

How Can Courts Better Meet the Civil Legal Needs of Low Income Litigants? A Comparative Look at the Justice Gap in the US and Canada

Friday, October 21, 2022

1:45 – 3:00 PM



There is no right to counsel in most civil proceedings in the US and Canada. This results in a civil justice gap for low-income citizens who are too poor to retain counsel and who make too much to qualify for low cost or free legal services. How can the legal system better meet the civil legal needs of low-income Americans and Canadians?

At the end of the session:

1. Attendees will learn about the Legal Services Corporation Justice Gap Reports and its findings.
2. Attendees will learn about innovations undertaken to bridge the justice gap in the US and Canada.
3. Attendees will learn about Michigan's Justice for All Commission, which is charged with eliminating the justice gap

Speakers:

Jasminka Kalajdzic, Associate Professor, University of Windsor Law



Jasminka Kalajdzic, BA (Ottawa), LLB, LLM (Toronto), is an associate professor of law at the University of Windsor's Faculty of Law, where she teaches courses on legal ethics, evidence, and class actions. Professor Kalajdzic is widely published, including *Class Actions in Canada: The Promise and Reality of Access to Justice* (UBC Press, 2018) and *The Law of Class Actions in Canada*, co-authored with the Honourable Warren Winkler, Justice Paul Perell and Alison Warner (Carswell, 2015). Professor Kalajdzic was the co-principal researcher and co-author of the Law Commission of Ontario's *Class Action Report* (2019). She speaks regularly about class actions at scholarly and judicial conferences in Canada and abroad. She served two terms as a member of the Law Foundation of Ontario's Class Proceedings Committee, and is the Canadian representative in an International Research Collaborative on Collective Litigation. She co-teaches a comparative class action seminar with colleagues at Stanford, Tilburg and Leuphana Universities. In July 2017 she was a Visiting Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne where she taught a course on class actions with Justice Bernard Murphy and Dr. Deborah Hensler. She is the founder and director of the Class Action Clinic, the first clinic in the world to focus on the needs and interests of class members.

Ashley Lowe, CEO, Lakeshore Legal Aid



Ashley E. Lowe is the Chief Executive Officer of Lakeshore Legal Aid, a non-profit law firm providing free legal services to low-income people in the Detroit Metro region. Prior to joining Lakeshore, Ms. Lowe was the Associate Director of Clinical Education at Wayne State University Law School and a Professor at Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Ms. Lowe is active in the justice community in Michigan. She chairs the Justice Initiatives Committee of the State Bar of Michigan and is a member of the Justice For All Taskforce, the State Planning Body, and Legal Services Association of Michigan. Ms. Lowe earned her law degree and Master of Business

Administration at Georgetown University.

Angela Tripp, Director, Michigan Legal Help Program



Angela Tripp is the Director of the Michigan Legal Help (MLH) Program, which is responsible for the statewide website for self-represented litigants (MichiganLegalHelp.org) and twenty-one affiliated Self-Help Centers around the state. In 2021, MLH saw nearly 2.9 million visits, and nearly 120,000 people used its resources to complete legal forms. Ms. Tripp has led the development and growth of MLH from its inception in 2011. Prior to that, she was a staff and managing attorney in the Lansing office of Legal Services of South Central Michigan. Ms. Tripp is also the Co-Managing Attorney of the Michigan Poverty Law Program, the state support program in Michigan,

and Co-Director of Michigan Statewide Advocacy Services, which manages five statewide programs (including MLH and MPLP). Ms. Tripp holds a J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law in Boston and a B.A. from the University of Cincinnati.

Janet Welch, Retired Executive Director, State Bar of Michigan



Janet Welch retired as executive director of the State Bar of Michigan in 2022 and now heads Impetus Law Consulting. She has an extensive history of involvement in court and legal profession reform. She began her legal career as a law clerk to Michigan Supreme Court Justice Robert Griffin and remained at the court serving five chief justices. She was the reporter for Michigan's 21st Century Courts Commission, and later, as Michigan Supreme Court counsel, helped implement trial court restructuring and other administrative reforms. At the State Bar of Michigan, she served as reporter for the State Bar's 2011 [Judicial Crossroads Task Force Report](#) and its 2016

[21st Century Practice Task Force Report](#), both of which addressed transformational changes to Michigan's justice system. She has served as an inaugural member of Michigan's Justice for All Task Force and its Executive Team, and co-chairs the Task Force's Regulatory and Practice Reform committee.

She has presented nationally and internationally on the role of bar associations in access to justice and the future of legal services. A recipient of the National Association of Bar Executives (NABE) Peer Excellence Award in 2020, she serves as NABE's representative in the ABA's House of Delegates and is a member of the ABA Center for Innovation Governing Council.

Hon. Dennis Archer (retired), Diversity, Inclusion & Equality Consultant, Dickinson Wright PLLC



Dennis Archer is chairman and CEO of Dennis W. Archer PLLC and chairman emeritus of Dickinson Wright PLLC, a Detroit-based law firm with more than 350 attorneys. He sits on the corporate boards of Johnson Controls Inc., Compuware Corp. and Masco Corp.

Mr. Archer served two four-year terms as mayor of the city of Detroit (1994-2001) and earned national and international respect for his success in changing Detroit's image and direction. While in office, he managed to balance the budget after only one year and was able to secure \$100 million in federal empowerment funds for the struggling city. Archer's time as mayor earned him many awards and much admiration. He was named Public Official of the Year by *Governing* magazine in 2000, was named one of the 25 most dynamic mayors in America by *Newsweek* magazine, and one of the 100 Most Influential Black Americans by *Ebony* magazine.

In 1985, Gov. James Blanchard appointed Mr. Archer an associate justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. He was elected to an eight-year term the following year. In his final year on the bench in 1990, Archer was named the most respected judge in Michigan by Michigan Lawyers Weekly.

Mr. Archer has long been active in the organized bar. He was the first person of color elected president of the American Bar Association (2003-2004) as well as the State Bar of Michigan. He has also served as president of the Wolverine Bar Association and the National Bar Association. Mr. Archer is a life member of the Fellows of The American Bar Foundation and the National Bar Association, a fellow of the International Society of Barristers, a fellow of the College of Law Office Management and life member of the Sixth Circuit Judicial Conference.

In July 2022, Mr. Archer was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Burton Foundation.