigator pilot program’s success will be enhanced if there is buy-in from key leaders, including the Iowa Supreme

Court Navigators

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Court, local judges and court staff, bar associations, Iowa Legal Aid, law schools and other college programs, local volunteer organizations, and other resources yet to be identified.

Location

The pilot program should be initiated in a limited number of counties to test viability and success on a smaller scale before implementation of a program statewide. The work group recommends mid-sized counties initially because if the pilot program is successful in a mid-sized county, it could be more easily scaled-up to accommodate the needs of larger counties, where there are more resources already available, or down to meet the needs of smaller counties where there may be fewer resources. Through its survey, the work group has already identified a number of clerks of court throughout the state who are willing to host a pilot program in their counties.

Training court navigators

The work group understands that ideally the cost of a court navigator program would be nominal. Therefore, the work group suggests that the task force or committee explore volunteer resources for navigators. The work group has preliminarily identified the following volunteer resources that the task force or committee should explore:

- Law schools
- Undergraduate colleges
- Retired attorneys

- Volunteer programs such as Retired Senior Volunteers, civic organizations, or a host of others depending on availability in each particular community.

It is reasonable to expect that there will be some cost to the judicial branch related to training, particularly in terms of court staff time. Some clerks and court staff

have indicated that they are interested in assisting with training court navigators as the program gets started.

As the program develops, it is conceivable that more centralized

training involving less staff would be possible, either in person or via remote technology. The People’s Law Library of Iowa, which is anticipated to go live in September 2022, will be an excellent resource for navigators and it is anticipated it will be providing free training on the website.

The work group recommends that training initially be focused on the areas of family law, evictions, small claims, and mental health and substance abuse commitments, as clerks have identified these as areas in which self-represented litigants most

The pilot program should be initiated in a limited number of counties to test the viability and success of court navigators

Court Navigators

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often need assistance that nonattorneys can provide. Coincidentally, Court Navigator Work Group members who also serve on the Libraries Work Group recently learned that data-based analytics utilized by the University of Iowa College of Law Library reveal that the three areas of law that generate the most questions from the public are family law, landlord-tenant law, and consumer debt, and that these are the topics that the People’s Law Library of Iowa will cover when it launches this fall.


Among other things, training should include familiarization with:

- Local courthouse offices and staff
- Self-represented litigant forms available on www.iowacourts.gov
- Court proceedings and processes
- How to use the e-filing system
- People’s Law Library of Iowa
- Outside resources available to litigants, such as Iowa Legal Aid, the Iowa Department of Human Services, local crisis center counselors, etc.

Measuring success of the pilot program

The work group further recommends development of a survey for self-represented litigants to complete throughout the year as they receive assistance to assess their perception of the program. A survey for navigators and clerks of court should be developed to complete after a specified period of time to assess their thoughts regarding the effectiveness of the program,

whether additional training should be considered, whether the program should be expanded, and whether modifications should be made.

Survey data could inform consideration of wider implementation of the program. Survey data could also illuminate long-term program oversight elements. 

Work group members

Anthony Farrell
 Brian Farrell
 Kim Hess, co-chair
 Brynne Howard
 Leslie Kilgannon
 Kevin McKeever
 Daniel Mart
 Carol Phillips
 Dustria Relph, co-chair
 Virginia Sipes

I. Libraries Overview

Recognizing the unique and ubiquitous role public libraries occupy across the State of Iowa, the Commission established the Libraries Work Group during the fall of 2019. Iowa boasts 543 public libraries from some of its smallest towns to its biggest cities. For many persons, libraries offer their only access to internet services. Many Iowans, especially those who encounter access to justice barriers, rely on information resources that libraries provide.

As the need of people without legal representation increases, disadvantaged communities across the state have relied on libraries for legal and referral information. As such, Iowa's libraries are natural partners of the civil legal justice community.

The State Library of Iowa (State Library), with important assistance from the Commission's Libraries Work Group, is spearheading development and implementation of the groundbreaking People's Law Library of Iowa.

II. Update from the 2021 Commission Report

The Libraries Work Group's first objective last year was to assist in finding the funding to begin building the People's Law Library of Iowa website. In July 2021, the website project became a reality when the State Library devoted \$100,000 of American Rescue Plan Act grant funding to contract with the University of Iowa

College of Law Library and Iowa State University to design, build, and launch the People's Law Library of Iowa on the State Library's brand-new, state-of-the-art website with a launch date goal of September 30, 2022.

The State Library website is already compatible with mobile devices and equipped with a screen reader for visually-impaired users. The People's Law Library is assigned a unique web address so that users will be able to access it directly. To begin, the site will cover three areas: family law, consumer law, and landlord-tenant law. The entire site will be translated into several languages in the summer of 2022. The University of Iowa College of Law librarians, professional librarians with law degrees, have been compiling and coordinating existing content from providers around the state, as well as composing original content, to make the site understandable at the sixth-grade reading level.

The work group's second objective last year was to assist with the design of printed resources to advertise and promote the People's Law Library of Iowa. The State Library is in the process of designing and branding business cards bearing the People's Law Library of Iowa web address, a QR code, and the State Law Library's telephone number, in English on one side and in Spanish on the other side, as well as bookmarks with the same information. There will also be a template for a small sign that can be

Libraries

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printed, laminated, and hung wherever needed.

The work group’s third objective last year was to hold limited-scope virtual legal advice clinics in a few select public libraries around the state. Because of this year’s lingering COVID protocols, a sudden and dramatic increase in challenges to content at public libraries, as well as city budget challenges threatening economic stability of libraries, this project was postponed until libraries return to a more normal operating status.

The work group also worked with several other Commission work groups, presenting opportunities in the coming year for joint project efforts, shared resources, and cross-pollination of ideas.

III. Looking Forward

Objective one: *Support the September launch of the People’s Law Library of Iowa website and monitor the site’s continued growth and expansion*

Launch of the People’s Law Library of Iowa will advance access to justice by making widely available a reliable source of information to help people better understand their legal problems, options, and possible remedies. The site will deliver a single source of information and guidance for unrepresented persons. The target

audience, however, is all Iowans who need legal information, but especially low- and moderate-income residents.

The work group would help the State

The People’s Law Library of Iowa will advance access to justice by making widely available a reliable source of information to help people better understand their legal problems, options, and possible remedies.

Library monitor implementation of the website, assist with detection and correction of any problems that may arise, and advise the State Library and the University of Iowa College of Law Library when asked for input

regarding the website’s development. The work group can act as a liaison between the website’s designers and its partners—the Iowa Judicial Branch, the ISBA, Iowa Legal Aid, and others.

The timeframe is ongoing during the entire year. Success will be measured by the increasing number of “hits” on the site and the quantity and quality of positive comments from our partners and the public. The State Library will provide the resources and cover the anticipated costs, although the work group is interested in exploring additional outside grants to fund enhancements to the site.

Objective two: *Advise the State and University of Iowa College of Law libraries on promotion of the People’s Law Library of Iowa website*

This initiative provides reminders of how to access authoritative plain-

Libraries

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language legal information quickly and conveniently at any time, which removes many barriers to justice for low- and moderate-income people with legal problems. It targets all Iowans who may need to use the legal information and resources on the website. The strategy involves researching successful promotional campaigns in other states and furnishing input on the design and branding of the business cards, bookmarks, signs, and other promotional materials the State Library will print and distribute to public offices, county courthouses, and the 543 public libraries in the state. The website will have a page of digital templates so that entities wishing to print more of their own can simply download them. The cards and bookmarks can also be distributed at key conferences, such as the Iowa School Counselor's Association's annual meeting. Distributing promotional materials would be an ongoing effort throughout the year.

The Libraries Work Group recommends that the Iowa Judicial Branch join the State Library, the University of Iowa College of Law, the ISBA, and other stakeholders in issuing joint news releases throughout the year announcing the launch and expansion of the People's Law Library of Iowa website. Such support, for example, by providing authoritative quotes that lend credibility to the site, will increase the public's confidence in its reliability and

encourage its use. The work group further recommends that the supreme court approve use of the judicial branch logo and name along with other partners on website promotional materials.

Promotional success would be measured by the number of hits on the digital templates as well as the quantity and quality of positive comments from our partners and the public. The resources will come from the State Library, which will also cover the costs.

Objective three: Plan and promote a pilot project of limited-scope virtual legal advice clinics in selected public libraries around the state

Legal aid and pro bono resources are perpetually exhausted. To meet the needs of those without access to attorneys, virtual legal advice clinics would advance access to justice by providing much-needed assistance to Iowans who have legal questions or problems, especially people in counties in which there are no or very few private attorneys. The target audience is adult Iowans, especially those who are hesitant to engage legal representation because of the perceived high cost or because of the scarcity of attorneys in parts of the state. The clinics will be open to all who are interested; services will not be restricted to low-income participants.

The virtual legal clinic strategy is to coordinate volunteer attorneys with libraries chosen to carry out this pilot

Libraries

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project. Volunteer attorneys would be recruited to provide free 15- to 20-minute one-on-one limited-scope virtual advice sessions to Iowans who preregister for clinics public libraries host. Training, guidance, promotional materials, instructions, policies, procedures, intake waivers, and other resources for libraries, volunteer attorneys, and participants will be developed in conjunction with the State Library, the ISBA, Iowa Legal Aid, the Polk County Bar Association, and the Polk County Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project. An aggressive timeframe would complete the planning phase in the fall and conduct the clinics in the spring of 2023. Detailed statistics will be collected and analyzed. Success will be measured by the quantity and quality of positive feedback received from all parties involved, as well as the levels of participation. The State Library, the ISBA, Iowa Legal Aid, the Polk County Bar Association, the Polk County Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project, and individual host libraries would provide necessary resources and bear the costs associated with this pilot project, including malpractice insurance for participating volunteer attorneys. ⚖️

Work group members

Mandy Easter, Co-Chair
Kim Hess
Dan Mart, Co-Chair
Dustria Relph
Virginia Sipes
Carrie Slagle

Limited Licensure

I. Limited Licensure

Overview

There is a sense among some legal service providers, stakeholders, and observers of legal processes that alternative forms of providing legal services will continue to be explored and expand across the country. Several states have been experimenting with forms of providing legal services different from the traditional law firm structure.

The Commission formed the Limited Licensure Work Group in the fall of 2020. The first work group task was to survey states that have adopted limited licensure status to determine what has been done in the past and what has worked or not worked for those states.

II. Update from the 2021

Commission Report

For two years the work group has been studying how limited licensure of nonlawyers and other changes to legal practice regulation might enhance access to justice in Iowa. The work group has examined the experiences of Arizona, Minnesota, Utah, Washington, and the UK, consulted with leaders in

There is a sense among some legal service providers, stakeholders, and observers of legal processes that alternative forms of providing legal services will continue to be explored and expand across the country.

those states that have implemented regulatory changes, reviewed proposals and literature in the area, and attempted to determine existing needs and forms of delivery of legal services in Iowa. The work group’s conclusions and recommendations have been further aided by pro bono research conducted by students at the University of Iowa College of Law through its Citizen Lawyer Program. The students prepared three memoranda, which included a 2020 survey of limited licensure developments nationwide, a 2021 update on more recent developments in the limited licensure arena, and a 2022 mapping of Iowa Court Rules that may be potentially involved in limited licensure.

III. Looking Forward

Objective: *Development of a limited licensure pilot program in Iowa*

The work group has concluded that “next steps” should be taken toward development of a limited license pilot program in Iowa. The work group, however, is not prepared at this time to propose specifics regarding scope or structure of such a program given the limits of its mandate and membership. Therefore, the work group recommends the Iowa Supreme Court take steps to

Limited Licensure

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convene stakeholders tasked with drafting a proposal for a limited licensure pilot program of substantive, geographic, and temporal scope by a specific date for the court to review and consider for future implementation. The court's involvement in engaging stakeholders, providing a charge to the group, and setting a clear timeframe would facilitate a successful pilot program effort.

The work group recommends that the court establish a task force that includes members of the work group and additional stakeholders to participate in drafting a proposal using the existing work group as a nucleus. The work group believes that the supreme court's imprimatur will best promote a focused, productive discussion as opposed to the work group or the Commission extending invitations itself. In addition to members of the work group, participants might include representatives from Iowa Legal Aid, the ISBA, an Iowa paralegal instruction program, the Iowa Paralegal Association, the state's law schools, district court judges and magistrates, clerk of court staff, and members of the general public.

The work group recommends that the court charge this new task force to draft a proposal for a pilot program to allow limited licensure of nonlawyers to handle specific matters. The work group

recommends that the proposal address the following:

- Geographic scope. For example, the work group sees benefits of a pilot in one larger and one more rural county in the same judicial district.
- Program duration. For example, an initial pilot of one to two years with periodic review and a thorough assessment at the end of the period.
- Supervision. For example, determining whether the program will require attorney supervision and, if so, what liability could attach.
- Scope of practice. For example, most states limit practice areas, and in Iowa, small claims, FED, landlord-tenant, and unemployment, might be good areas for a pilot.
- Necessary Iowa Court Rules changes.
- Regulatory structure. For example, looking at other states and existing Iowa structures, determining which entity should regulate the proposed program.
- Funding. For example, exploring potential grant sources to support a pilot program, such as Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts, the ISBA, private foundations, and industries.

Limited Licensure

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The court should, of course, provide any additional direction or parameters on these points as it sees fit. The work group recommends that the court's charge include a reasonable deadline for submission of the proposal to ensure timely progress.

The new task force should be encouraged to utilize resources and engage with experts through entities such as the National Center for State Courts and the Institute for the Advancement of the American legal System's new Allied Legal Professionals initiative. Similarly, the work group has been in close contact with leaders in Minnesota as their pilot project continues.

The work group emphasizes that it is not suggesting the court commit to the eventual adoption of any program, but it does recommend that the court facilitate development of a concrete proposal that will inform all stakeholders in the near future. ⚖️

Work group members

Bill Boyd
Brian Farrell
Kyle Fry
Bob Oberbillig
Carol Phillips, co-chair
Anjie Shutts
Bruce Walker, co-chair

Rural Access

I. Rural Access Overview

The Rural Access Work Group met quarterly via Zoom and communicated by email. Work group members conducted research, shared developments from Iowa and other jurisdictions, and engaged in conversations with various stakeholders, including the ISBA, the Iowa Judicial Branch, law schools, the National Center for State Courts, academic researchers, and community partners.

II. Update from the 2021 Commission Report

In 2021, the work group identified five objectives, briefly updated as follows:

Innovative delivery of legal advice and representation by private attorneys. Work group members have continued exploring aspects of rural access to justice with practitioners, professional associations, and law schools. The work group is encouraged by continued growth of alternative business models such as limited-scope representation, sliding-scale representation, and the use of technology to increase rural access. The work group has been in communication with the Commission's Limited Licensure Work Group and supports further exploration of limited licensure, particularly given the potential positive impact it could have in underserved rural and other areas.

Potential new programs to provide pro bono advice and representation. The

work group continues to monitor and discuss potential rural initiatives such as a mobile clinic and partnerships with rural health clinics. Although progress on these initiatives remains limited due to the pandemic, the work group has observed that the pandemic has resulted in widespread availability of remote pro bono legal information and advice.

Educate the rural public on availability of legal information, services, and dispute resolution. The work group is pleased to see progress on the online People's Law Library of Iowa—a promising expansion of rural access. Last summer law student volunteers updated a compilation of legal resources.

Enhance access to judicial processes in rural areas. In the summer of 2021, the work group reviewed the report of the Judicial Branch's Lessons Learned Task Force and explored the possibility of administering an access to justice focused survey in collaboration with the National Center for State Courts. The work group chair will be attending a workshop on Covid-19 and virtual courts at the University of Illinois in late May. The work group encourages continued progress on judicial branch development of interactive court forms. The work group has also been communicating with the Navigator Work Group and supports the implementation of a court navigator pilot program.

Rural Access

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Support and incentivize rural practice. The work group discussed raising the idea of a rural practice incentive program with legislators but did not take steps to do so. Work group members did engage with law schools, law students, and the ISBA rural practice committee about the issue of rural attorney recruitment and retention.

III. Looking Forward

Objective one: Support Commission initiatives of other work groups

The work group will support further progress on the following three initiatives being advanced by other Commission work groups given their likely impact on rural access:

- Limited licensure of legal professionals pilot project (Limited Licensure Work Group)
- The People’s Law Library of Iowa (Libraries Work Group)
- Court navigator pilot project (Court Navigator Work Group)

The work group will monitor the activities and recommendations related to these initiatives and provide input as needed.

Objective two: Rural access stakeholder summit

The work group has discussed convening a rural access stakeholder summit to bring together legal educators, bar association members, rural practitioners, law students, community leaders, local government officials, rural social service providers, and Iowa Judicial Branch personnel. A conference along these lines would

provide an opportunity for discussion as well as providing highlights of successful models or initiatives. Partnerships with law schools and the ISBA would likely provide the resources to achieve such an event in the next year. The work group will consult with the Community Outreach Work Group on this project.

Objective three: Expand support and incentives for rural law practice

The work group will continue to monitor and look for opportunities to expand support and incentives for rural practice and to introduce law students to the benefits of rural practice.

Objective four: Enhance availability of legal information and representation in rural areas

The work group will continue to monitor and assess the efficacy of remote technology to enhance the availability of legal information, advice, representation, and access to courts in rural areas. There are four primary components to this objective:

The work group recommends remote participation in routine judicial proceedings . . . continued development of interactive court forms . . . implementation of a pilot court navigator program . . . and exploration of a limited licensure pilot project.

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- The work group recommends that the supreme court continue to allow and regularize the use of technology to allow for remote participation in routine judicial proceedings when appropriate and possible, that it monitor developments in other states, and that it reviews forthcoming data on virtual court proceedings. Remote participation enhances access for many rural residents and allows greater options for securing legal representation when needed.
- The work group recommends continued development of interactive court forms for self-represented litigants and online dispute resolution tools. Interactive forms facilitate self-representation in all parts of the state but particularly where fewer attorneys practice. Online dispute resolution tools are especially useful for rural residents who do not live in proximity to their courthouse.
- The work group recommends implementation of a pilot court navigator program upon consideration of a specific proposal from the Court Navigators Work Group. Navigators help court users, particularly self-represented litigants, and can reduce demand on clerk of court resources. Virtual navigators available via telephone or video conference might be able to serve multiple rural counties.
- The work group recommends further exploration of a limited licensure pilot project through the creation of a task force as the Limited Licensure Work Group

has outlined. Given the concentration of attorneys in urban areas in Iowa and the rest of the nation, nonattorney limited licensure may provide a particularly important resource in underserved rural communities. ⚖️

Work group members

Brian Farrell, chair
Phil Garland
Katie Hall
Dan Mart
Dustria Relph
Megan Srinivas
Bruce Walker
Michael Wells

Veterans

I. Veterans Overview

For the past year, the Veterans Work Group met and corresponded by email. The work group also enlisted the help of student researchers from the University of Iowa College of Law through its Citizen Lawyer Program under the supervision of Commission member Brian Farrell. The primary focus of the work group was to ascertain additional information about the needs of veterans and the legal services available to veterans in the State of Iowa. Additionally, members of the work group continued to cultivate existing partnerships to facilitate continued support for the legal needs of veterans.

II. Update from the 2021 Commission Report

During the 2021–2022 Commission year, the work group utilized the data obtained through research and gained additional data as a result of veterans’ clinics held previously. The work group built upon the previous year’s conclusion that it was imperative to understand the legal needs of veterans before attempting to address those needs. As a result of research during previous years, as well as research which was conducted during the 2021–2022 Commission year, the work group determined that the most likely areas of civil legal need for veterans fit into one of five different categories: (1) eviction and foreclosure, (2) driver’s license restoration, (3) child support issues, (4) outstanding warrants and fines, and (5) discharge upgrades. As with the previous year, thus far, the practical

experience obtained during the clinics supports the information gained through the work group’s research. Accordingly, the work group should be able to focus its efforts on the legal issues that are of greatest need among veterans.

III. Looking Forward

Objective One: *Identify the veterans in need of legal assistance*

The first specific task in support of identifying veterans in need of legal assistance is to identify each of the organizations and agencies across the state that serve veterans, have contact with veterans, or have contact with the families of veterans. Identifying where veterans access information can promote targeted information as well as serve as an indication of how many veterans are in need of legal assistance. One of the major sources of contact with veterans in the State of Iowa is the Veteran Service Officer (VSO). There is a VSO in every Iowa county. The president of the VSO, Michael Mortensen, oversees all 99 Iowa counties. He has indicated a willingness to become engaged in efforts to reach veterans in need of legal assistance. Although the work group has considered several options, as there are a variety of programs and associations who work with veterans in Iowa, partnering with the VSOs is likely the most effective and efficient way to reach veterans in need of legal assistance. The Commission should continue to work to accurately identify veterans in need. This will enable

Veterans

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providers to more effectively and efficiently connect with veterans in need.

Objective Two: *Identify legal service options available to veterans*

The work group has been working on a comprehensive statewide assessment to discover all available legal resources for veterans. The work group has examined several efforts providing legal services to veterans. Some examples include the following: the Drake

University Law School clinic providing legal services to veterans; lawyers in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, engaging in an annual volunteer effort called “Stand Down,” at which they hold a legal clinic to provide legal services to veterans; the veterans treatment court in Woodbury County; and Iowa Legal Aid clinics in various parts of the state to address the legal needs of veterans.

In support of this objective, the work group enlisted research assistance from students in the University of Iowa College of Law Citizen Lawyer Program. The researchers were tasked with identifying existing legal service options for veterans in Iowa. The students concluded that the most comprehensive legal support for veterans currently comes from Iowa Legal Aid and through the Iowa Attorney General’s Office website. In the past, Iowa Legal Aid has offered a variety of legal services

In supporting this objective, the work group will identify a viable number of legal professionals who are willing to donate their time, skills, and expertise to assist veterans with legal issues.

and clinics. Current information suggests, however, that the need for legal services among veterans outpaces available services. Breaching the barriers to providing sufficient legal services to veterans in Iowa is a task this work group will adopt for the coming years.

Objective Three: *Encourage volunteer efforts to provide additional legal services to veterans*

To encourage volunteer legal services for veterans, the work group will

continue to conduct outreach to various legal service providers. In supporting this objective, the work group will identify a viable number of legal professionals who are willing to donate their time, skills, and expertise to assist veterans with legal issues. The work group’s research and experience demonstrate that there is a shortage of legal volunteers relative to the number of veterans in need of legal assistance.

This effort will include reaching out to legal associations across the state in order to gain volunteers and secure legal training for volunteers. Once volunteers are identified, they must be engaged so as to hold their interest and provide them with an opportunity to make the best possible use of their time. This is an ongoing effort in which the work group will continue to engage for the foreseeable future.

Veterans

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Objective Four: *Ensure veterans in need of legal assistance are connected with available legal services*

To ensure veterans connect with existing legal services, the work group must provide information and utilize partnerships. The work group will consult with the Commission’s Community Outreach Work Group on these efforts.

One key partnership in connecting services with veterans in need is Iowa Legal Aid. Through October of 2021, Iowa Legal Aid provided assistance to numerous veterans and their families. Iowa Legal Aid’s ability to hold clinics and special events has been challenged over the last few months, however, due to funding limitations and Covid-19 protocols.

Despite these challenges, Iowa Legal Aid handles a number of cases for veteran clients, veteran-specific issues, or where veterans are part of a household. This includes full-representation, limited-scope representation, advice-only, and cases sent to the Volunteer Lawyers Project.

Due to the pandemic, Iowa Legal Aid has not held in person outreach events for veterans during this time period, but there are plans to hold veteran-specific outreach events in the future (in person or virtual).

Iowa Legal Aid has expressed interest in giving additional veteran-specific continuing legal education programs for attorneys in the coming years to

encourage volunteer attorneys to serve veterans through limited-scope representation.

Two key partnerships providing legal information for veterans continue to be the VSOs and Iowa Workforce Development. Members of the work group actively participated in training with the VSOs on October 13, 2021, in support of the task of information dissemination. Iowa Workforce Development has individuals across the state who focus their work on veterans. This fall, members of the work group will meet with key members from Iowa Workforce Development to discuss dissemination of legal information for veterans. ⚖️

Work group members

- Elizabeth Van Arkel
- Susan Barta
- Daphney Daniel
- Phil Garland
- Kevin McKeever, co-chair
- Chantelle Smith, co-chair

Current Highlights

By work group, the Commission highlights certain efforts and activities for the next year.

Community Courts Work Group

- Evaluate the potential for a community courts program in Iowa, which would involve a variety of service providers and stakeholders, including corporate and private attorneys, discussed at pages 6–7 of the Report.

Community Outreach Work Group

- Plan, promote, and host an Iowa Access to Justice Summit, discussed at page 9 of the Report.

Corporate Involvement Work Group

- Leverage community courts concepts for pro bono opportunities for corporate attorneys, discussed at page 11 of the Report.
- Support statewide or regional efforts to address crises or other events driving the need for legal services, discussed at pages 11–12 of the Report.

Court Navigators Work Group

- Development of a court navigator pilot program in a limited number of mid-sized Iowa counties, discussed at pages 13–15 of the Report.

Libraries Work Group

- The People’s Law Library of Iowa, discussed at pages 17–18 of the Report.
- Pilot project of limited-scope virtual legal advice clinics in public libraries, discussed at pages 18–19 of the Report.


Limited Licensure Work Group

- Development of a limited licensure task force to propose a limited licensure pilot program tailored to the State of Iowa, discussed at pages 20–22 of the Report.

Rural Access Work Group

- Support Commission initiatives that will positively impact rural access to justice, including a limited licensure pilot program, a court navigator program, and the People’s Law Library of Iowa, discussed at page 24 of the Report.
- Enhance availability of legal information and representation in rural Iowa areas, discussed at pages 24–25 of the Report.

Veterans Work Group

- Identify veterans with access to justice challenges and the services available to address those challenges; encourage volunteer efforts to provide legal services to veterans; and connect veterans with available legal services at pages 27–28 of the Report. 

Conclusion

The Iowa Access to Justice Commission nears completion of its sixth year dedicated to serving all Iowans by identifying, investigating, and proposing solutions to barriers and impediments to achieving justice for all at all times.

One year ago, the conclusion to the 2021 Commission Report stated the following: “The Commission begins its sixth year with the nation and Iowa working to establish footholds on the return from the pandemic to a (probably new) normalcy.” While a “return from the pandemic” may still be an open question, there is little doubt that many aspects of day-to-day life have permanently changed, some for the better, some perhaps not.

Unfortunately, what has not changed is the fact that for far too many people, it remains a struggle at best to fairly and satisfactorily resolve even relatively minor legal problems.

Just as the Covid-19 pandemic caused much reflection on how every day patterns and practices could be reconsidered or modified to fit societal changes, the Commission continues to explore innovative solutions to stubborn problems. In 2020, the Commission established the Limited Licensure Work Group. As noted in the 2021 Commission Report: “The Commission’s rationale for this structure change included recognition that alternative forms of providing legal services are on the horizon and likely approaching Iowa. Such innovations, if

studied and adopted responsibly and deliberately, could positively impact efforts to overcome barriers to access to justice that persist for so many Iowans.”

The Commission recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all or comprehensive solution to assuring access to justice for all. During this past year, the Commission established two new work groups: Community Courts and Court Navigators. The Commission has concluded, based on the work of these new work groups, as well as the Limited Licensure Work Group, that Iowa Judicial Branch’s development of robust pilot programs is the best and most productive path toward identifying and implementing effective and sustainable statewide solutions to access to justice challenges. The Iowa Judicial Branch has a proven track record of careful and prudent use of pilot programs that enhance the branch’s public service to Iowans.

Another important recognition of the Commission this past year is the extent to which access to justice efforts from different perspectives may involve overlapping initiatives. A Commission emphasis going forward will be to leverage the overlapping or close-in-nexus efforts of various Commission work groups, court system stakeholders, and service providers as the most effective way to improve access to justice for all Iowans. ⚖️