Save the Date: 75th Anniversary Gala on October 3, 2025!

October 2023

Dunlap’s Download

We all know that access to justice is a fundamental pillar of any fair and functioning legal system. However, in recent years, Indiana has been grappling with a shortage of lawyers, which poses a significant challenge to ensuring all its residents have equal access to legal representation and other legal resources. This shortage not only hinders the ability of individuals to navigate the legal system but also undermines the overall effectiveness, fairness, and confidence in the state's legal processes in civil and, perhaps more alarmingly, criminal cases.

I recently attended the Indiana State Bar Association’s House of Delegates meeting, where representatives from the Indiana Public Defender Commission provided a sobering and stark assessment of how this lawyer shortage is affecting the fundamental legal rights of Hoosiers around the state in criminal cases. I urge you to read their recent article about the crisis in the area of indigent defense.

This lawyer shortage is not only a crisis in criminal law. Low-income Hoosiers involved in civil cases are also impacted. This crisis affects people’s fundamental ability to provide for themselves and their families, including family law, housing, veterans' benefits, employment, and consumer law. The scope of this problem is of such magnitude that it will take the collective efforts of many people and organizations at all levels and branches of government, as well as the private bar and the nonprofit sector, to make meaningful improvements.

As lawyers, we are trained not just to identify the problem but to come up with innovative and creative solutions. The Foundation has been focused on these issues for some time, but expanding these efforts through additional partnerships and support can significantly impact addressing the crisis.

1) Loan Repayment Assistance/Forgiveness Programs: In partnership with the Indiana Supreme Court, the Foundation started a Loan Repayment Assistance Program in 2009 focused on supporting attorneys at civil legal aid organizations.

2) This program has helped dozens of Hoosier attorneys remain in these critical jobs at legal aid organizations and continue to help people in need. Expanding the program to reach more attorneys and broadening it to include contract public defenders not currently covered by the Foundation's or federal loan forgiveness programs could make a significant impact. Working with additional partners like the Indiana General Assembly, county governments, and the private bar, we could expand the impact and make a difference for countless additional Hoosiers.

3) Support for Legal Aid Organizations: One of the critical parts of the Foundation's mission is its grantmaking program, which will award nearly $4 million to legal aid organizations throughout Indiana this year.

Continuing to increase funding for legal aid organizations can continue to help bridge the gap by increasing legal services to those in need. This is also a prudent investment of our collective dollars. A recent study that the Indiana Coalition for Court Access, in partnership with the Foundation, conducted in 2017 showed that for every $1.00 invested in legal aid services, it yielded $6.70 in immediate and long-term financial benefits.
These are areas where the Foundation works to make a difference in the lawyer shortage crisis. With your help and expanding our partnerships, we can continue to work together to increase and enhance the significant impact of these programs and create new ones. Addressing this problem is crucial to ensuring that people perceive the legal system as accessible and fair. Supporting the collective faith and confidence in our legal system is one of our most important obligations as Hoosier lawyers. Please join the Foundation as we continue to support innovative and creative solutions to this complex problem.

Civil Legal Assistance

October Celebrates the Impact of Pro Bono Work
"Voices of Democracy: Ensuring Justice for All" is the theme for Pro Bono Week, October 22-28. The Foundation supports pro bono in Indiana in a variety of ways. Please see pro bono frequently asked questions here. Also, the Foundation provides the Pro Bono Opportunity Portal, an online matching tool for Indiana’s legal community.

Loan Repayment Assistance Programs Offers Opportunities for Students and Donors
Applications are open for the Foundation's Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP). LRAP provides a forgivable loan to help offset student loan costs for law school graduates who enter into a professional career with a qualifying Indiana civil legal aid program. Visit the Foundation website here for additional information.

LRAP is made possible thanks to the generosity of donors who have established and supported the Hon. Richard M. Givan Loan Repayment Assistance Fund and the Hon. J. Terrence and Peggy Cody Loan Repayment Assistance Fund, both endowed funds at the Indiana Bar Foundation. To support these funds, please click here for additional information.

2023 Indiana Civil Legal Assistance Conference is October 26
If you haven’t reserved your seat for the 2023 Indiana Civil Legal Assistance Conference, please do so on or before October 13. The October 26 event is packed with great speakers, timely topics, and opportunities throughout to talk with colleagues from across the state. All the information you need is available here. Conference sponsorship remains available. Please contact Director of Development Kim Berry for details.

Civic Education

Educators Gain First-Hand Look at Judicial System
A partnership between the Foundation and the Indiana Court of Appeals allowed 14 Indiana teachers from across the state to have a rare opportunity to watch an oral argument in person, hear from the participating attorneys, and have lunch with Court of Appeals judges. This is the first-of-its-kind professional development workshop sponsored by the Foundation.

Attendees at this workshop learned about the Indiana judicial branch and legal system by embedding within it and interacting with the attorneys, judges, and staff that make up our court system. Because of the joint work of the Foundation and the nationally award-winning Indiana Court of Appeals, it allowed Hoosier educators to have this immersive experience, becoming a workshop that was a must attend and teachers are ready to share what they learned with their students and colleagues.

Participating judges in the oral argument included Foundation Board Member the Hon. Elizabeth Tavitas,
former Board Member and 2023 Foundation Champion of Civil Legal Assistance award recipient the Hon. Melissa May, and the Hon. Robert Altice. Teachers were asked to share a unifying message with their students: the concept of being adversaries but not adversarial. Learn more about the Foundation’s Civic Education programs here.

**We the People Season Begins This Month**
October brings the start of the 2023 We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution regionals beginning with the northwest regional middle and high school competition hosted at Indiana University Northwest on October 27. The Foundation continues to seek individuals to judge We the People regional and state competitions with the greatest need at the Fort Wayne, Evansville, and Gary regionals. The necessary training, materials, information, and resources will be provided so that any person can judge the competition comfortably. To see the full list of regional dates, the questions the students will answer, and the registration form, visit this page.

**Mock Trial Case will be Released October 27**
Friday, October 27, the 2023-2024 Mock Trial case will be released! Keep an eye out for the case to be posted on the Foundation website. Registration and competition information will also be posted by that date. Please contact Civic Education Specialist Isaac Harper with any questions.

**Mock Trial Teachers Encouraged to Attend Upcoming Workshops**
The Foundation is excited to offer a beginner and advanced Mock Trial Law School workshop to teachers interested in starting mock trial or making their team better. For the Beginner Workshop on October 11 at the Indiana Bar Foundation Office (Indianapolis), the Foundation will provide everything needed to start an amazing mock trial program at your school. The Advanced Workshop on October 12, also at the Indiana Bar Foundation Office (Indianapolis), will offer the tools to make an amazing mock trial program even better. Staff will bring in legal professionals to assist in developing the difficult aspects of the mock trial competition and translate them to your high school team. Please register here.

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**Development**

**Support the Foundation as a Keystone Society Member**
Individuals donating $1,000 or more are welcomed to the Foundation's Keystone Society, which includes special recognition and unique events. Join our distinguished group of supporters and become a Keystone Society member today. Keystone Society contribution levels are listed below.

- **The Barrister level** – annual donation of $10,000
- **The Advocate level** – annual donation of $5,000
- **The Counselor level** – annual donation of $2,500
- **The Partner level** – annual donation of $1,000

Conveniently donate through this link and please contact Director of Development Kim Berry to discuss your gift.

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**Board Retreat Focuses on Progress and Planning**
The Foundation’s Board of Directors held their retreat last month to hear updates on key areas including the state of the organization and progress made so far on the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, planning for the 75th anniversary, and planning for sustainability and resource development. Board members and Foundation staff also had the opportunity to share time together for informal conversations and a friendly trivia competition.

News Briefs

Board Chair Caryn Glawe (pictured) represented the Foundation during the September 29 House of Delegates program, part of the Indiana State Bar Association (ISBA) Annual Summit. Glawe highlighted Foundation accomplishments, the upcoming 75th anniversary in 2025, and goals for the year to come.

Former Foundation Board Member and outgoing ISBA President Amy Dudas (right) hands over the gavel of leadership to former Foundation member and new ISBA President Senior Judge Thomas Felts. Judge Felts becomes the first judge to serve as ISBA President.

The 4th Annual Bill of Rights Art & Essay contest sponsored by the U.S. Courts is live and ready for your students’ entries! All Indiana students in grades 5-12 are encouraged to participate! Submissions will be accepted through October 29. Students can win up to $500, and teachers can win prizes, too! This year’s contest prompts, complete instructions, and the online submission form can be found through this link. The contest deadline is October 29. Questions may be emailed to Mary Giorgio.

Get to Know: Mike Commons
New staff and expanding programs reflect the Foundation's continued growth. We are proud of our team and want to introduce them to you! Please take a moment to Get to Know Indiana Legal Help Manager Mike Commons.