

CHAPTER 11

SYSTEMS GAINS...

GIVING PERMANENCY TO THE EQUAL JUSTICE VISION

WASHINGTON JUSTICE LEAGUE

(to the tune of "Yellow Submarine")

There's a time to take a stand
Starving orphans need a hand
We can fight for change you know
And defeat old Status Quo

Let's get off our derrieres
We can make the system fair
And we'll hear the rafters ring
As we all join in and sing

We're all part of the Washington Justice League
The Washington Justice League,
The Washington Justice League
We're all part of the Washington Justice League
The Washington Justice League,
The Washington Justice League

Everyone get on your guard
Making changes can be hard
From Spokane to Hoquiam
There's a fight that must be won

We're all part of the Washington Justice League
The Washington Justice League,
The Washington Justice League
We're all part of the Washington Justice League
The Washington Justice League,
The Washington Justice League

*From "The State's Greatest Superheroes: The Justice League of Washington vs. Supervillain Status Quo — When Indifference Strikes,"
written and produced for WORKING TOGETHER TO CHAMPION JUSTICE,
Washington State's Fifth Annual Access to Justice Conference, September 2000*

"Kitsap County Volunteer Attorney Services continues to benefit from the work of the Northwest Justice Project and CLEAR. These dedicated attorneys and paralegals assist clients in our county in numerous ways and work with our program for the benefit of these individuals. I can't imagine going back to where we were before without CLEAR. We could not do half the work we do now. It becomes more apparent each year just how valuable their services are and their need for continued and more generous funding."

Olivia Dennis, KCVS Coordinator, commenting on the importance of her program's partnership with CLEAR, the Northwest Justice Project's statewide Coordinated Legal Education Advice and Referral telephone access line

“Law is a very powerful tool that makes society better. The next step for the Access to Justice Network is to learn how to communicate that power for equality and justice beyond our narrow legal community. By harnessing the different strengths and constituencies within the ATJ Network, we will gather more -and more diverse - donors under the umbrella of equal justice.”

Lisa Stone, Executive Director, Northwest Women's Law Center

The “Justice League of Washington” is made up of equal justice “superheroes”: Justiceguy, Barman, the Incredible Clerk, Superiorjudge, Captain Jurisprudence, OACWoman (court administrator), Wonderadvocate and The Green Volunteer. Having defeated Supervillain Status Quo and his henchmen, the League is now working to make the system fair for starving orphans.

There are untold systems gains from having a “Justice League” or other comparable “network” of committed partners, anchored by an overarching coordinating board and a coordinated legal services delivery system. Following is an effort to give you a sense of what can be accomplished if you take this journey.

At the end of this chapter, take the “Self-Test” to help you assess where you are on the road to Equal Justice.

OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS GAINS

ECONOMICAL, EFFECTIVE AND TARGETED USE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Do the math — calculate the financial implications of, for example:

- (1) One system-wide comprehensive intake system v. multiple intake systems.
- (2) One coordinated system-wide strategy for increasing financial support v. multiple, perhaps competing strategies.
- (3) The administrative costs of one program v. the aggregate administrative costs for multiple similar programs.
- (4) A coordinated system-wide training plan v. individual program training initiatives.
- (5) One comprehensive case management system v. multiple case management systems with a variety of data definitions.

BALLS DON'T GET DROPPED

A coordinated Equal Justice Community can provide the infrastructure for insuring that things get done. Consider who in your Equal Justice Community is taking primary responsibility for the following important tasks:

- developing and overseeing strategies to obtain and ensure the strategic investment of additional resources – state funding for legal services, federal grants (e.g. VAWA), cy pres awards, major foundation grants for the benefit of the overall system in accordance with a state plan;
- addressing existing and proposed local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations that may adversely affect meaningful access to the civil justice system, e.g. a proposed rule defining the practice of law and by implication precluding non-attorneys from

providing any form of advice or assistance to those in need;

- developing and implementing new programs and innovative measures designed to expand access to justice, e.g. expanding the courthouse facilitator program to every county in the state; developing pilot projects to develop and test the feasibility of online self-help interactive forms for domestic violence victims;
- establishing and evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the entire civil legal services delivery system against an objective set of standards and criteria;
- promoting adequate levels of volunteer support;
- serving as an effective clearinghouse and mechanism for communication and information dissemination;
- promoting jurisprudential understanding of the law relating to the fundamental right of individuals to secure meaningful access to the civil justice system;
- promoting widespread understanding of civil equal justice among the members of the public through public legal education;
- promoting the responsiveness of the civil justice system to the needs of those who suffer disparate treatment or who shoulder disproportionate access barriers or burdens of poverty.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

An infrastructure insures that things get done only once and that the responsibilities are evenly distributed. For example, are all the websites in your community linked – and do you know about them all? Are they all necessary? Should they be centralized? How many bar, legal services and judicial committees are dealing with the problem of the increasing number of pro se litigants in our courts? Do you know how often (and from what source) private attorneys are approached to give money for equal justice and to volunteer their time? Are legal services staff attorneys carrying a disproportionate share of the burden of staffing and supporting these initiatives?

INCREASED NUMBERS OF RESOURCES

As your Equal Justice Community begins to expand beyond known and limited resources, your resource base will expand exponentially. **Examples:** By establishing a state-wide committee composed of representatives from the print and electronic media, with the goal of developing plans to better utilize the media in our work, you immediately and dramatically expand the potential to get your messages out. By including a member of the

“Access to Justice is now, and has been for hundreds of years, the most fundamental of rights. Its alternative is the jungle. The conservators of the rule of law and constitutional values must be our judges and lawyers whose professionalism commit them to their ethical duty to uphold the nobility of the law, and their commitment to public justice.”

**Leonard Schroeter, Chair,
ATJ Board’s
Jurisprudence Committee**

statewide county clerk's association on your conference planning committee, you get the buy-in and participation in the conference by a significant number of clerks. Through launching a "Summer of Justice" program to take your messages to every county in the state in anticipation of the legislative session, you vastly increase the number of people willing to volunteer to write/call/e-mail their elected officials about the importance of financial support for equal justice.

SUPPORT AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS GAINS

Following are additional **examples** of support and delivery systems initiatives that can be staffed and coordinated for the benefit of the entire Equal Justice Community to ensure: economical, effective and targeted use of resources; that balls don't get dropped; that things get done and done only once; and to manage the inevitable increase in resources that will result. These are being accomplished, and can be accomplished in a sufficiently coordinated Equal Justice Community:

- State and regional planning and coordination
- Coordination of client intake, advice and referral
- Planning and coordination of training, technical assistance and professional development for staff and volunteers
- Developing strategies to increase volunteer participation
- Resource development and coordination
- Developing and overseeing delivery system accountability standards
- Planning and coordination of conferences
- Technology planning and implementation, including compatible case management and data-definition systems
- Developing and testing technology innovations
- Media coordination
- Educational initiatives for the bar, the courts, the media and the public
- Development of jurisprudence
- Developing strategies to identify and address diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism-related issues
- Developing delivery systems for the moderate income population
- Developing systems to address the needs of pro ses
- Developing strategies to address specific legal issues
- Uniform data collection to improve system capacity to identify and assess critical client needs, patterns of abuse or illegal practices, and unmet need.

"Members of Washington State's Access to Justice Network who serve as Road Volunteers for Summer of Justice 2000 have an unparalleled opportunity to take the Access to Justice message to the road and meet with people around the state and talk about 'equal justice for all.'"

From Summer of Justice
2000 Job Description

EXERCISE

- √ Develop a sample checklist of functions essential to the development and support of your Equal Justice Community.

REFERENCES TO PART II

Access to Justice Board Committee Structure
www.wsba.org/atj

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“Those active in the delivery of services to the low and moderate income population of the state recognized the need for a ‘beacon’ as a focal point for access to justice activities. The need exists for an institutionalized entity to provide a forum to address the difficult problems of access to justice, to develop and implement strategies and solutions, and to provide a centralized place where access to justice activity can be coordinated, grow and thrive.”

**WSBA Access to Justice
Task Force Report
1992-93**

SELF-TEST

WHERE ARE YOU ON THE ROAD TO EQUAL JUSTICE?

TO DO:

INTRODUCTION

Is there a broad-based group that could represent the interests of your current or planned Equal Justice Community?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

Describe the group. If not, how do you plan to assemble one?

TO DO:

CHAPTER 1

Does your community have a commonly held and understood equal justice vision?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

What is it (or what should it be)?

TO DO:

CHAPTER 2

Have you established commonly held and understood core values and guiding principles you agree to abide by in times of trouble and opportunity alike?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

What are they (or what should they be)?

CHAPTER 3

Do you have a core team of leaders who are willing to carry the equal justice vision forward over time? Who are these people, and what organizational “skins” must they transcend? Identify key missing people and institutions you must have to make progress on the equal justice vision?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

TO DO:

CHAPTER 4

Have you built an Equal Justice Community of partner organizations?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

TO DO:

CHAPTER 5

Do you integrate humor and entertainment into the task of building and solidifying your Equal Justice Community?

Yes____ No____ Making Progress____

Examples:

TO DO:

TO DO:**CHAPTER 6**

Have you developed an organizational model, structure, design or framework by which your community is working to achieve the equal justice vision?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

What is the framework?

TO DO:**CHAPTER 7**

Do you have a mechanism that ensures timely, disciplined and inclusive short- and long-term planning for the equal justice community?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

TO DO:**CHAPTER 8**

Can you identify unanticipated and unexpected benefits that have resulted from operating under a common plan, or from a more inclusive, integrated and collaborative approach to equal justice?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

List a few of these, if any:

CHAPTER 9

a) Identify the two most commonly spoken frustrations and pitfalls to a common vision and integrated equal justice model:

1. _____

2. _____

b) Name two unspoken pitfalls everyone knows are obstacles but no one dares to speak about out loud (write on a separate piece of paper if you are sharing this list).

1. _____

2. _____

CHAPTER 10

Do you have assessment/evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure accountability to clients, the vision and values, and to funders and supporters of the Equal Justice Community?

Yes____ No____ Making progress____

CHAPTER 11

If you were made “King” or “Queen” for a day and as a result, had the power and opportunity to shape the future so that an enduring and lasting commitment to equal justice for poor and vulnerable people would result, what would you do? What would you change? What would you put in place to ensure this commitment endures past your reign? (More resources and money can be only ONE of five answers.)

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

TO DO:

TO DO:

TO DO:

FINIS

The overarching theme of every skit produced at the annual Access to Justice Conference is that of an Equal Justice Community sharing in, and working toward, the dream of a fair and equitable justice system. The challenge is to find metaphors for this message that resonate with meaning for every member of your unique Equal Justice Community. We wish you all the best on your unique and challenging journey.

AGE OF AQUARIUS/LET THE SUNSHINE IN

**When the courthouses are bursting
And litigants are all pro se
Then we must work together
And soon we'll clear the way**

**This is the partnership for
Access to Justice
Justice, Justice**

**Work for justice
Work for justice now
For justice now**

**Fight for justice
Fight for justice here
For justice here**

**Sing for justice
Sing for justice now
For justice now**

***From "Lawfulpalooza,"
written and produced for JUSTICE AT WORK,
Washington State's Third Annual Access to Justice Conference, April 1998***

