

**MINUTES for Utah Judicial Council's Standing Committee
on Resources for Self-Represented Parties Summary**

Via Webex
February 11, 2022
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Name	Position	Attended	Excused
Honorable Rich Mrazik	District court judge and chair	X	
Honorable Ann Marie Mciff Allen	District court judge	X	
Honorable Annette Jan	Juvenile court judge	X	
Honorable Katherine Peters	Justice court judge		X
Honorable Danalee Welch-O'Donnal	Justice court judge	X	
Nicole Gray	Appellate clerk of court	X	
Shannon Treseder	Urban clerk of court	X	
Janet Thorpe	Rural clerk of court	X	
Nathanael Player	Self-Help Center representative	X	
Charles Stormont	Utah State Bar	X	
Peter Strand	Legal services organization that serves low-income clients		X
Marcus Degen	Legal services organization that serves low-income clients	X	
Alison Satterlee	Private attorney	X	
Professor Leslie Francis	Law school representative	X	X
Professor Beth Jennings	Law school representative	X	
Kaden Taylor	State law librarian	X	
Shawn Newell	Community representative	X	
Brooke Robinson	Community representative	X	
Amy Hernandez	Ex Officio Domestic Violence Coordinator		X
Kara Mann	Ex Officio Language Access Coordinator		X
Pamela Beatse	Ex Officio Utah State Bar Access to Justice Office	X	X
Nancy Sylvester	Guest – Utah State Bar	X	
Sandra Carpaio	Guest – Utah 2-1-1	X	
Nini Rich	Guest facilitator	X	
Valeria Jimenez	Guest – OFA	X	
Keri Sargent	Guest – District Court Admin.	X	

1. Nathanael Player gave a short presentation on legal services in Utah and provided a framework for thinking about what work on access to justice issues look like.
2. Nini Rich facilitated a conversation regarding priorities of the committee for the future. A brief summary is below.

Big values/accomplishments of this committee

- Expansion of pro se calendars
- Promoting a balanced use of remote hearings
- Supporting MyCase – the self-represented litigant portal
- Establishing the need for, and creating the Self-Help Center
- Coordinating services during COVID
- Rule changes to require bilingual summonses and add short URLs and QR codes to our forms
- Rule changes allow parties to access the courts, regardless of their appearance
- Someone is paying attention - multidisciplinary, varied group of people who pay attention to what is happening/looking out for self-reps
- Continuing to reassess what we have and whether or not it is working
- → it's critical to continue on this path and to find new ways to step out of the norms of operations, and to consider new opportunities to develop new resources to remove barriers (even if it might not be popular or make some uncomfortable)

What's important for this committee to work on next?

- Throw away all URCP and start over with non-lawyers writing the rules
- Simplify URCP for cases where we get a lot of self-reps
- Greater connection to the communities that we serve
 - We need to do lots of outreach and be brave enough to make connections in a way that complements the work we are doing so they feel safe and understand the resources we have and how to use them
 - Then we can get those communities to share with others
 - We can't just throw out a plate of info that people won't eat
- Explore how to work with communities and to amplify their strengths. Why aren't we doing that? What can be done?
 - Can we bring those communities into this group?
 - We should things WITH communities, NOT for them
- Move away from the idea that members of the bar are the only ones who have specialized knowledge of what goes on in court
- Enshrine as sacrosanct, the notion that everyone has the right to access to someone with specialized knowledge to protect their interests/advocate on their behalf
 - Human beings for everyone
 - ⇒ People should be well-represented
 - It could be by themselves
 - Or by a lawyer
 - Or in some other way

- ⇒ We are in unique a position to think what options are available to break down barriers
- The idea is that we are providing sound advice and help, regardless of who is doing it
 - We don't have enough resources, especially in areas where there is a great need
 - How do we train people to give good information?
 - How do we help others to give effective, meaning information?
- Identify other barriers to access
 - Childcare
 - Transportation
 - Relationship with your employer
 - ⇒ these barriers leave people feeling hopeless before they even begin
 - People need support to get started AND to keep going and to fight for their cases
- Catch legal issues upstream, before things become so out of control and hard to fix
- Train the clerks of courts periodically
 - Clerks often start interactions with saying "I can't give you legal advice"
 - Clerks don't know what they can/can't do or say
 - It even relates to whether or not they can give connection to resources
 - Clerks are the face of the court
 - ⇒ there is so much frustration at the window
- Center court users
 - Plain language
 - User-centered design
 - Make court programs friendly and easy to interact with
- There should be a warehouse - one central place where people go to for information
 - If they start there and then move toward other sources of information that could be a better model
- There are systemic regulations that limit judicial discretion
 - Are there ways for us to explore where those limits come from and what else is possible?
- Can we remove some types of disputes from court regular processes so that they would be more user friendly?

Notes on issues to focus on

COMMENT	SPEAKS TO
a cultural change for the court the court system is in order - clerks should not be so squeamish about giving legal information	Training clerks
fear defines a lot of being a court employee, but people go into government service b/c they want to help	Training clerks
could there be a concierge/docent - the face you see when you come into the building to guide people to at least start off on the right foot	navigators
this relates to what Marcus was saying about catching issues	Training clerks and

upstream. It would also address people feeling bounced around. Having people get HELPFUL information EARLY is critical	navigators
people end up in the wrong place and then can't get helpful information	Training clerks and navigators
people seem to go to Matheson hoping for someone to tell them where to go, like a navigator	navigators
hospitals are really good at this. People start from a physical space - they show up and want to get help	navigators
This is specific to Matheson, but if we understood how rural/small courthouses do business, perhaps our approach in Matheson would be different. Matheson and WeJo should be more like Summit County and Monticello	Looking to other courts (rural/other states) for better models
we need to train our legal service providers to refer somewhere else instead of just saying "no, we have a conflict."	Training partner agencies
Utah 2-1-1 is a tool for service providers. We can identify what resources we have and we can look to see what else can be added	Training partner agencies
we should advocate for more investment in resources to help people	Navigators, advocacy for more resources
court processes are more personalized in rural areas. Information online would be helpful. Also, I'm curious to know what other states do to handle these issues.	Looking to other courts (rural/other states) for better models
we need to work on giving clerks more comfort with giving procedural information	Training clerks
we need to simplify our forms and website	Improve online resources
people still need help from a human being to walk folks off the ledge	Training clerks and navigators
we really need to push for a cultural change, and that means we need to give folks accurate and COMPLETE information	Training clerks and navigators
court navigators seems like something we need to work on and move forward with b/c of the linkages to so many other issues	navigators
we can't just rely on tech b/c not everyone has access to technology	Training clerks and navigators
we need to think about interventions that are trauma-informed so that folks can meaningfully engage with the legal system	Training clerks and navigators and training

	partner agencies
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Themes of design, coordination, navigation are all connected

People feel:

- Like they are part of a community
- Hopeful/excited/energized after this conversation AND about the action items that we are looking to implement
- There are great resources and a lot of work has clearly been done - and we there is still a very long way to go
- There are a lot of easy/tangible tasks and solutions that we can take on
- This question about legal information from court staff is a no-brainer
- Appreciation for our facilitator
 - We should prioritize what we try to focus on for the next meeting
- We need to do better about sharing our own victories/successes

Self-Rep Committee meeting schedule – every other month at noon.

June 10, 2022
August 12, 2022

October 14, 2022
December 9, 2022