

**Justice Action Group
JAG Executive Committee**

March 24 – 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: **Via ZOOM!** (rather than the CJC as previously scheduled for the SJC
Conference Room at the Capital Judicial Center)

AGENDA

- I. Welcome/Introductions**
- II. Approval of Minutes** from March 25, 2024
- III. Report from Chair – J. Mead**
 - a. Summary of ATJ Day at the Legislature
 - b. Funding strategies/status of federal grants
- IV. Vice Chair’s Report and Pro Bono Committee Report – J. Wolf**
- V. ACP Chair’s Report – E. Gorman/ Rotating Representative**
- VI. Justice Systems Committee Report – Jaye Martin**
- VII. Legislative Committee Report – Charlie Dingman**
 - a. Update on legislative goings-on/status of JAG/providers’ initiatives
- VIII. Executive Committee Organization Optional Updates:**

NOTE: In response to earlier inquiries, representatives from individual provider organizations are more than welcome to attend Executive Committee meetings, but attendance and reports are optional.¹

 - Maine Judicial Branch
 - Volunteer Lawyers Project
 - Maine Justice Foundation

¹ The providers have historically designated a rotating representative from the provider ranks to attend the EC meetings in addition to the ACP counsel representative.

- Maine State Bar Association/Lawyers in Libraries
- Maine Trial Lawyers Association
- Pine Tree Legal Assistance:
- Law School/Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic
- Legal Services for the Elderly
- Maine Equal Justice
- Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

IX. Other Business:

X. 2025/2026 JAG Executive Committee and Board meeting dates:

Board:

October ~~15~~ 27, 2025 - Portland (Feeney Conference Room)

February 24, 2026 Portland (Feeney Conference Room)

Executive Committee:

March 24, 2025 - Via Zoom

May 27, 2025 - Augusta (CJC, 4th Floor SJC suite)

September 15, 2025 - Augusta (CJC, 4th Floor SJC suite)

January 26, 2026 - Via Zoom

**Justice Action Group
JAG Executive Committee**

July 1, 2024 – 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: **Via Zoom**

MINUTES

Zoom Participants: Hon. Andrew Mead, Ellen Gorman, Charlie Dingman, Deirdre Smith, Lisa Lunn, and Judith Fletcher-Woodbury

I. Welcome/Introductions

II. Approval of Minutes from March 25, 2024. No additions or corrections noted. Minutes accepted and made part of the permanent record. No additions or corrections noted for the Inventory.

III. Report from Chair – J. Mead: Justice Mead reported on the presentation of the recognition plaque to Liz Stout at the MSBA meeting. Liz was most appreciative. She received a standing ovation. Liz joined the VLP at a critical time in its history and brought an enormous amount of energy and dedication to the organization. Justice Mead thanked the Justice Action Group for endorsing this sentiment.

a. Proposed changes to Maine Bar Admission Rule 11 and Rule 89 of the Rules of Civil Procedure: An effort is underway to consolidate rules regarding conditional admissions to practice law in Maine and will be posted for public comment if it has not already. Draft rule amendments will be posted for public comment.

b. Update on Rural Access to Justice Task Force: This initiative undertaken by the MSBA has concluded its working sessions and a report will be issued soon.

c. Update on Internationally Trained Lawyers Task Force: Justice Mead reported on the work and progress of the Task Force. He served as an observer and commented on the extraordinary efforts and dedication of the Task Force members. A report and recommendations will be submitted to the SJC by late August.

d. Single annual provider reports to JAG and the MJF: Section 18A(6) of Title 4 of the Maine Revised Statutes establishes an annual reporting date

of February 1 for purposes of the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund. After a brief discussion, all members present agreed that we should not seek a statutory change to create a later reporting date.

e. ABA National ATJ Conference October 24-25: Justice Mead is hoping to attend this excellent conference this year.

f. Executive Committee composition. The Executive Committee was historically a fairly small group, but has grown in recent years. Justice Mead will present a proposal to clarify the membership at the next meeting.

IV. Vice Chair's Report and Pro Bono Committee Report – Justice Mead commented on the pro bono committee report provided by Magistrate Wolf. The Committee continues to explore new and innovative means of increasing pro bono engagement by Maine Lawyers. A revised and expanded proposal for granting CLE credit for pro bono work is in the works and will be submitted to the SJC for consideration in late July.

V. ACP Chair's Report – E. Gorman/ Rotating Representative: Justice Gorman reported that ACP continues to meet monthly via Zoom. The Legislative Committee is planning and preparing for the next round of funding initiatives. The ACP may engage a coordinator soon. The JAG Justice Systems Committee continues to be a wonderful communications conduit between the Judicial Branch and the providers. Summer interns are serving in many of the ACP member organizations.

The Law School is working in conjunction with ILAP on immigration issues. VLP is going to be offering a training on family basics. Staffing levels are up for the first time in quite a while. DRME hired one new attorney and one new advocate who are going to start work in Augusta. Pine Tree Legal Assistance expects to have 60 attorneys in September, including attorneys at all six sites. ILAP has been redoubling its efforts on asylum application workshops to address the many people who cannot get assigned an individual attorney to them to start the process by getting the paperwork done correctly. ILAP will be reviewing and addressing recent changes to immigration laws. MJEP, despite funding issues, has also had some successful endeavors to come out of the recent legislative session. There's a rent relief pilot project that will give 18 million dollars to renters who are at risk of eviction and increasing the TANF benefit by 20%. LD 2115 was signed into law, which prevents debt collectors from suing for medical debt if the individual's income is below 300% of the federal poverty level. This

year the Legislature passed LD 1490, which limits the fees a landlord can charge and extends the prohibition of application fees to include mobile home parks. In the past, when towns foreclosed for property tax debts, any amount paid that was greater than the taxes owed was kept by the town. LD 2262 now mandates that those sums be turned over to the property owner. CLAC has some new fellows and they are being used to do some outreach projects, including one for incarcerated individuals. There is also a major staffing change. Chris Northrop is heading to the County to take over for Dave Soucy and Courtney Beer is taking over Chris' role as director of the clinic.

Deirdre added in terms of VLP that on the intake side they are spending quite a bit of time trying to streamline it. They are trying to get people connected to attorneys more quickly. They are in the process of launching a new online portal that will hopefully get people into their system more quickly so they can assess people's legal needs and their eligibility more quickly. They are hiring a part-time intake specialist. It is a newly created position that will greatly facilitate the intake process and help them get in contact with people on a much more rapid basis. They are doing a pilot project this summer in hopes of launching a new bankruptcy clinic. They have so many people asking for help filing for bankruptcy and they are finding the vast majority of them should not be filing for bankruptcy. Many bankruptcy attorneys have retired so it has been challenging for people to find an attorney. They are setting up a clinic similar to their family law clinic. They have had two of those sessions so far. They are hoping to get lawyers to volunteer to help launch this as a regular program hopefully in the fall. Deirdre is in the process of trying to find a sufficient number of attorneys for this right now. VLP is going through a strategic planning process this year and they hope to wrap it up this fall.

VI. Justice Systems Committee Report: The Justice Systems Committee continues to provide an excellent communication conduit between the providers and the courts.

VII. Legislative Committee Report: Charlie Dingman

- a. Update on legislative goings-on/status of JAG/providers' initiatives: Charlie reported that the providers are in a different situation this year after the one-time funding that was approved last year. We need to

secure a minimum of a two million increase in the baseline to avoid a corresponding shortfall in the immediate future. Charlie and the committee will be following up with Senator Carney.

VIII. Executive Committee Organization Optional Updates:

NOTE: In response to earlier inquiries, representatives from individual provider organizations are more than welcome to attend Executive Committee meetings, but attendance and reports are optional.¹

- Maine Judicial Branch: No report given.
- Volunteer Lawyers Project: Deirdre Smith reported during the ACP's report.
- Maine Justice Foundation: Judy Fletcher Woodbury reported on behalf of the MJF. IOLTA funds are still robust. The ATJ Tax Credit program applications are being reviewed now. The MJF is getting ready to send out notice to the winners of the Dana, New Lawyer, and Downing awards. The Board of Directors had a retreat in early June where they introduced new board members.
- Maine State Bar Association/Lawyers in Libraries: No report given.
- Maine Trial Lawyers Association: Lisa Lunn attended the meeting, but did not report.
- Pine Tree Legal Assistance: Report given during ACP report.
- Law School/Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic: Report given during ACP report.
- Legal Services for the Elderly: No report given.
- Maine Equal Justice: Report given during ACP report.
- Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project: Report given during ACP report.
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IX. Other Business: None.

X. 2024/2025 JAG Executive Committee and Board meeting dates:

Board:

Oct. 15, 2024 – 3:00 – Portland – Mt. Washington Conference Room

¹ The providers have historically designated a rotating representative from the provider ranks to attend the EC meetings in addition to the ACP counsel representative.

Feb. 25, 2025 – 3:00 – Portland – Feeney Conf. Room

Executive Committee:

Sept. 16, 2024 – 3:00 – Augusta – SJC Conf. Room

Jan. 21, 2025 – 3:00 – Augusta – SJC Conf. Room

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

JAG INITIATIVE and COMMITTEE STATUS INVENTORY
UPDATED: Oct. 15, 2024

Project/Initiative/Committee & Membership	Description	Status	Next Action/ Next Step(s)
CLE/ Outreach Programming	<i>Date:</i> No currently scheduled meetings.	The ACP will spearhead future CLE and outreach programs in conjunction with the Law School, MJF and MSBA.	The ACP will brainstorm and consider new formats and subjects for ATJ outreach meetings.
ATJ Day at the Statehouse - Membership: ACP & Legislative Committee	April 17, 2025		Planning for 2025 will involve kiosks in Hall of Flags as has been done in past years and opportunities for JAG leadership to address the Judiciary Committee and party caucuses.
Lawyers in Libraries	<i>Date:</i> Law week, or TBD	Transitioned project to the New Lawyer Section of MSBA - no longer a JAG initiative, but we will continue to monitor the progress of the program and offer support where possible.	
Advisory Committee of Providers - Membership: Chris Northrup, Susan Roche, Jaye Martin, Robyn Merrill, Michelle Draeger, Liz Stout, Tom Fritzsche, Kim Moody. Counsel to the ACP: Hon. Ellen A. Gorman, ret.		Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month.	Continue to meet and communicate on issues of mutual interest, including (1) a proposal to add a subsection (f) to Rule 11A of the Maine Bar Admission Rules, and (2) possibility of statute change for the date for reporting MCLS data to the Legislature .
Legislative Committee - Membership: Charles Dingman-Chair, Charles Soltan, Robyn Merrill, Kate Knox and all Exec. Directors for all providers		Primary efforts will be: (1) Organizing the State House aspect of ATJ Day, (2) monitoring legislation of interest to the ATJ community, and (3) organizing legislative initiatives for funding and statutory changes.	Obtain a date and plan for ATJ Day on a day when the Legislature is in session (see note above), monitor draft legislation of interest to providers, and seek additional General Fund funding.

JAG INITIATIVE and COMMITTEE STATUS INVENTORY
UPDATED: Oct. 15, 2024

<p>Pro Bono Committee - Membership: Magistrate Judge Wolf, Chair, Deirdre Smith, Co-chair, Zach Heiden, Sara Wolff, Jonathan Dunitz, Ezra Willey, Katy Rand, Shannon Karam, Kathryn Reid, and Hon. Charles Dow, Hon. David Soucy</p>		<p>Explore initiatives to promote pro bono legal services by Maine attorneys.</p>	<p>Participate in the Pro Bono Fair and the MSBA ATJ Task Force work.</p>
<p>Justice Systems Committee - Jaye Martin, Chair. Benjamin Jenkins (LSE), Jennifer Annis (Violence Intervention Partnership, Kathryn Childs (PTLA), Deirdre Smith (VLP), Frank D'Alessandro (MEJ); Christopher Northrup (CLAC), Peter Rice (Disability Rights Maine), Beth Maddaus (courts), Allison Gray (courts), Chet Randall (PTLA <i>(temporary)</i>), Maggie Loeffelholz (ILAP), Courtney Beer (CLAC <i>(temporary)</i>), Lauri Boxer-Macomber (MTLA), and Nickole Wesley (courts), Diane Kenty (courts), Laura Pearlman (courts)</p>	<p>The Justice Systems Committee's purpose is to identify best practices and/or new approaches to ensuring the judicial system is accessible to all litigants, in particular vulnerable populations like the elderly, disabled, victims of violence, and those w/limited English proficiency.</p>	<p>The Committee is meeting bimonthly beginning in 2022. (1.5 hour meetings)</p>	<p>Regular meetings and conversations with the JB Access team.</p>
<p>Incubator Program:</p>		<p>To our knowledge, there are no traditional incubator programs currently operating, but several initiatives, including the law school's clinic program and the VLP Pro Bono Fellowship, are providing similar opportunities for mentoring.</p>	