



**Kentucky Access to Justice Commission  
Program Initiatives Update  
September 2023**

**Legal Assistance in Treatment (LAT) Project**

The Legal Assistance in Treatment (LAT) Project is a collaborative partnership between the Kentucky Access to Justice Commission (KAJC) and Addiction Recovery Care, LLC, (ARC). KAJC is the lead organization for the project and is responsible for grant implementation, evaluation and reporting.

The LAT Project is currently staffed by 3 full-time community legal resource coordinators (CLRCs)/paralegals. The CLRCs conduct legal screenings and provide information, direct services and referrals in 10 residential drug treatment centers in northeast Kentucky. To date, more than 450 individuals have been assisted.

KAJC entered into a contract with Eastern Kentucky University faculty to evaluate the LAT project. Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative supports the underlying premise of the project - that addressing clients' unresolved legal issues while they are in treatment will positively impact their treatment and long-term recovery. The full report is available upon request.

**Legal Help Centers**

The Fayette County Legal Help Center opened in March 2022. The Center is a collaborative project between KAJC and Fayette Circuit Clerks office, Fayette County Family Court Judges, the Fayette County Law Library Trustees, AOC and Legal Aid of the Bluegrass.

AOC has created 15 guided interviews that allow patrons to create legal pleadings by answering a series of questions. After completing the interview, the A2J platform creates the pleadings in ready-to-file form. These current guided interviews are: dissolution of marriage (no minor children), small claims court complaint/counterclaim, petition for order of protection, petition for probate, petition to dispense with administration, petition for name change, motion to modify child support, petition for expungement (for misdemeanor, violation, or traffic infraction conviction), petition for involuntary hospitalization or involuntary admission, petition/application for appointment of a guardian/conservator for a minor; motion to modify

parenting time; and motion to waive court costs and fees [civil and criminal]. Additional court forms are available in Word format.

The Center is currently open 1 day per week (Thursdays) from 11:00 a.m. until 2 p.m. and is staffed by volunteer attorneys and KAJC staff. To date, the Center has assisted more than 1,500 patrons.

The Commission is collaborating with organizations in Jefferson, Warren and Kenton Counties to open legal help centers in those areas.

### **kyjustice.org**

kyjustice.org is the statewide legal information website created in partnership with the four Kentucky civil legal aid programs. The updated website officially launched in March 2022. Legal Aid contracted with KAJC to develop and write content for the site. As of the end of July, more than 172,000 have visited the website and more than 300,000 pages of content have been viewed.

### **KY Free Legal Answers**

KY Free Legal Answers (FLA) is a virtual legal advice clinic in which qualified users post civil legal questions to be answered by pro bono attorneys licensed in Kentucky. KY FLA is a collaboration between KAJC and the American Bar Association. The Kentucky Bar Association provided funding for start-up costs for this project. The site will launch in October 2023.

### **Legal Aid Staff CLE Training**

KAJC has worked with legal aid staff to plan several training events over the last year: Trial Skills Training, co-sponsored with the American College of Trial Lawyers; Statewide Conference; and the upcoming Substantive Law Overview Training. KAJC plans to host both a Statewide Conference and an Advanced Trial Skills Training in 2024.

### **Court Navigator Planning Grant**

The Court Navigator Project was an initiative identified in our Justice for All Strategic Plan. This planning grant from Serve Kentucky was funded by AmeriCorps. The purpose of the grant was to determine where court navigator projects would best be located, what are the appropriate roles for navigators and how AmeriCorps volunteers could be utilized. The grant was completed in December 2022 and a final report submitted to Serve KY.

### **Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health**

The Judicial Commission on Mental Health is charged with improving the practice, quality and timeliness of judicial response to cases where the litigants are dealing with mental health issues, substance use or intellectual disabilities. The Commission is a participant in the Guardianship and Commitment Workgroup and is especially interested in how guardianship proceedings can be made uniform across the state, understandable to those serving as guardians and often not represented by counsel while developing best practices that protect the Constitutional rights and autonomy of persons with disabilities.

**KBA Rural Practice Task Force**

The Commission is a member of this task force which focuses on the unmet legal needs of rural Kentucky residents and the need for recruitment and retention of attorneys in those areas.

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