

**LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
KATRINA CONFERENCE CALL NOTES
NOVEMBER 2, 2005**

Tennessee- Linda Seely

- 4,000 evacuees have settled permanently in Memphis
- Landlord tenant, bankruptcy and insurance issues have been the most frequent concerns of callers and clients.
- The Memphis Bar recognized Craig Barnes of Washington who helped to set up a CLE system and organized volunteers.
- Lawyers need to be present at the DRCs.
- The temporary housing program in Texas is ending soon.
- There is speculation about putting trailers in East Texas.
- Serious housing issues are expected. Although there is available housing remaining, people are being put in hotels.
- Providing assistance depended on the Red Cross, but once you connect with the right people, much more was done at the DRCs with lawyers and providing people with legal aid.

Alabama- Jimmy Frye

- They recently finished a three-day training with 55 LSA staff members and 35 volunteer lawyers and paralegals. The first day focused on disaster issues and the second day dealt with disaster issues and general practice.
- The office has hired 4 new lawyers, 4 paralegals
- The new call center will open on November 15.
- The Montgomery call center opened last week.
- 15 different flyers were created to address different legal issues. They are all being sent out with the 1-800 number of the call center on the back.
- The call centers are still slow, but have had many substantive calls.
- Each attorney is averaging 1-1 ½ hours researching issues from each call.
- There has been a rise in eviction and housing issues.
- The calls coming into the YLD call center pertaining to FEMA appeals cases have been diverted to their offices.
- Coordination between YLD and the hotline has been good
- The Alabama Legal Services still needs more resources to handle calls.
- Temporary help has been hired in the Mobile office.
- They have had 50 full representative cases thus far and are going to need volunteers.

Mississippi- Sam Buchanan

- The office continues to get routine YLD referrals.
- The FEMA training with Kate Meiss will take place on November 15 in Jackson.
- The logistics of having volunteer attorneys come Mississippi have not been figured out. There are not enough apartments available for these volunteer attorneys.

- There is still no housing the Coastal County area.
- Most of the members of the legal services offices in Mississippi who have been displaced are working at church sites and in private attorney offices.
- The Pascagoula office has not been reopened because everything needs to be replaced. However they hope to have it up and running soon.
- He anticipates that soon they will have too many people to serve for the number of staff members and volunteers they currently have.
- As the DRCs shut down, they anticipate that more calls will be sent to their offices.
- There has been an increase in FEMA denials. There have also been a large number of housing issues including eviction cases.
- There have not been as many consumer issues.
- Although they have been getting basic YLD referrals, the FEMA appeals cases are not being recommended to their offices through the YLD.
- Out of state lawyers must volunteer through the Volunteer Lawyer Program of the bar and not directly through the legal services program under the court order allowing practice.

Texas- David Hall

- Their office is taking on Monty's Spanish speaking callers from Louisiana.
- He is concerned with the YLD hotlines and the lack of referrals.
- There are currently 100,000-125,000 displaced Louisiana residents in the Texas service area.
- Only 111 calls have been received through the hotline referrals.
- Their office is currently doing outreach at the DRCs and is seeing some FEMA appeals.
- The biggest problem they are seeing in the legal services area is the exhausted pool of volunteer lawyers. There are four lawyers at the LSU hotline. The line is staffed for twelve hours per day. They receive around 1,000 calls per week.
- Very few cases are being sent out of the call center because the center is so busy.
- There needs to be a better working relationship between the Texas and Louisiana legal aid offices.
- He would like to get the LSC programs on board with their offices.
- FEMA is not telling people about legal services and the ways in which they can help.
- The YLD turnover is high and there is no disaster action system in place, which would allow for a more organized response.
- It would be great if all the elements of disaster preparedness could be assembled by LSC. Mike responded by saying that LSC was granted \$1 million dollars by Congress for disaster preparedness, and the Katrina Legal Aid website hopes to become a permanent disaster site.

Arkansas- Jean Carter

- There is a big push occurring to get people out of shelters.

- FEMA is canvassing hotels in order to find people and put them into apartments with housing vouchers. There are still 30,000 people in hotels.
- The voucher and housing programs are not maxed out at this point.
- David mentioned that there seems to be a general aversion to expanding the voucher program. There are a greater number of vouchers and housing than what is currently being used.
- There are not a lot of calls coming into the office.
- Bankruptcy was the largest issue, which reached its peak in mid-October.
- The office has been working closely with Arkansas insurance organizations.
- It is very difficult for people to realize that they have a legal problem that a lawyer could help them with.

California- Chancela Al-Mansour

- There is no firm number of evacuees, but over 2,000 people have been served by the Red Cross.
- Their office has been doing outreach at the centers.
- It is the Red Cross and not FEMA that is providing hotels for the victims in California.
- A notice was sent to people in the hotels last week telling them that the Red Cross would no longer be paying for hotel rooms after October 28th, but that decision was repealed without declaring a definite end date to the hotel funding.
- There is no money being given for new Section 8 vouchers and there is currently a wait list.
- Many evacuees are asking for assistance to return home, but no one is sure if this type of assistance is available. Some people were offered one-way bus tickets.
- FEMA has a contract with the Red Cross for hotel rooms.
- The Red Cross was telling people to contact FEMA about paying hotel costs, which confused many of the evacuees, but then the Red Cross decided at the last minute to continue their hotel payments.
- It is hard to get SDA loan applications. Getting long-term FEMA assistance has also been a challenge for many evacuees.

Evictions

- Upwards of 20,000 people are being evicted in New Orleans in their absence.
- Texas has seen a few eviction cases. Without FEMA telling people about legal services, it is hard to inform people that they can get help.
- Willie Abrams asked how people are learning that they have been evicted if they are not in the area. Apparently some people are calling their landlords to find out if they have been evicted, but most evacuees do not know whether or not they have been evicted.
- The evictions cannot be carried out if the person being evicted is not present in court.
- Some legal aid offices are telling the evacuees to write letters to their landlords to inquire about evictions and to give them updated contact information.

ABA- Terry Brooks

- A conference call took place on October 31 between the YLD, the ABA, LSC, and other legal services organizations. The YLD was defensive, but welcomes help and information from other organizations.
- It is going to take time and many more conversations before things start to improve.
- John mentioned that only \$5,000 is given to the YLD per affected state as part of their contract with FEMA to set up the legal aid call centers. This investment is extremely low.
- The YLD contract with FEMA has not changed in a very long time.

NLADA- Don Saunders

- Congressman Davis cannot attend the conference and the NLADA is currently looking for a new speaker, preferably someone from the hurricane affected area. Suggestions are welcome.
- They are hoping to disperse the money from the Helping Hands Fund soon.

LSC- Mike Genz and John Eidleman

- John stated that LSC has made a commitment to get out more information on the website. LSC will be sending out more press releases and public service announcements in hopes of publicizing the site.
- Mike has not received news on supplemental funding as of yet.