

**LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
KATRINA CONFERENCE CALL NOTES
September 22, 2005**

STATE UPDATES

FLORIDA

- More evacuees in the Pensacola area
- Increased FEMA applications
- Contractors are starting to leave for Gulf Coast jobs without completing repairs
- Financial and family law cases prevalent
- Suggest developing a plan for organizing resources available on website, available volunteer lawyers and persons with expertise in critical areas

LOUISIANA

- Louisiana Katrina website up and running and can provide assistance
- Louisiana hotline may get overwhelmed with calls for assistance, and need assistance in coordinating to prevent overload

MISSISSIPPI

- Working with YLD who have developed a triage approach for assisting victims
- Displaced staff volunteering at local FEMA and Red Cross locations
- Looking for temporary offices in the Gulf Coast area. Hope to have an office open by next week
- Biggest problem is extended services cases that need more than the triage approach YLD is providing
- 75% of cases are beyond the counseling and advice that the YLD can provide

CALIFORNIA

- Many evacuees do not have enough money to move into permanent housing. FEMA's IHP (The Individuals And Households Program) has not been activated in California.

WEBSITE

- Website will be launched on Sept. 23. Has three main focus areas:
 - individuals affected
 - advocates
 - volunteer attorneys

- Suggest developing links to attorneys available to provide assistance in specific areas
 - Pro Bono Net has tools built into their sight to link attorneys but may need to coordinate use with ABA
 - Suggest developing a focus group on the subject
- Suggest adding a “Hot Topics” section to the Substantive Law section of the website
- LSC website is not currently available in other languages – Spanish, French, Creole, Vietnamese, etc.

FEMA

Some of the FEMA issues that were reported are:

- YLD cannot take cases filed account FEMA. There needs to be a system for handling FEMA cases
- Most programs have been unsuccessful in communicating with FEMA
- Plan a forum to discuss FEMA issues legislatively, i.e., SBA loans, household bar, etc.
- Benefits unavailable
- Information about Red Cross funds for hotels and temporary housing not distributed
- Problems with households being split. Assistance available only to one; the first to apply
- No assistance for persons who were homeless previous to the hurricane
- FEMA long-term housing assistance
- Publicizing of Red Cross financial assistance
- SBA loans and tight timeframes for claims when insurance adjusters cannot reach areas
- Homeowners required to be present during inspection
- Guidelines for FEMA provision of \$26,200 individual assistance. Some are getting less than the full amount. Can this be challenged? There is an appeal process but it must be within 60 days and in writing
- FEMA information included in PowerPoint Presentation and informational flyers provided by Kate Meiss. Information will be e-mailed to conference call participants

YLD COORDINATION

- Other than the affected areas and Texas, the YLD is not present in other states receiving evacuees
- Not clear that information about availability of services through legal aid offices and pro bono attorneys is getting to YLD for referrals

ASSISTANCE

- Steve Gray (eJustice) can host Webcasts for on-line trainings and conference calls. Also works with group of poverty “techie” who are available to assist programs with redeveloping their program technology. Some are willing to travel. Information is available on LSTECH.org/Katrina and will be included on ABA/NLADA/LSC/Probono.net web site

OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN

Finance and Family

- Child custody is area of concern regarding referrals
- Bankruptcy reform -- efforts to postpone Oct. 17 implementation
 - Legislation has been introduced in Congress to postpone implementation. NLADA working to determine timing and to get advice as to whether affected persons should rush to file and what the ramifications are if not filed by Oct. 17

Housing/Property

- Getting the word out that most mortgage companies in the affected areas have given 3-month extensions on payments (with continued interest accrual), which addresses the problem of imminent foreclosure
- Landlord/Tenant issues; illegal evictions
- Decreased housing stock for poor people
- Land purchases by developers (Enterprise Foundation is focusing on this issue)
- Escalating property costs
- The redevelopment of affordable and subsidized housing
- Increased evictions (500% increase)
- Suggest participation in Enterprise Foundation calls regarding housing issues

Services

- Develop of list of experts on local law to field calls to
- How are programs dealing with returning evacuees?
- Social Security hearings and evacuees being away from local offices
- FEMA hotline recording (1-800-621-3362) – recorded information is in very poor Spanish

Coordination

- Inventory of evacuee locations. Legislation requiring shelters to document arrivals being discussed. Even though some are documenting, there is no central repository for information. FEMA does offer money to develop these types of systems
- Documentation problems are also leading to immigration problems.
 - Requests have been made that those with immigrations issues should be referred to the appropriate consulate.

Other

- Relaxing Congressional restrictions on legislative and administrative advocacy

ACTION ITEMS

- Ensure that information on local legal aid programs in the affected areas and Texas is getting to the YLD. LSC will provide Terry Brooks with list of local program offices for YLD. Terry to check on information provided to the Red Cross.
- Any information or resources on bankruptcy issue should be sent to Terry Brooks (tjbrooks@staff.abanet.org) and Don Saunders (d.saunders@nlada.org)
- Glenn to send Helping Hands Manual to Kate Meiss for review of FEMA section
- Community-education flyers and PowerPoint presentation with basic overviews of the federal programs/issues (distributed by Kate Meiss) will be sent by LSC to the call participants once the Powerpoint presentation has been updated. Updated information should be e-mailed to Wendy Burnette (burnettew@lsc.gov)
- Submit language resources for translation of website to Glenn Rawdon (grawdon@lsc.gov)