

## Rural Justice Issues



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Access to Justice has reached a crisis in the US, Canada, and abroad. The Legal Services Corporation’s 2022 Justice Gap Report reports that rural communities are particularly at risk. Approximately 8 million people living at or below 125% of the poverty level live in rural America. In Canada, rural communities within all of Canada’s provinces likewise grapple with poverty and receiving access to justice. In this session, participants will develop:

1. A better understanding of the civil justice gap and its scope in the US and Canada;
2. The ability to identify the prevailing civil justice needs that are inadequately or entirely unaddressed within individual communities and reasons why;
3. Available resources external to courts employed to reduce the civil justice gap;
4. Existing court-initiated or court-involved solutions to eliminating the civil justice gap in rural communities.

**Speakers:**



**Dennis Kennedy**, Director, Michigan State University Center for Law, Technology & Innovation

Dennis Kennedy is the Director of Michigan State University's Center for Law, Technology & Innovation, a retired in-house technology counsel for Mastercard, and a well-known legal technology and innovation expert who, among other things, was the author of the ABA Journal's technology column for many years. He teaches classes in Artificial Intelligence and the Law, New Technologies and the Law, and Cybersecurity and Data Protection at MSU, and a course in Legal Technology Literacy and Leadership as an adjunct professor at the University of Michigan Law School. A prolific author, Dennis's published books include "Successful Innovation Outcomes in Law," "The Lawyer's Guide to Collaboration Tools and Technologies," and "Make LinkedIn Work for You." He currently writes a monthly column on law department innovation at the LegalTech, consults and speaks on transformative innovation and law department, and co-hosts a long-running podcast on legal technology called The Kennedy-Mighell Report. Dennis is former chair of the ABA's Legal Technology Resource Center and a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management. His website is [www.denniskennedy.com](http://www.denniskennedy.com) and he's on LinkedIn at [www.linkedin.com/in/dennismkennedy](http://www.linkedin.com/in/dennismkennedy). If Twitter still exists at the time you are reading this, he's been @denniskennedy for many years.



**Margaret Pettipas**, Articling Student, Katzman Estate Law

Margaret Pettipas is a recent Canadian graduate of the Detroit Mercy School of Law and the University of Windsor Faculty of Law, providing her with both Canadian and American law degrees. Margaret has an Honors Philosophy degree from Dalhousie University. During law school, she contributed to her community by volunteering and working as a civil pre-trial administrator and mediator with Southeastern Dispute Resolution Services. She also pioneered Windsor Law's Sanctuary Volunteer Day.

Currently, Margaret is employed as an articling student at Katzman Estate Law, located in Windsor Ontario.



**Hon. Michelle Rick**, Judge, Michigan Court of Appeals

The Honorable Michelle Rick was elected to the Michigan Court of Appeals in November 2020 and began her term of service representing the 4th Judicial District in January 2021. Judge Rick served as a trial judge from 2007–2020.

Judge Rick is a graduate of Michigan State University and the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. Judge Rick is a former district director for the

National Association of Women Judges and current Vice President of District Directors. She is the president of the Michigan Judges Association.

Judge Rick is the recipient of several local, state and national awards. In 2019, the Michigan Supreme Court recognized Judge Rick as a judge who gives back and makes a difference. In 2020, the State Bar of Michigan awarded Judge Rick and select University of Detroit Mercy School of Law faculty and students the Kimberly M. Cahill Bar Leadership Award for creating and executing "Project Access," a traveling expungement clinic. In 2022, the National Association of Women Judges awarded Judge Rick the Vaino Spencer Award for outstanding leadership in promoting the vision, core values and mission of NAWJ.

Judge Rick teaches courses concerning access to justice at the UDM Law.