

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

*On the call: Terry Brooks, Sam Buchanan, Matthew Burnett, David Hall, Kris Knab,
Mike Monahan, Lindia Robinson and Betty Torres
For LSC: John Eidleman, Willie Abrams and Mike Genz*

ABA (Terry Brooks)

- The ABA continues to address YLD delivery issues. We got some information about the hotline there and forwarded it on to Mississippi. We are trying to achieve a solution.

Mississippi (Lindia Robinson; Sam Buchanan)

- Not much news since the NLADA meeting. It will take a while before the Gulfport office is back; Pascagoula office will be open soon. It will handle cases from the Gulfport area.
- We are still getting evictions and FEMA denials. We are seeing probate issues, FEMA housing issues.
- Training. West Tennessee ran a housing forum, discussing common concerns. Last Tuesday we had a FEMA training given by Kate Meiss. WebEx FEMA appeals training will be on the 29th.
- One of the issues was the need for better coordination among those who would like to help.
 - John E. – Coordination was identified as an issue in Orlando. Bonnie Allen agreed to work on this aspect.
 - Lyndia -- there is need to have a liaison person to work with the Mississippi. Center to do some brainstorming on how to address the needs we have. We are seeing again a lot of evictions, people returning and not having their places. We understand that people have signed up to do research, but we need somebody who can do brainstorming, clarifying of issues. .
 - Sam – A central figure who would be primary contact for us would be very helpful; it wouldn't necessarily have to be somebody with a background in major disasters. Bonnie Allen with the ABA to seek to identify such a resource. .
 - Mike – LeAnna. Hart Gibson also took note of this need in noting the upcoming Equal Justice Works fellowships for experienced attorneys.

Texas (Betty Torres, David Hall)

- There are over 5,000 clients, most of them are in east Texas. We are continuing efforts to keep this in the minds of the public. We are concerned that lawyers are less inclined to take cases.

- FEMA will put legal aid office numbers on the denial efforts. (Staff on the ground hasn't seen letters with legal aid numbers on it yet. The notice was promised beginning November 2nd. The Texas folks will follow up.)
 - The decision to put legal aid numbers on FEMA denial letters applies, for now, only to Texas. It was as a result of a congressional inquiry. Senator John Cornyn. There was a discussion about how to get that extended nationally. There will be follow up on this. Betty will look into it.
- We are also continuing our efforts to raise revenue. \$50,000 is coming. Exxon donated has donated funds. Also, sections of the ABA have contributed to the effort. Conoco is also contributing.
- FEMA has agreed to extend the deadline for hotel placements until Jan. 7th in the main states including LA, TX and MS.
- We have not been seeing a significant increase in the number of calls through the state bar, FEMA hotlines, or others; East TX has received the bulk of the calls in TX. We have gotten 800. North have a similar number. We are getting a lot more of the appeals of FEMA.

Florida (Kris Knab)

- In the panhandle, we are still seeing a lot coming in from hurricane issues.
- In south Florida, finally have some information about Wilma. Broward was slow to get electricity back. There was not much damage to programs except for the two Florida Rural offices. But there are a lot of client issues. Legal aid staff wasn't able to see their clients in shelters. County and government officials are looking for code violations brought about by storm damage, and were going to require residents to leave. The problem is that there is no safe place to. They were trying to address that.

Discussion on National Coordination

- We need to have an institutional capacity to deal with disasters. Reinventing a response for every new crisis is inefficient. It would be helpful to have a "czar" – someone to coordinate things.
- The Florida Bar Association is going to have an annual meeting to prepare each year for the next season. They have been contracting with experts who can help substantively.
- Will the ABA volunteer capacity include major research? Perhaps the ABA could be looking at price gouging and other issues.
- There has to be somebody who is deciding what the issue is; formulate it.
- Terry – it is possible that we could organize people around common issue areas that need to be researched.

Other Needs

- Mike M. So many of the issues are local. If there is a way that that expertise could be spread, that would be helpful.

- Sam B. There is also the need to handle the volume of individual cases that we are getting.
- There is need for funding. No Katrina funds have been earmarked directly for legal services. Efforts to get Katrina to allocate funds for legal services continue.
- Mike M. At this point lawyers on the ground are engaged in a lot of handholding for clients where the legal issues have not yet materialized. Messaging and creating generic materials would be helpful. Getting lawyers to donate financially would be useful.
 - Betty – TX lawyers gave in excess of a million dollars for general Katrina efforts. We have never raised so much money. The next time there is a disaster we need to be there to encourage them to give money out.
 - They put up a link to the Red Cross. Next time, if the Bar had links to local programs, the funds could go straight to legal services.
 - John – perhaps programs can talk to their bar associations about a giving campaign. Should ABA encourage lawyers to give to Legal Services programs in addition to or rather than other organizations such as Red Cross?