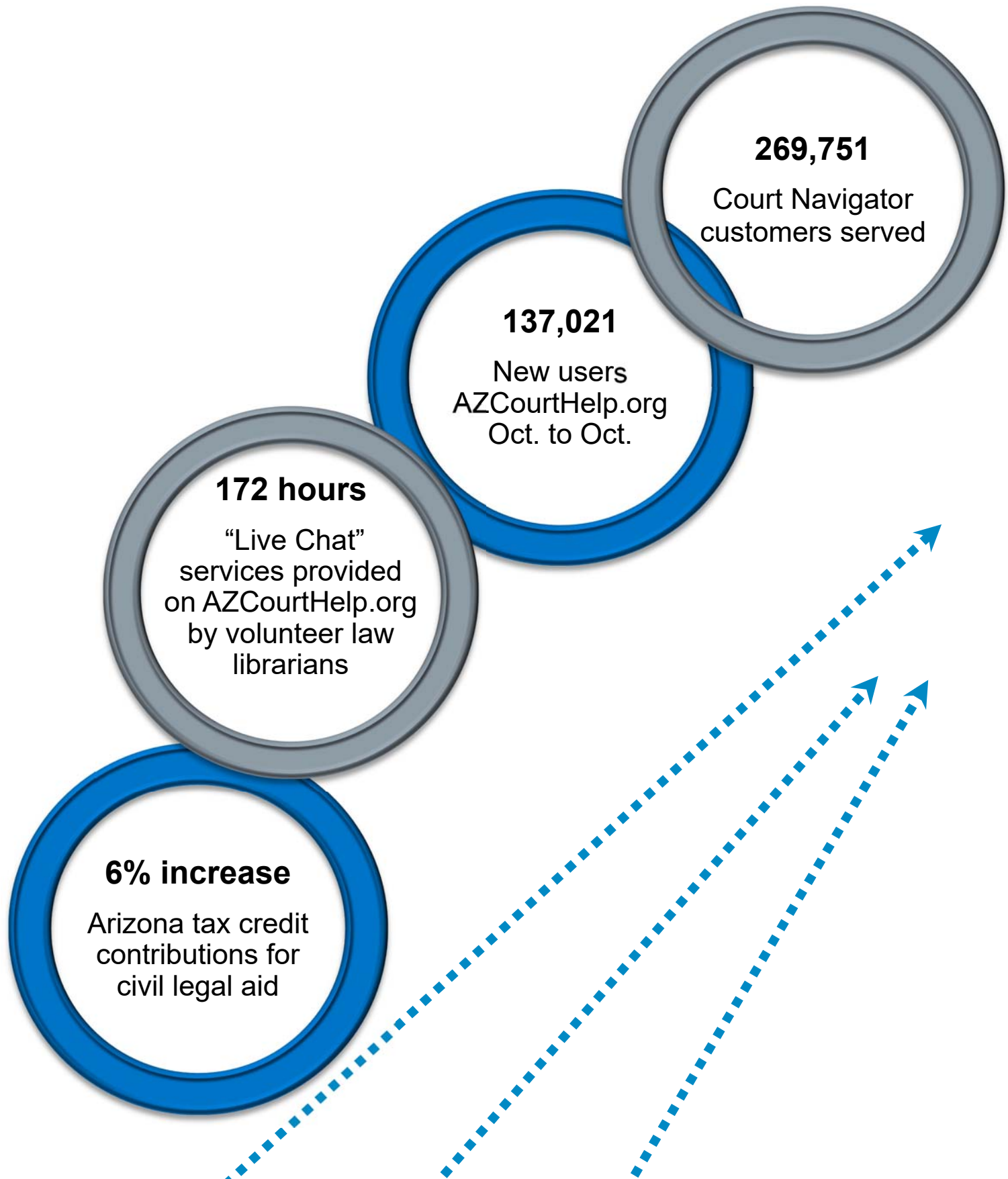




# Arizona Commission on Access to Justice 2018 Annual Report



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# Arizona Commission on Access to Justice

2018 Annual Report

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***“Many people cannot afford or choose not to obtain legal representation in court proceedings. Consequently, the courts must be prepared to assist self-represented individuals in understanding court processes and legal procedures.”***

Chief Justice Scott Bales

*Advancing Justice Together: Courts & Communities*

*2014-2019 Strategic Agenda*

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*Chief Justice Scott Bales*

## Comments from the Chair

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*Judge Lawrence F. Winthrop, Chair*

Ensuring every citizen's right to meaningful access to our court system is not only a critical responsibility of the judicial branch of government but is also one shared by the Executive and Legislative branches of government, the business community, our faith-based organizations, and every community in our state.

Protecting meaningful access to our court system means recognizing and removing barriers. Those barriers can be as obvious as physical challenges for people with disabilities. The location of the courthouse can create distance and transportation challenges.

Communication barriers exist for the thousands of Arizonans for whom English is a second language and are made worse by court forms and instructions that are not easily understood and completed by the average individual. Barriers are also driven by economics and an inability – both real and perceived – to hire a lawyer. The poverty rate in the United States, per the latest data, has dropped to 12.3 percent, the lowest it has been since the economic recession several years ago. The poverty rate in Arizona, although lower than in recent years, is still two-plus percentage points higher than the national average. Finding lawyers, particularly in areas outside of Phoenix and Tucson, remains problematic. The availability of civil legal aid services is outstripped by population growth and the expanding need for legal help involving housing, employment, medical care and consumer issues, and funding for legal aid remains a contentious political issue in Congress.

We can't guarantee that every person facing a civil legal problem will have access to a lawyer. We can, however, help that person connect with a volunteer lawyer and if a lawyer is not available, we can demystify the court process, and help that person navigate the judicial system.

In 2014, the Arizona Supreme Court formalized its commitment to improving access to justice with the creation of the Arizona Commission on Access to Justice. I invite you to take a look at the Commission's website, <https://www.azcourts.gov/cscommittees/Arizona-Commission-on-Access-to-Justice>, which contains a lot of information about Arizona-specific access to justice issues and provides links to our prior annual reports.

We continue to work on eliminating or reducing these barriers. A lot of progress has been made in providing accessible, useful legal information to the public; the value, content and use of the Arizona's legal information resource center, [AZCourtHelp](#), continues to grow every day. The court navigator program launched in Maricopa County Superior Court assists over 100,000 people each year, and we hope to see similar programs launched in other Arizona counties over the coming years. The availability of accessing on-line dispute resolution – overcoming barriers of work obligations, child care, distance and transportation – will become a reality in 2019 with the launch of pilot programs in multiple jurisdictions and will greatly increase the number of individuals able to actively participate in their court case. Finally, we are collaborating with the Executive Branch to provide legal assistance in the new Second Chance Centers and to expand legal help for those who are victims of domestic violence, for veterans and for victims of the opioid crisis.

## Major Accomplishments to Date



### Court Navigator Program

In the third year of the Maricopa County Superior Court's Providing Access to Court Services (PACS)/AmeriCorps navigator program, 54 undergraduate students from Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, Grand Canyon University, and several community colleges in Maricopa County, are trained and serve as AmeriCorps Navigators in the Law Library Resource Center ("LLRC").

The volunteers serve in the court's four valley locations, as well as the Coconino County Superior Court. The students, supervised by court staff, assist self-represented litigants with several types of legal problems, such as family law issues (divorce, legal decision-making and parenting time, and child support issues), probate, civil, and criminal matters.



*National AmeriCorps Director, Chester Spellman, visits the Court Navigator Program in the Superior Court in Maricopa County on December 11, 2017. Visit was co-hosted by Judges Dean Fink and David Gass.*

## How are the PACS/AmeriCorps volunteers helping the court?

The student navigators take the time to escort self-represented litigants to the proper courtroom, assist people who need to complete court forms and help them find applicable legal information. Also, many of the volunteers are bi-lingual, adding another level of customer service for non-English speaking litigants.



*Court Navigators sworn in by Judge David Gass*



*Karen Korematsu, Founder and Executive Director of the Fred T. Korematsu Institute, visits the Court Navigator Program.*

The Law Library Resource Center also partners with the ASU Arizona Legal Center to provide court customers with 15 minutes of free on-site legal advice from volunteer attorneys two days per week.

In the last 12 months, AmeriCorps Navigators have assisted more than 100,000 self-represented litigants.

### Just the Numbers

#### Year 1

January 11, 2016 through August 31, 2016

68,095 customers assisted  
1,636 customers escorted  
12,025 hours served

#### Year 2

September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017

101,446 customers assisted  
1,297 customers escorted  
19,660 hours served

#### Year 3

September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018

100,210 customers assisted  
809 customers escorted  
19,741 hours served

#### Total to date

January 11, 2016 through August 31, 2018

269,751 customers assisted  
3,742 customers escorted  
51,426 hours served

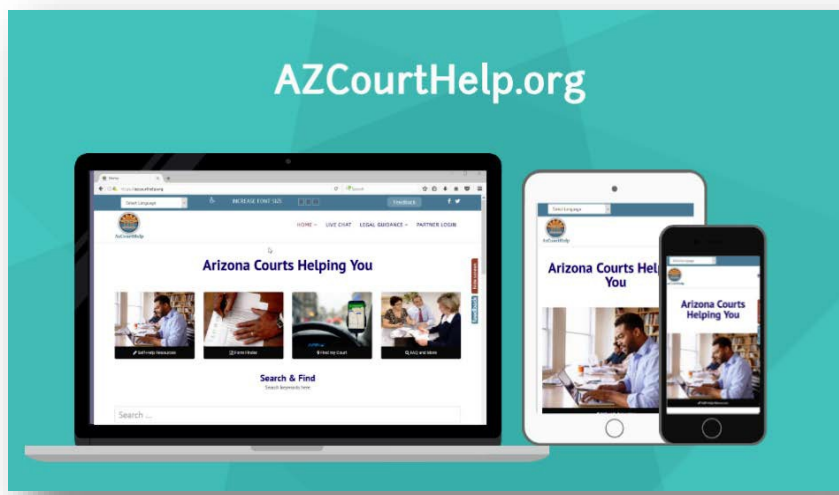


## Statewide Virtual Legal Resource Center

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Since the virtual resource center's launch in January 2017, AZCourtHelp.org has assisted over 115,000 individuals to find court-related legal help. Resource information for AZCourtHelp.org is gathered from the 15 Arizona counties through in-person meetings, organized committees, and ongoing collaborations with state and local entities. Cathleen Cole, AZCourtHelp.org Content Manager at the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education (AZFLSE), along with others, maintains the site daily, adding and editing materials that have been curated. The core features of the site are:

- Legal information for 35 topic areas
- A legal glossary with 672 entries
- Fillable superior court forms for self-represented litigants in both English and Spanish
- ADA and language compliance through the use of an audio component that reads text in English and 54 other languages, high contrast imaging for those with color blindness, text resizing, font alteration for those with dyslexia, image captions, and Google translate features
- A map component with 384 detailed court, probation, police, Motor Vehicle Department, and Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) locations
- A live chat program that is virtually staffed by eight law librarians in different counties
- An online user survey in English and Spanish that allows for continued input and feedback on the site's functionality and content
- Notification of "Legal Talks" information and logistics for the public and volunteers



*Functionality on a variety of platforms—cell phones, tablets, and personal computers*

AZFLSE also makes use of **Google Analytics** reports that provide a great deal of information and insight about how the site is being accessed and what content is being viewed. The reports reflect the number of people who are conducting organic searches, the number of referrals from other websites, top languages used, top cities visiting the website, specific pages viewed, and whether the website was accessed by desktop, mobile devices, or tablets. These reports are carefully studied and analyzed to enhance the delivery of useful information. (See [Marketing Bytes...and Sites, Apps and Other Digital Properties](#) for information regarding specific reports and information captured.)

Month	Organic Search	Referral	Direct	Google Ad	Social Media
December 2017	3,644 (54%)	1,882 (28%)	1,043 (15%)	205 (3%)	16 (>1%)
January 2018	5,582 (55%)	2,504 (25%)	1,518 (15%)	447 (4%)	139 (1%)
February 2018	6,106 (61%)	2,286 (23%)	1,247 (13%)	339 (3%)	14 (>1%)
March 2018	7,002 (52%)	2,393 (18%)	1,889 (14%)	857 (6%)	1,373 (10%)
April 2018	8,335 (60%)	2,377 (17%)	1,645 (12%)	1,054 (8%)	463 (3%)

*This Google Analytics User Acquisition Table tracks users by the acquisition source: organically, by a referral from another webpage, direct, through a Google ad, or through social media. From "Marketing Bytes...and Sites, Apps & Other Digital Properties."*

Since the beginning of the July 1, 2017 grant cycle Google Analytics reports the following data for the AZCourtHelp.org website:

- 129,901 sessions by 107,488 unique users
- Over 348,622 pages were viewed, averaging 3.09 pages per user
- Top languages used: English, Spanish, and French
- Top cities visiting: Phoenix (12,464), Tucson (2,846), and Los Angeles (3,616)
- Accessed on: desktops (51,414), mobile devices (50,630), and tablets (5,538)
- Highest number of referrals were from AZLawHelp.org (11,749), AZCourts.gov (7,713), and courts.Yavapai.us (1,610)

Another valuable addition to the existing eviction topic section on AZCourtHelp.org is a series of short "Legal Info Videos" in English and Spanish that cover specific legal issues such as:



- *"How do I get my deposit back?"*
- *"Requesting continuances in eviction action"*
- *"What is a stipulated judgment?"*
- *"What can a tenant do? My landlord is not following the lease"*

The video series addresses legal information regarding residential, mobile homes, and recreational vehicles. The videos are also co-located on the Legal Info Hub on [www.azcourts.gov](http://www.azcourts.gov) website.



Requesting continuances in eviction actions



When is a landlord required to accept payment?



What Landlords Need to Know Before Going to Court



Overview of Tenant Defenses



What Will Happen in Court



What can a tenant do? My landlord is not following the lease.




Tenant Defenses for Non-Payment of Rent



What Will Happen in Court



What Landlords Need to Know Before Going to Court



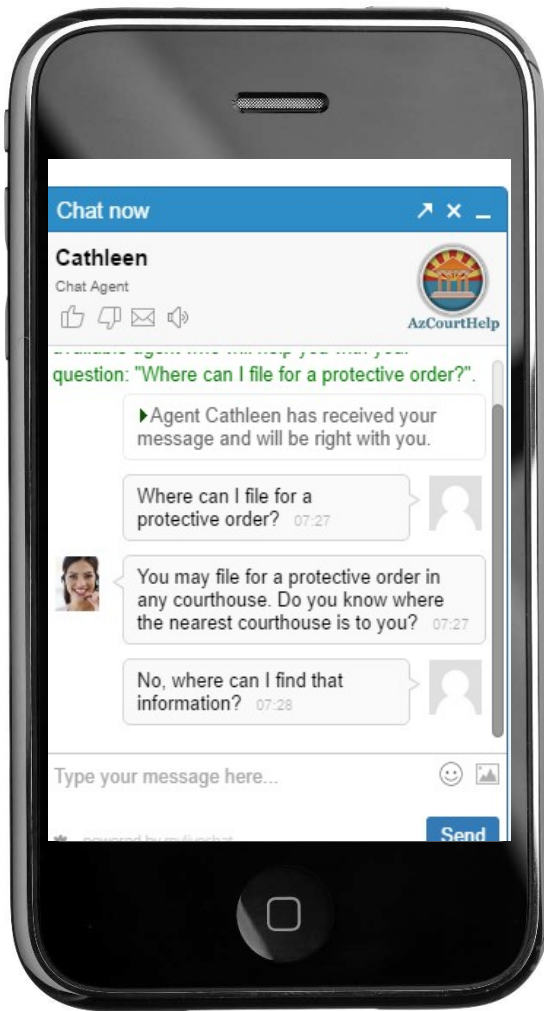
Información para los arrendadores que acuden al juzgado para una acción de desalojo



¿Qué es una sentencia acordada?



¿Qué puede hacer un inquilino? Mi arrendador no cumple con el contrato de alquiler.



One of the most valuable features offered through the AZCourtHelp.org website is the “Live Chat” function. When a law librarian is available, the blue chat tab will appear in the bottom of the screen. Users are asked to provide name, email address, language spoken, and their question. The only required field is the language preferred in which to receive services.

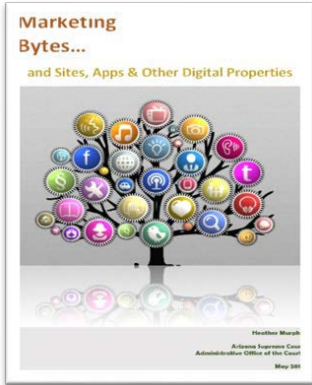
For the period of January 2, 2018 through September 30, 2018 a total of 604 chat sessions were conducted, averaging 10 minutes each chat, for a total of 6,090 minutes or 101.5 hours. Since February 1, 2017 volunteer law librarians have participated in 922 sessions for a total number of 172 hours. In addition to English, chat services have been provided in Spanish, Chinese, and Urdu.

*“Being a chat agent for azcourthelp.org has allowed me to assist many individuals throughout the state. I routinely receive feedback of appreciation for the service. [AZCourtHelp.org](http://AZCourtHelp.org) is a wonderful tool to ensure access to justice.”*  
 ~Lori A. Linn, Law Librarian, Mohave Superior Court/County Training Coordinator

The Arizona Commission on Access to Justice thanks and recognizes the following law librarians that volunteer time in their very busy schedules to assist Arizona’s self-represented litigants.

Gretchen Hornberger	Coconino Superior Court Law Library
Shawn Friend	Maricopa Superior Court Law Library
Bryan Hohnen	Maricopa Superior Court Law Library
Valerie Lerma	Maricopa Superior Court Law Library
Jackie Traher	Maricopa Superior Court Law Library
Jon Voight	Maricopa Superior Court Law Library
Lori Lynn	Mohave Superior Court Law Library
Shannon Munoz	Yavapai Superior Court Law Library
Craig Robinson	Yavapai Superior Court Law Library





## A Case Study of AZCourtHelp.org

AZCourtHelp.org was launched to the public in January 2017 as the technology connection between the court user and a powerhouse menu of court resources. Heather Murphy, former Administrative Office of the Courts Public Information Officer and Chair of the ACAJ Public Information and Messaging Workgroup, authored a white paper that outlined how traditional and digital marketing concepts were combined to maximize the awareness of the AZCourtHelp.org website and other emerging technology products used to increase access to justice. The paper presented a case study of AZCourtHelp.org, which demonstrated how to move from marketing concepts to implementing a successful combined traditional and marketing campaign. [Marketing Bytes...and Sites, Apps & Other Digital Properties](#)

The Time Frames table below is an example of just one of the detailed reports from the case study.

The Time Frames table indicates overall use reflecting that users, new users, and sessions on the site doubled from December to the end of April; that the largest increase in new users per day was from December to January; and there was a total of **51,837 new users** during this five-month period.


Time Frames	Users	Avg Per day users	New Users	Avg Per day new users	Sessions	Avg Per day sessions
Dec 1 - Dec 31, 2017	6,796	219	6,452	208	7,835	253
Jan 1 - Jan 31, 2018	10,107	326	9,720	314	11,773	380
Feb 1 - Feb 28, 2018	9,879	353	9,527	340	11,437	408
Mar 1 - Mar 31, 2018	13,237	427	12,866	415	15,558	502
April 1- April 30, 2018	13,685	456	13,272	442	15,875	529

Fig. 1. Time Frames Table











## Q & R Handbook - Update

To assist all court staff in assisting self-represented litigants, the Commission published an updated “Question and Response” Handbook, available in both electronic and printable format. This information has now been incorporated into the “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) feature on the AZCourtHelp.org website and on azcourts.gov. The information in the Handbook has been placed into 38 categories on the websites, totaling 483 questions. The categories that have been expanded upon or added on the azcourts.gov website include: criminal, domestic violence, jury service, parent education, and small claims in both English and Spanish. To date users have viewed over 64,000 pages in the FAQ section.

### Legal Info FAQs



If you are looking for some general information and procedural guidance, please click on one of the tiles below to view frequently asked questions about particular topics.

  <b>Criminal</b>	  <b>Domestic Violence</b>	  <b>Jury</b>	  <b>Parent Education</b>
  <b>Small Claims</b>			

*“Frequently Asked Questions” topics listed on the AzCourts.gov webpage.*

## NEW! - Yuma County Law Library Self-Represented Services

Coconino County Law Library served as the first physical hub for the Virtual Legal Resource Center, which offers “Legal Talks” on such subjects as “Divorce 101” in both English and Spanish. Recently the Yuma County Law Library completed a re-design of a dedicated space that better serves self-represented litigants. The project was a collaborative effort with the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts and the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education to join Coconino County and serve as a hub for expanded services for self-represented litigants through legal clinics and informational talks.



*Top photo: The Yuma County Law Library space prior to repurposing as a space to benefit self-represented litigants.*



*Bottom photo: The Yuma County Law Library space starts to get a make-over.*



*The Yuma County Law Library Self-Represented Litigant Services sparkles with a modern room, A/V equipment, and the ability to offer self-represented litigants real-time Spanish translation for clinics.*



*Yuma County Law Library Self-Represented Litigant Services is the recipient of the 2018 Strategic Agenda Awards for "Improving Court Processes to Better Serve the Public." From left to right: Chief Justice Scott Bales, Danae Figueroa, Law Library Manager; (back row) Presiding Judge David Haws; Kathy Schaeben, Court Administrator and Judge Roger Nelson.*

## Recognizing *Pro Bono* Service and Access to Justice

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For the last several years, the Governor has proclaimed April as [Access to Justice Month](#) in Arizona. Last year, one issue of the “[Arizona Attorney](#)” magazine, published by the State Bar of Arizona and distributed to 20,000-plus Arizona attorneys, featured a cover article honoring *pro bono* volunteers and highlighting the importance of Access to Justice.



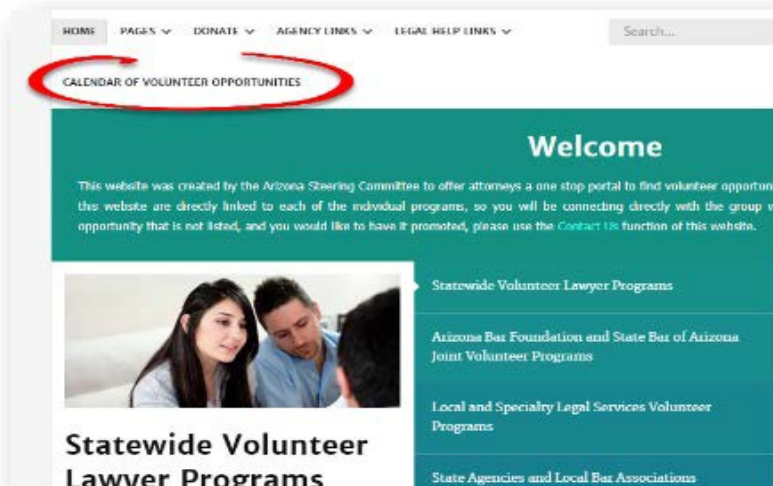
## *Pro Bono* Opportunities Portal - Update

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The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education has created an online portal (<http://probono.azbf.org/>) for lawyers that identifies *pro bono* opportunities around the state. In collaboration with various partners, the site is being enhanced to increase accessibility for date-specific opportunities. This feature will allow a user to match a *pro bono* opportunity with their personal calendar to take advantage of specific events, such as the “We the People” competition that occurs every January.

The involvement of the *Pro Bono* Network, a recently formed group of legal service organizations using volunteer lawyers, has increased the list of agencies through which attorneys can meet the Ethical Rule 6.1 50-hour *pro bono* aspirational goal. Some of the new qualifying agencies include the Arizona Center for Disability Law, Christian Legal Aid, and Step Up to Justice. In the first nine months of 2018, 1,065 individuals have used the portal website.

*Access to the calendar is located on the main page entitled Calendar of Volunteer Opportunities.*

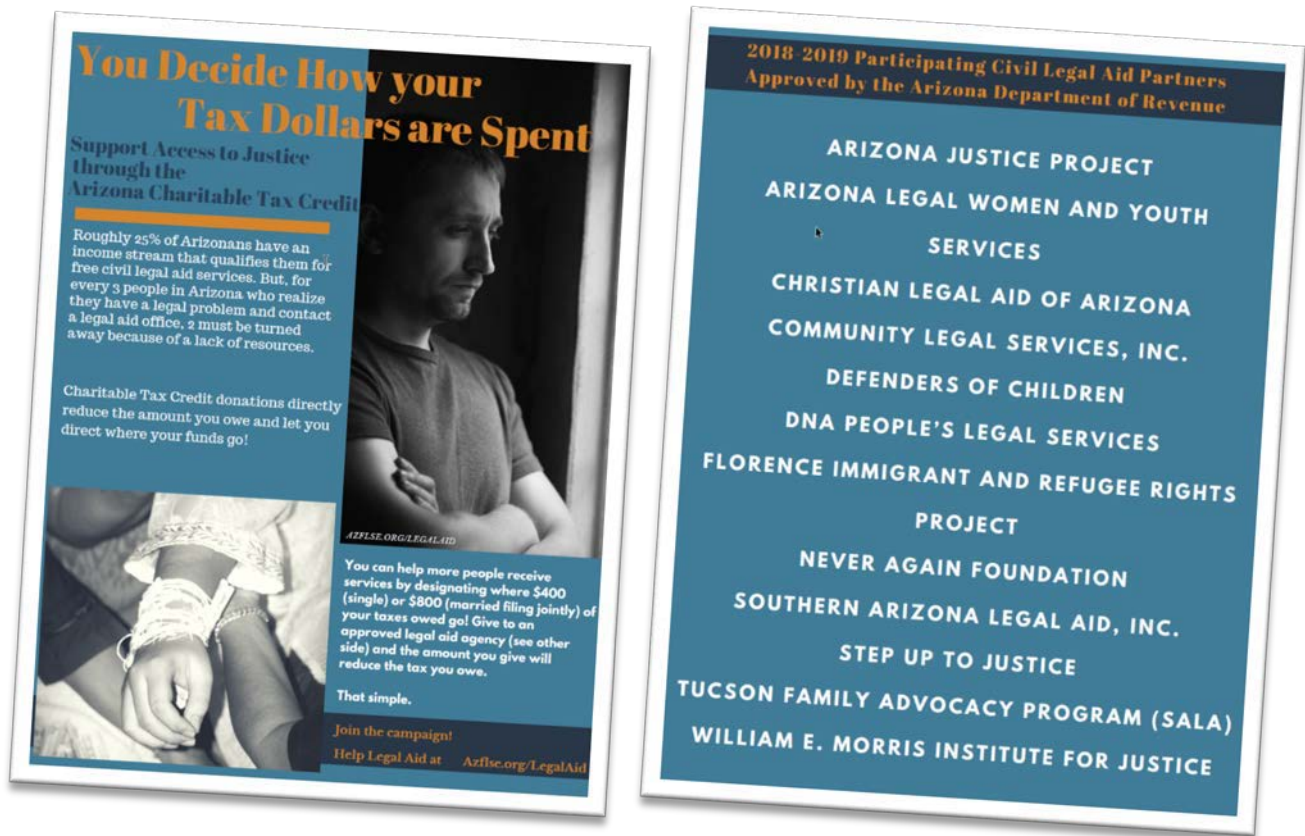


## Arizona State Tax Credit Funding Support

Since 2014, the Commission has encouraged and promoted the use of the Arizona Tax Credit qualifying donations to non-profit charitable organizations that provide legal assistance to the poor. In 2016 the total rose to \$263,018, representing a greater than 400 percent increase since 2014. In 2017, that number increased again, to a total of \$277,282, representing a six percent increase over last year's donations.

Two new agencies were added to the list of non-profit civil legal aid partners that are approved by the Arizona Department of Revenue: Arizona Justice Project and Never Again Foundation.

In the Fifty-Second Legislature, Second Regular Session 2016, [\(SB1216\)](#) this program was expanded to allow a state tax credit up to \$400 for a single individual or a head of household and \$800 for a married couple filing a joint return.



2018 State Tax Credit Flyer representing 12 Civil Legal Aid Partners

# Current and Anticipated Initiatives in 2018-2019

## Webpage Improvements and Development of “Legal Info Sheets”

Through its Self-Represented Litigants in Limited Jurisdiction Courts Work Group (SRL-LJC), the Commission will continue to develop informational videos for self-represented litigants in housing-related litigation. These videos are located on the [azcourts.gov](http://azcourts.gov) and [AZCourtHelp.org](http://AZCourtHelp.org) websites. Additionally, based on SRL-LJC recommendations, the [azcourts.gov](http://azcourts.gov) webpage has been enhanced to improve the self-represented litigant’s experience using the eviction action section of the site.

**Legal Info Sheets: Landlord/Tenant Disputes & Eviction**

**NOTICES**

- Non-Payment of Rent
- Material Breach 5-day Notice
- Material Breach 10-day Notice
- Material Breach Immediate

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- After an Eviction Judgment
- Arizona Residential Landlord Tenant Act
- Claims Against your Landlord
- Landlord's Obligations
- Mobile Home Park Evictions
- Rules of Procedure for Eviction Actions (RPEA)
- Section 8 Housing
- Tenant's Obligations

**Non-Payment of Rent**  
A.R.S. § 33-1201(B)

The following does not apply to mobile home park evictions, recreational vehicle park evictions, and certain residential housing. Before a summons that may be filed to you and a complaint for legal advice. There are other rules and laws that may be applicable to your situation, but there are common rules and laws that apply in eviction actions.

A.R.S. means Arizona Revised Statutes and RPEA means Rules of Procedure for Eviction Actions.

- 1 NOTICE**
  - You (landlord) must give your written notice that your rent is unpaid and that your rental agreement will terminate if rent is not paid in 5 days. A.R.S. § 33-1201(B)
  - In a notice for non-payment of rent, landlord cannot file the eviction action until after the final day of the notice.
  - If you did not receive a termination notice and a chance to pay the rent and late fees, the notice does not comply with the law or was not properly served, the court must dismiss the eviction action. [RPEA § 33-1201\(B\)](#)
- 2 SERVICE**
  - Generally, an eviction summons and complaint must be served in one of two ways:
    - (a) personally served on you, or
    - (b) posted in an obvious place and mailed to you by certified mail. [RPEA § 33-1201\(B\)](#)
- 3 ANSWER**
  - Twenty (20) calendar days after your answer is filed in court on the record of the court sets a trial date, you may be contacted by the written answer. [RPEA § 33-1201\(B\)](#)
  - If you cannot attend the trial, file the court for the appropriate application in order to not pay the fee when you file. [http://www.azcourts.gov/court/eviction](#)
- 4 REINSTATING THE RENTAL AGREEMENT**
  - If the eviction filing by non-payment of rent, the rental agreement will be reinstated if you pay all past due rent, late fees that appear in a written rental agreement, attorney fees, and court costs before judgment is entered. [A.R.S. § 33-1201\(B\)](#)

Arizona Supreme Court  
Legal Info Sheet: Eviction Actions: Non-Payment of Rent 1  
AZC18AD134-000017

**Section 8 Housing**  
A.R.S. § 33-1201(B)

The following applies to Housing Choice Vouchers ("Section 8 Vouchers"). Before a information that may be provided to you, read the information that may be provided to you, and read the rules that may be applicable to your situation, but there are common rules and laws that apply in regarding Section 8 Vouchers. C.F.R. means Code of Federal Regulations.

- 1 TENANT'S PORTION OF THE RENT**
  - You (tenant) are only responsible for the amount of rent only responsible for their portion of the rent. [42 C.F.R. § 982.308\(a\)\(2\)](#)
  - A landlord may demand from the tenant more than the tenant's portion of the rent as determined by Section 8. [42 C.F.R. § 982.308\(a\)\(2\)](#)
- 2 SECTION 8'S PORTION OF THE RENT**
  - As long as the tenant complies with the Section 8 program, a landlord cannot seek a portion of Section 8 that is not part of the rent. [42 C.F.R. § 982.308\(a\)\(2\)](#)
  - If a landlord is seeking a portion of the rent, you can request a hearing to stop Section 8 program or HUD's Fraud Hotline at (800) 343-7443. This will not end the eviction case against you.
  - If Section 8 has to pay rent or pay the portion of rent, the tenant is not responsible for the late fees or the tenant's portion of the rent. Another example, if a tenant pays 10 percent of the rent and Section 8 pays late, the tenant is not responsible for late fees. [42 C.F.R. § 982.615](#)
- 3 HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS)**
  - HQS inspectors are inspectors conducted by Section 8 to ensure the unit meets housing quality standards and is safe. [42 C.F.R. § 982.308](#)
  - Periodically, Section 8 is required to conduct an HQS inspection of the household and to make sure it is in good standing. [42 C.F.R. § 982.308](#)
  - If the unit does not pass the HQS inspection or if the landlord is not, the tenant may file a complaint with the landlord for the month the unit failed the HQS inspection. [42 C.F.R. § 982.615](#)
  - If the unit is not in good standing and Section 8 pays late, the tenant is not responsible for late fees. [42 C.F.R. § 982.615](#)
  - If the unit is not in good standing and Section 8 has not paid its portion of the rent, a landlord cannot file an eviction action to evict the tenant as long as the tenant has paid its portion of the rent. [42 C.F.R. § 982.615](#)

Arizona Supreme Court  
Legal Info Sheet: Eviction Actions: Section 8  
Information Sheet  
1  
AZC18AD134-000017

People can now easily access the specific eviction topic by clicking on user-friendly, self-explanatory tiles. Each tile corresponds to a “Legal Info Sheet” that explains the process and procedure in plain language for a variety of housing notices and issues.

## Redesign of the Arizona Judicial Branch's Self-Service Center

A new redesigned Self-Service Center is now available in both English and Spanish on the Arizona Judicial Branch's website to assist self-represented litigants and other users. The web addresses, however, have not changed. The English Self-Service Center is located at <https://www.azcourts.gov/selfservicecenter> and the Spanish Self-Service Center is located at <http://www.azcourts.gov/elcentrodeautoservicio>.

This redesign is a major website update intended to help self-represented individuals navigate the courts. The Self-Service Centers feature updated and expanded content organized with tiles, or buttons, to navigate easily throughout the website. The easy-to-use format is designed to help the public access and learn about courts and court processes.

The new English Self-Service Center landing page features six tiles dividing the content between Locations, Topics, Forms & Instructions, eFiling Information, and Resources, with a tile for the Spanish Self-Service Center.

Existing topic pages were enhanced, and

new topic pages were created for appeals, domestic violence, eviction, garnishment, small claims, tax law, and traffic law. Forms pages were also expanded in areas of civil, criminal, eviction, family law, and small claims. Hub pages were developed to educate the public about eFiling, jury service, and victims.

Forms pages were expanded, and new topic pages were created for appeals, civil, criminal, domestic violence, eviction, family law, garnishment, probate, small claims, tax law, and traffic law. The Spanish Self-Service Center also includes hub pages for eFiling, jury service, and victims. In collaboration with Maricopa County Superior Court, over 400 forms in English and 400 forms in Spanish have been developed that are generic in nature and may be accepted by courts statewide. In collaboration with the AOC's language access coordinator, 78 topic and forms pages were translated to date into Spanish, as well as numerous AOC forms and instructions, FAQs, and other resources.



*Special attention was taken to create a separate Spanish Self-Service Center that mirrors the English Self-Service Center and continues to grow. The Spanish Self-Service Center features the same six tiles on the landing page as the English Self-Service Center.*

## NEW! - Legal Info Hub

The Commission's workgroups have developed many legal resources for self-represented litigants to improve access to justice. This content was created in different formats and is already available on individual topic webpages like eviction actions and domestic violence.



Legal Info Podcasts  
Legal Info Videos  
Legal Info Sheets  
Legal Info FAQs

With the concept spreading to other committees, a new Legal Info Hub was created as the central repository for the Arizona Supreme Court's Legal Info Podcasts, Legal Info Videos, Legal Info Sheets, and Legal Info FAQs. The hub will go live on December 1, 2018 and complements the redesign of the Arizona Judicial Branch's Self-Service Center, which was recently launched in both English and Spanish. The Legal Info Videos, Legal Info Sheets, and Legal Info FAQs have been translated into Spanish. Legal Info Podcasts were transcribed and translated into Spanish.

**Azcourts.gov**  
Arizona Judicial Branch

Home | AZ Courts | AZ Supreme Court | Court Admin/AOC | Self-Service | Licensing & Regulation | Publications & Reports

Home / Self-Service Center / Legal Info Hub

### Legal Info Hub

The Arizona Commission on Access to Justice was established in 2014 as part of Chief Justice Scott Bales' Strategic Agenda. Since then, the commission's workgroups have developed many legal resources for self-represented litigants to improve access to justice. This content was created in different formats: Legal Info Podcasts, Legal Info Videos, Legal Info Sheets and Legal Info FAQs. This content can already be found on individual topic webpages like eviction actions and domestic violence.

With the concept spreading to other committees, a new Legal Info Hub was created as the central repository for the Arizona Supreme Court's Legal Info Podcasts, Legal Info Videos, Legal Info Sheets, and Legal Info FAQs. This Legal Info Hub will go live on December 1, 2018 and complements the redesign of the Arizona Judicial Branch's Self-Service Center, which was recently launched in both English and Spanish.

Special attention was placed on creating an equivalent Legal Info Hub for self-represented litigants who speak and read Spanish. The Legal Info Videos, Legal Info Sheets, and Legal Info FAQs have been translated into Spanish. Legal Info Podcasts were transcribed and translated into Spanish.

Legal Info Podcasts | Legal Info Videos | Legal Info Sheets | Legal Info FAQs | Self-Service Center



## Continue to Support and Promote Adequate Legal Aid Funding

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The Legal Service Corporation (LSC) was created by Congress in 1974 to provide uniform standards and federal funding for legal aid agencies in each state. 2019 budget recommendations from the White House/Office of Management and Budget propose eliminating all federal funding for civil legal aid. Arizona's current share of LSC funding ranges from \$11 to 13 million and constitutes approximately 70 percent of the total funding that allows these already-overtaxed entities to provide legal services to Arizona's poverty population. Elimination of federal funding would seriously disrupt an already-fragile legal aid system in Arizona and would jeopardize meaningful access to justice for well over 20 percent of Arizona's citizens. National court and legal organizations and national business organizations are publicly united in opposition to any cuts to federal funding for legal aid. Meetings with our elected federal representatives thus far have been encouraging in that they all recognize the importance of civil legal aid and the value such services provide to people across Arizona. Completion of the 2019 budget process has stalled; however, as a result of the outreach described above, the President on September 28 signed H.R. 6157 (P.L. 115-245) that provides full-year funding for the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Education. The bill also includes a continuing resolution to ensure that the entire federal government will be funded through December 7, 2018. This includes maintaining LSC funding at its current level of \$410 million. The Commission, with the approval of the Supreme Court, will continue to raise public awareness and advocate for maintaining or increasing federal funding for legal aid services.



## “Justice in Government” Project - Update

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With the approval of the Governor’s office, Arizona is participating in a pilot project bringing together the various state agencies that provide services to our poverty population, sharing information and best practices and, through accessing existing and potential state, federal or foundation block grants, looking for ways to add civil legal aid services to the menu of services these agencies provide to their constituents. Statistical data indicate that, when legal services are provided, the affected agency’s mission is advanced. In that regard, a collaborative project with the Department of Economic Security, the Bar Foundation, the domestic violence shelters across the state and Arizona’s legal aid agencies has been providing legal services to victims of domestic violence across Arizona through volunteer lawyers and lay legal advocates. Through September of 2018, the Domestic Violence Legal Assistance Project (DVLAP) provided direct legal assistance and lay legal advocacy to 6,043 victims of domestic violence and their families. Additionally, 2,719 victims received assistance in self-help clinics and workshops. Volunteer lawyers donated 2,268 hours of time to victims, with a donation value in excess of half a million dollars. And DVLAP staff reached 53,464 members of the general public in community-based presentations and provided civil legal education specific to domestic violence issues.

In October, the Arizona Bar Foundation was awarded a two-year, \$ 1.1 million federal VOCA Vision 21 grant to improve technology services for all Arizona victims of crime, including victims of domestic violence, elder abuse and consumer fraud. Sub-grantees for this award will include Community Legal Services, DNA People’s Legal Services, Southern Arizona Legal Aid and the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence.

Legal assistance is the biggest factor in successful reentry into the community, in removing barriers to employment and in preventing recidivism, and the Commission continues to work with the Governor’s task force on reentry and recidivism to ensure that civil legal services are available to participants in the new Second Chance Centers.

In May, Arizona representatives made a presentation on the Justice in Government project to a national meeting of state supreme court justices and access to justice commission chairs and staff. Future collaborative projects may include providing legal assistance to veterans and to victims of the opioid crisis and looking at steps to improve meaningful participation in agency administrative hearings for self-represented litigants.



## Online Dispute Resolution - Update

As facilitated by the Commission, the Administrative Office of the Courts continues to study the viability of an online dispute resolution option for self-represented litigants.

Based on information initially provided by the Commission, the Administrative Office of the Courts is currently conducting a Proof of Concept Pilot in multiple courts to determine whether Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) could be viable in helping to resolve cases in Arizona courts. The technology platform allows litigants to provide and receive information and actively negotiate their civil legal dispute through an on-line resource without having to leave work or their home to travel to a courthouse. Pilot courts in Yuma and Pinal counties will be addressing family law cases with the use of court mediators regarding requests to modify child support, parenting-time, and legal decision-making matters. (Administrative Order No. [2018-78](#)) If parties reach an agreement, the confirming documents can be executed using electronic signatures, and electronically filed with the court. A recent administrative order was issued that eliminates the need in this application for such agreements to be notarized. If approved, this administrative change will go into effect in January 2019.

Scottsdale Municipal Court is also preparing to pilot an ODR program that can accept plea documents from the city prosecutor and defendant for the purpose of facilitating telephonic pleas for misdemeanor cases.

In July, the Maricopa County Superior Court launched the Accountability and Enforcement Court (ACE). This court will supervise a separate ODR pilot for family and civil cases. Additionally, Maricopa County Superior Court is launching an on-line platform to allow parties to remotely resolve credit card debt cases under \$50,000.

The Maricopa County projects should be implemented by the end of September 2018 with the three pilots from the Administrative Office of the Courts to launch shortly thereafter. Future plans include creating a statewide Request for Quotes, which will allow courts to independently select and purchase the on-line dispute resolution product that best meets their specific business needs.

## Corporate Counsel *Pro Bono* Initiative

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We continue to work with the Arizona Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, in conjunction with its In-House Counsel Pro Bono Commission (IHCPBC). The IHCPBC, chaired by Kevin Groman, was developed to increase *pro bono* participation of corporate counsel and their outside law firms. To date, these efforts have resulted in corporate counsel partnering with schools and colleges to improve the pipeline of future lawyers, helping to represent immigrant children and refugees, assisting veterans with startup businesses as a part of their Phoenix based incubator, and serving first responders through the Wills for Heroes program. Many of the legal departments at Arizona-based companies are becoming more actively engaged in *pro bono* efforts. For example, Pinnacle West's legal department created a clinic in partnership with Wills for Heroes. This clinic for the past 12 months has helped 105 veterans and their spouses, prepared more than 315 legal documents, logged over 513 volunteer hours and 238 *pro bono* hours. Intel's corporate law department regularly staffs a debt counseling clinic for low income residents. Other clinics are staffed with volunteers from the Salt River Project, APS, Blue Cross/Blue Shield and USAA Insurance legal departments.



*Pinnacle West Clinic Team*

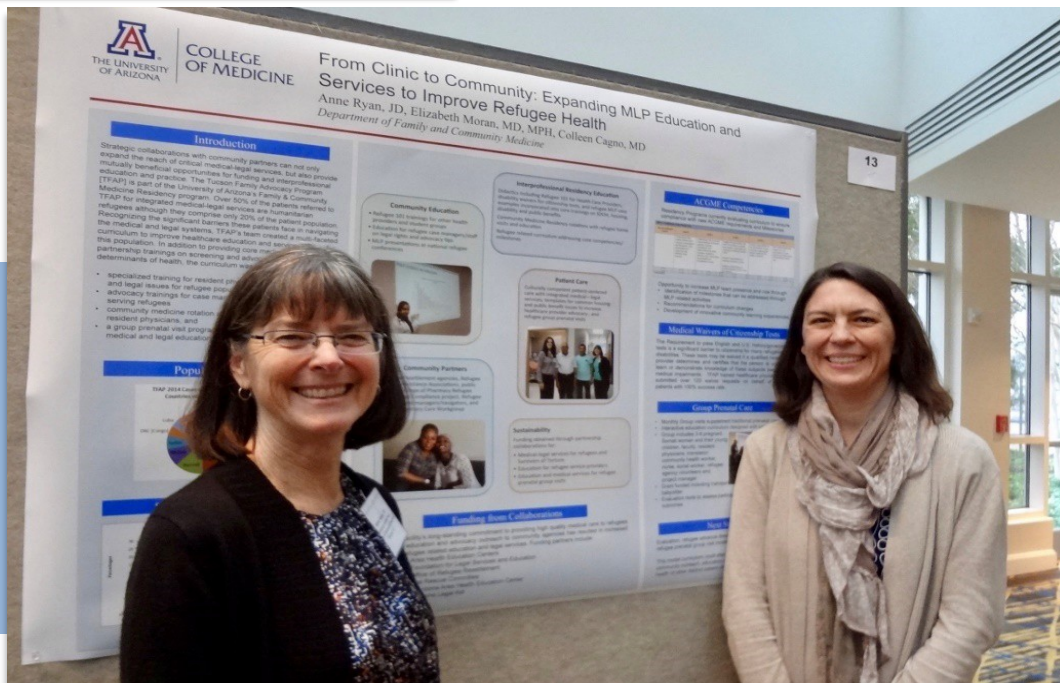
## Promote Medical Legal Partnerships

The Tucson Family Advocacy Program (TFAP) is a multidisciplinary partnership of medical and legal providers in the University of Arizona (UA) Department of Family and Community Medicine working together to improve patient health. As part of the UA Family Medicine's Residency Programs, TFAP teaches healthcare providers about legal barriers to patient health and how they can become more effective advocates for their patients. TFAP also provides free legal assistance to referred low-income patients in areas affecting health including access to health care, public benefits, disability-related matters, and advance care planning. More than half of referred patients in 2017 had physical or behavioral health disabilities or arrived in the United States with humanitarian refugee status. By combining the unique strengths of multiple professions, TFAP helps vulnerable patients obtain the medical and legal services they need to prevent or resolve crises that undermine health.



*Left: Suzanne Teeple, J.D., Charity Reynolds, M.D., and Daniel Dickman, M.D.*

*Below: Anne M. Ryan, Esq. Assistant Professor, University of Arizona Department of Family and Community Medicine and Director of Tucson Family Advocacy Program, and Jessie Pettit, MD, IBCLC, Residency Program Director, University of Arizona Family Medicine Residency Program and Medical Director Tucson of Family Advocacy Program.*





## **Grant Funding for Civil Legal Assistance for Crime Victims**

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The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime created the *VISION 21: Transforming Victim Services* initiative in 2013 to expand the vision and impact of services to victims of crime. As well as holistic recommendations and a comprehensive examination of the crime victims field, the Vision 21 initiative is a funding resource for efforts to increase crime victim access to support, services, and justice. In September 2018, the Office for Victims of Crime awarded the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education, a two-year, \$1.1 million *Vision 21: Advancing the Use of Technology to Assist Crime Victims* grant to develop and implement technology to expand and enhance access to civil legal information and resources for Arizona victims of crime. The Foundation will use a statewide network of stakeholder collaboration to develop and review content and the technology resource created will be replicable to other jurisdictions. The collaboration and technology solution will establish an online portal to support a virtual statewide crime victim self-help center, provide an online civil legal assistance resource center, offer information specific to crime victim services and service providers, increase awareness and visibility of services to crime victims, and promote new and existing opportunities for the legal community to work with and assist crime victims.

## Speaking Engagements, Interviews and Access to Justice Presentations September 2017- June 2018

Date	Engagement	City
09/17/2017	Presentation on Access to Justice to faith-based community, Faith Lutheran Church	Phoenix
10/10/2017	ATJ Presentation to Superior Court Presiding Judges	Flagstaff
10/11/2017	ATJ Presentation to Arizona Judicial Council	Flagstaff
10/19/2017	ATJ Presentation to Phoenix Soroptimists	Phoenix
11/06/2017	ATJ Presentation to Arizona Corporate Counsel Group and its Pro Bono Commission	Tempe
12/15/2017	ATJ Presentation – Snell & Wilmer law firm	Phoenix
01/04/2018	Update on ATJ Commission Projects to Arizona Corporate Counsel and its In-House Pro Bono Commission	Phoenix
01/24/2018	ATJ Presentation to Phoenix Combined Inns of Court	Phoenix
01/26/2018	ATJ Presentation – Jennings Strouss law firm	Phoenix
02/16/2018	ATJ Presentation – AZ Association of Counties	Phoenix
03/01/2018	ATJ Presentation – Phoenix Foreign Relations Group	Phoenix
03/23/2018	ATJ Presentation to Phoenix Rotary Club	Phoenix
03/27/2018	ATJ Presentation to Pima County Bar Association	Tucson
03/28/2018	ATJ Presentation to Arizona Women Lawyers’ Association	Phoenix
03/29/2018	Presentation to Governor’s Task Force on Reentry and Recidivism	Phoenix
04/10-04/12 2018	Meetings with all Arizona Congressional representatives and staff members regarding ATJ and civil legal aid issues	Washington, D.C.
04/13/2018	ATJ Presentation at SBA Leadership Conference	Phoenix
04/18/2018	ATJ Presentation – O’Connor Institute Board of Directors	Phoenix
04/27/2018	ATJ Presentation to Yavapai County Bar Association	Prescott
05/01/2018	Law Day ATJ Presentation at Cochise County Courthouse	Bisbee
05/11/2018	Presentation to representatives of Arizona, Hawaii, Wisconsin, California, Mississippi and South Carolina on Arizona ATJ efforts and developing Justice in Government project	San Diego
05/12/2018	Presentation on Arizona’s Justice in Government project at National ATJ Chairs Meeting	San Diego
06/27/2018	ATJ Presentation – State Bar Convention	Chandler

## Commission Workgroups

### **Public Information and Messaging**

**Co-chair Heather Murphy**

**Co-chair Rick DeBruhl**

#### **Workgroup Goals**

- Create and manage a media plan
- Publicize ATJ issues and opportunities, and Commission initiatives and recommendations
- Monitor and assist in enhancing AZCourtHelp.org information
- Promote state tax credit
- Design and develop ACAJ annual report

#### **Members**

Kip Anderson  
Cari M. Gerchick  
Michael Jeanes  
Aaron Nash  
Helen Purcell  
Alberto Rodriguez  
Judge Winthrop

### **Self-Represented Litigants in Limited Jurisdiction Courts**

**Chair Judge Anna Huberman**

#### **Workgroup Goals**

- Continue work on eviction-related issues
- Consideration of a “navigator” project in the Maricopa County consolidated justice courts concerning housing and debt collection cases
- Script and produce eviction-related informational videos and other resources

#### **Members**

Charles Adornetto  
Judge Janet Barton  
Mike Baumstark  
Judge Thomas Berning  
Pamela Bridge  
Denise Holliday  
Paul Julien  
Anthony Young

## Judicial and Attorney Engagement

Chair Judge Joseph Kreamer

### Workgroup Goals

- Create, coordinate, and sponsor CLE programs for private and public attorneys regarding *pro bono* opportunities
- Evaluate potential for coordinating statewide legal service triage programs
- Make recommendations on engaging retired lawyers and judges in *pro bono* clinics and projects

### Members

Judge Thomas Berning  
Dan Christensen  
Judge Maria Elena Cruz  
Pat Gerrich  
Kevin Groman  
Cheryl Kulas  
John Phelps  
Dr. Kevin Ruegg  
Lara Slifko

## Inter-Governmental Collaboration

Chair Judge Lawrence Winthrop

### Workgroup Goals

- Participate in “Justice in Government,” a four-state pilot project to encourage inter-governmental collaboration, including enhancing opportunities for legal assistance for agency constituents
- Promote best practices and sponsor training for hearing officers concerning dealing with self-represented litigants
- Develop a strategy for engaging appropriate legislative leaders on access to justice issues and opportunities

### Members

Judge Janet Barton  
Judge Sean Brearcliffe  
Beth Broeker  
Christina Corieri  
Anni Foster  
Kevin Groman  
Chris Groninger  
Maria Morlacci  
Helen Purcell  
Janet Regner  
Dr. Kevin Ruegg

## Commission Membership

**Honorable Lawrence F. Winthrop**  
Chair  
Arizona Court of Appeals, Div. 1

**Mr. Kip Anderson**  
Court Administrator  
Superior Court in Mohave County

**Honorable Janet Barton**  
Presiding Judge  
Superior Court in Maricopa County

**Mr. Mike Baumstark**  
Deputy Director  
Administrative Office of the Courts

**Honorable Thomas Berning**  
Municipal Court Judge  
Tucson City Court

**Ms. Pamela Bridge, Esq.**  
Attorney  
Community Legal Services, Inc.

**Ms. Millie Cisneros, Esq.**  
Attorney  
Federal Public Defender's Office

**Honorable Maria Elena Cruz**  
Judge  
Arizona Court of Appeals, Div. 1

**Ms. Anni L. Foster, Esq.**  
General Counsel  
Office of the Governor

**Mr. Kevin Groman, Esq.**  
Attorney

**Honorable David M. Haws**  
Presiding Judge  
Superior Court in Yuma County

**Honorable Anna Huberman**  
Justice of the Peace  
Maricopa County Justice Courts

**Honorable Joseph C. Kreamer**  
Judge  
Superior Court in Maricopa County

**Ms. Maria Morlacci, Esq.**  
Attorney  
Assistant Attorney General

**Mr. John Phelps, Esq.**  
Attorney  
State Bar of Arizona

**Ms. Helen Purcell**  
Member of the Public

**Ms. Janet K. Regner**  
Director  
Coconino County Community Services

**Dr. Kevin Ruegg**  
Executive Director  
Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education

**Honorable Valerie Wyant**  
Clerk of Court  
Superior Court in Coconino County

**Mr. Anthony Young, Esq.**  
Attorney  
Southern Arizona Legal Aid

## Administrative Office of the Courts

**Kathy Sekardi**

Senior Court Policy Analyst  
Court Services Division

**Julie Graber**

Court Policy Analyst  
Court Services Division

**Theresa Barrett**

Manager, Court Programs Unit  
Court Services Division



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## Commission on Access to Justice 2018 Annual Report

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