

Kentucky Equal Justice Center

July 14, 2022

Staff Report Highlights

Food Justice — Tyler Offerman

Kentucky Food Action Network: We continue to work with the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy, Community Farm Alliance, and Feeding KY to support the Kentucky Food Action Network (KFAN). KFAN is currently planning a full member meeting and Steering Committee retreat for August 24-25. At that gathering, members will identify and vote on priorities for the Network for this coming year.

Food is Medicine Consortium: The Humana Foundation and Department of Agriculture are helping to convene some meetings and conversations about how hospitals, MCOs, and doctors can utilize food and food prescriptions to address chronic illness or as a treatment plan post-op. KEJC is ensuring that KFAN members are participating in these conversations to ensure the voices of directly-impacted people are heard and outcomes are just.

Collaborating with the Programs and SNAP Advocates: KEJC has secured funding from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities to allow us to work with legal aid staff in the Welfare and Health Task Force to create a training curriculum and facilitate trainings for the Programs on SNAP IPV hearings and appeals. This work will be done alongside and in conjunction with the launch of a Local SNAP Advocates program to work with Step-By-Step and Kentucky Food Action Network members to ensure that local community members, including SNAP beneficiaries:

- know about new options for SNAP enrollment
- have their voices heard in implementation of the state SNAP Kynector program
- know the process and their rights to appeal inaccurate SNAP determinations, and
- with the assistance of the legal aid programs, build a network of support for community members who have had SNAP claims collections unjustly brought against them

ThriveKY Coalition Advocacy for Thriving Communities Roadshow Series: KEJC is one of the host organizations for this 15-stop roadshow series. Tyler will be anchoring the food and food assistance section.

Resource Organizer — Raaziq El-Amin

Donor Management System: Over the past year, we've been transitioning from Salesforce to a new donor management system. We settled on [Bloomerang](#) in the Fall and worked with the Bloomerang conversion team through the Winter and Spring to customize the system to fit our needs. The team helped us format the data and convert the data on a macro scale. Now, Raaziq is

doing manual edits to make the system our own. We're already able to do some reporting and can get a pretty good picture of each donor. Over the next few months, we'll be fully immersed in the system, using it for emails, processing donations, and more!

Development Plan: In our recently adopted strategic plan, we agreed that KEJC needs a formal fundraising plan to help sustain this important work. Raaziq has been working on a first draft. Raaziq foresees more involvement from the rest of the team on parts of the plan, especially with our grant writing and reporting processes since these overlap so much with the work of program staff. Raaziq's goal is to have a good working draft prepared for the board fundraising advisory committee when they convene.

Give for Good Louisville: The next online giving campaign KEJC will participate in is [Give for Good Louisville](#). It's similar to Good Giving in Central Kentucky, but it is focused on increasing support for organizations making an impact in the Louisville Metro area. Over the next couple of weeks, Raaziq will work with Ebony to develop social media messaging, create graphics, and design email reminders. If you are based in Louisville, or if you have friends and family in the area, please help us promote KEJC's involvement in Give for Good Louisville!

Maxwell Street Legal Clinic — Angela Evans

Interns and Volunteers: We have two legal interns who've been with us this summer, Annie Dietz and Claire Sandberg. They are both rising 2Ls at UK Law School. During the summer, they've worked on various research projects for Allison and Michelle. We've also had a volunteer join us, Debora Mbakala. She is a college student, fluent in several languages and considering attending law school. She has been a wonderful asset to the office. Since May, she has volunteered over 90 hours of her time, equating to an economic value of approximately \$2,250.

Bluegrass HealthFirst: Maxwell Street Legal Clinic has also developed a new relationship with Bluegrass HealthFirst, a non-profit Federally Qualified Health Center that provides affordable healthcare for everyone, regardless of a person's ability to pay. During this quarter, Maxwell Street Legal Clinic has presented at two virtual lunch and learn events. The presentations have focused on how medical records and information within them can potentially impact patients' immigration proceedings.

Immigration Law Partners: Last month MSLC practitioners met with the legal staff for KY Refugee Ministries and Neighbors Immigration Clinic. We plan to establish regular meetings to learn from and coordinate with each other when feasible. In our June meeting we discussed client capacity for the organizations and the types of cases each organization is currently accepting. The consensus was the current and anticipated demand for immigration services far exceeds our collective capacity. MSLC is temporarily limiting our services to DACA and green card renewals of current clients, and naturalization cases for previous, current or new clients. We hope this will be a temporary action and that we can add at least one practitioner by the Fall.

Outreach — Miranda Brown, Emma Anderson

Networking/Outreach/Communications

- **Outreach:** KEJC staff spoke directly with over 300 people, either by meeting them at the New Life Day Center, the Mother's Day Festival, or through in-person meetings with partners, virtual meetings, and presentations. Some unique occasions this quarter were meeting with staff of HealthFirst BlueGrass, presenting for the Kentucky Refugee and Immigrant Inclusion Summit, and meeting with social workers at the Ballard and Connie Griffith Towers Apartments.
- **Workers' Rights Task Force:** Highlights from our June meeting include Saru Jayaraman of the national organization One Fair Wage sharing legislative updates and strategy for achieving fair wages for restaurant workers and Eva Melissa Astudillo sharing insight into La Casita Center's community-driven accompaniment model and barriers that many Latinx people face with Unemployment Insurance and other programs. Twenty-eight legal aid staff, labor representatives, and other partners in Kentucky and across the South attended.

Direct Service

- **Lexington Wage Claim Clinic:** We assisted 6 wage claimants with demand letters, ES-8 wage and hour complaint forms, advice, and accompaniment.
- **Health Coverage Enrollment Assistance:** Miranda helped 10 new individuals and families with health coverage in addition to previous clients, including four Emergency Time Limited Medicaid cases.

Advocacy Feedback Loop:

- **Kentucky Health Benefit Exchange (KHBE):** Miranda serves on KHBE's recently revived Education and Outreach Subcommittee. During the last quarter, she used this platform to request outreach materials with information on the year-long Special Enrollment Period for Kentuckians under 150% Federal Poverty Level and how to keep covered after the end of the nationally declared Public Health Emergency.
- **Consumer Rights & Client Needs Technical Advisory Committee:** Miranda serves on this committee, which has asked Kentucky's Department for Medicaid Services (DMS) to publicly distribute information on Emergency Time Limited Medicaid. DMS's response to this recommendation is that they will develop materials and share them with the Consumer TAC prior to distribution via the DMS website, kynectors, and providers.

Also, after TAC members made multiple recommendations that DMS lift the 5-year Medicaid waiting period for legally residing pregnant women and extend postpartum coverage to 12 months, DMS submitted a State Plan Amendment to do both in March, which federal CMS approved in May!

- **Notice Improvement:** We wrapped up this two-year intensive project of updating and improving notices! In the final months of this project, Rich and Miranda helped make many notices more understandable and useful. The changes include adding a patient liability definition and DCBS contact information to QMB Medicare Savings Program notices, adding a return address to the Medicaid Penalty Warning form, adding the MCO phone number to Presumptive Eligibility notices, adding space for filling out a hearing request to the notice shell page, clarifying EPSDT services for children, and clarifying information about Medicaid Estate Recovery and Qualifying Income Trust.
- **Advocacy partnerships:** Miranda met with Federally Qualified Health Center HealthFirst BlueGrass kynector Genoveva Segura and Kentucky Refugee Ministries' Health Services Coordinator, Alyssa Rice, to discuss kynect and Presumptive Eligibility enrollment issues.

Impact Litigation and Advocacy — Ben Carter

Developing Movement Law Lab's "[Level Up Housing Justice Fellowship](#)"

- A program for housing lawyers and housing justice organizers in the South/Southeast to help both work together more effectively on campaigns and in movements.
- Movement Law Lab asked Ben to help develop the curriculum for this program.
- Now accepting applications (one lawyer and one organizer must apply together)
- This work fits in well with both the experience we had supporting the Justice for North Fork campaign last year ([appeal brief](#) filed in May) and helps us prepare to support the work of partner organizations in our Kentucky Civic Engagement Table coalition.

Soft Reset, continued

- Last board meeting, Ben suggested that this summer would be a chance to reset our litigation and advocacy work and focus on internal processes and platforms. Fact check: actually true.
- Really good conversations internally and externally regarding opportunities to support the work of coalition partners in the Kentucky Civic Engagement Table
- Exploring [Basecamp](#) as a project management platform for KEJC and combining that with [Toggl](#) for any timekeeping our staff might need to do for grants, cases, lobbying, etc.
 - The killer feature of Basecamp is how promiscuous it allows us to be with seats/users. For less than \$1,000/year, Basecamp offers organizations unlimited seating, which is just so crazy powerful for an organization like KEJC. As just one example, we could create a "SNAP Intentional Program Violations" project in Basecamp and have people from across multiple organizations working together on that chunk of work; same for Tyler's Food Action Network; housing attorneys and organizers in Kentucky; our ThriveKY coalition; family lawyers in LSC programs.
 - There are project templates, so if there's a checklist of things we do for outreach, grant applications, hiring, task force meetings, onboarding, etc., simply create a new

project using that template and lots of the work of identifying “to dos” is already done.

- Really good experience working recently with the Legal Aid Society on fighting some next-level villainy from a private-equity-backed landlord here in Louisville that is trying to cancel a bunch of lease renewals at an apartment complex near U of L.
 - [News](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) (100+ shares)
 - Looking forward to KEJC having a FT housing attorney (this has been my white whale for 20+ months; not sure what I’ll do when this is someone else’s job)

Health Justice and Advocacy — Shannon Rempe

Impact Litigation - UK Healthcare Case Update

- The litigation team has been in settlement discussions with UK's counsel following the passage of HB 8 and subsequent cancellation of the collection agreement between UK and the DOR.
- A term sheet has been finalized and drafting of settlement papers is now underway.

Reproductive & Sexual Rights

- Assisted trans woman with her healthcare discrimination complaint by analyzing all of her viable legal claims and advising her to utilize the Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission and KY Commission on Human Rights
- Attended Judicial Bypass training hosted by If/When/How
- Have met with KY advocates to discuss the impact of Dobbs and KY's trigger law, as well as strategize on where help is most needed

Balance Billing & the No Surprises Act

- Have been assisting a patient from Baptist Health in Louisville with a balance billing issue—ultimately has led to discovering a loophole in the NSA (RBP plans)
- Been meeting with surprise billing experts from NHeLP and Georgetown University to discuss how the NSA applies to RBP plans and how we can help this patient or others similarly situated

Housing Outreach Worker — Emma Anderson

Rental Assistance Applications

- Have helped people access over \$247,458.94 by helping them complete rental assistance applications for the Housing Stabilization Program
- Have completed 67 apps with people

Housing Outreach

- **Mr. S:** Met Mr S. when I did a rental assistance application with him. He's an older man on social security and works at Kroger to make ends meet. During the lockdown his hours were cut at Kroger and he hasn't been able to catch up. After getting his back rent paid through HSP I connected him to a local grassroots housing justice group called KY Tenants. He has gotten very involved and will be speaking at the Town Hall on July 22nd.