

Access to Counsel in Evictions Task Force
Implementation Committee Meeting
Minutes of Meeting of December 1, 2021

Committee Members in Attendance: Charisse Lue (co-chair); Stu Simms (co-chair); Sumbul Alam; Gregory Countess; David Eppler; Meredith Girard; Luke Lanciano; Douglas Nivens; Jessica Quincosa; Jonathan Riedel; Reena Shah; Vicki Schultz (Task Force Chair, *ex officio*)

Task Force Members and Staff in Attendance: Deb Seltzer; Brenda Hurford; Leah Tulin

- Charisse Lue, co-chair of the committee, greeted everyone and informed the committee that minutes from prior meetings would be sent following the meeting and approvals would be requested by email.
- The Committee discussed the development of infrastructure and a staffing pipeline. Topics of discussion included:
 - The Housing Justice Program in Richmond, VA, which is an Equal Justice Works fellowship program that began before the pandemic. It has proven to be a pipeline for housing lawyers in Richmond. Equal Justice Works has partial funding for a pilot in another location and is interested in coming to Maryland.
 - Pipeline fellowship programs, in general, and the fact that participants often stay in fellowship area of experience. Maryland Legal Aid clerkships for law school students were given as an example.
 - The need to provide adequate incentives for attorneys to attract and retain attorneys, including:
 - Competitive salaries
 - Public student loan forgiveness
 - Stipends for childcare/housing (especially in rural areas)
 - The need to ensure adequate training, including potentially a certification, and for training to include cultural competency.
- The committee then discussed the need to maintain a focus on equity and identified needed tools and resources:
 - Eviction prevention programs
 - Building relationships (formal & informal)
 - Rosetta Stone subscription
 - Development of affordable housing and State support for public housing (not within this Task Force's jurisdiction)

Committee Recommendations:

- MLSC and legal services providers need to build a pipeline of attorneys to ensure that eligible clients can access counsel for eviction matters.

- MLSC should require attorneys and staff to be adequately trained to do eviction work, including cultural competency training, and it should develop a certification process for doing so.