

STRENGTHENING JUSTICE SUMMIT

Strengthening Justice: Legal System Innovation Summit

Thursday October 16 – Friday October 17

Agenda

Day 1 – Pretrial Justice – Thursday October 16

8:30 – 9:30 Registration, Breakfast, and Networking

9:30 – 9:40 Welcome by Maisie Osteen, Legal Aid Justice Center

9:40 – 10:00 **VISIONARY VOICE:** Kenneth Hunter, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

10:00 – 10:45 **KEYNOTE:** Jonathan Rapping, Gideon's Promise

10:45 - 12:00 **Counsel at First Appearance Panel: What is Happening in Virginia**

Moderator: Maisie Osteen

Panelists:

Judge William Jarvis, Prince William General District Court Judge

Tracey Lenox, Public Defender Prince William

Nate Green, Williamsburg James City County Commonwealth's Attorney

Bryan Kennedy, Fairfax Public Defender

Description: Panelists will discuss the successes, benefits, and lessons learned of implementing counsel at first appearance in Virginia localities and roadblocks along the way. Panelists will explore different strategies for implementation in jurisdictions both with and without public defenders, as well as the drawbacks of different approaches.

12:00-12:45 Catered lunch by local business

12:45 – 2:00 **Pretrial Legislative Panel**

Moderator: Dom Martin

Panelists:

Delegate Patrick Hope, District 1

Delegate Rae Cousins, District 79

Sheba Williams, Nolef Turns

Description: Give legislative updates around recent law changes regarding the pretrial system, explore potential shortcomings in our current system, and engage in conversation around legislative reforms.

2:10 – 3:10 **Innovative Ways to Increase Court Appearance Rates and Reduce Harms**

Moderator: Andrea Fenster

Panelists:

Michelle Russell, The Pew Charitable Trust

My'chael Jefferson-Reese, Chesterfield Public Defender

Wendy Shang, PJI

Description: A detailed discussion among practitioners about current issues when people miss court, and how Virginia localities can implement new strategies to increase court appearance rates and decrease the number of failures to appear and the number of people held in Virginia jails and prisons for missing court dates. This session will cover innovative ideas for practice and an illustration of court collaboration.

3:20-4:30 **Foundations of Pretrial System, Who is Affected - Storytelling Panel**

Moderator: Taj Mahon-Haft, The Humanization Project

Panelists:

Kenneth Hunter, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

Jared Rose, Department of Veteran's Affairs

Bonnie Hoffman, National Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys

Description: Panelists will share lived experiences with the criminal legal system in Virginia and how it has affected their lives, even after their contact with the criminal legal system ends. NACDL will have an attorney on the panel that will engage in these individual stories and illuminate the importance of client-centered, zealous representation. Stories will focus on (1) interactions in the pretrial system and how it

affected case outcomes and everyday life, and (2) how Virginia's fines and fees system traps people in a cycle of poverty after incarceration. Panelists will also discuss suggestions for reform.

4:30- 5:15 **RECEPTION**
Light hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic drinks

5:30-7:00 **FILM VIEWING & PANEL**
Partner: InThrive Film Festival
Where's My Coffee Cup

Day 2 – Fines & Fees Justice – Friday October 17

8:30 – 9:00 Registration, Breakfast, and Networking

9:00-9:05 Welcome

9:05-10:00 **The True Cost of Court Debt**
Moderator: Amy Wentz, The Commonwealth Institute
Panelists:
Alisha Smith, Peer Recover Specialist,
Shakil Ali, Help Me, Help You
Pat Levy-Lavelle, Legal Aid Justice Center

Description: Panelists will share lived experiences with the criminal legal system costs and the challenges for overcoming these costs. LAJC will have an attorney on the panel that will engage in these individual stories, talk about alternative statutory options, and illuminate the importance of process transparency.

10:00 – 11:00 **Rethinking Court Debt: Ability-to-Pay as a Path to Equitable Justice**
Moderator: Emily King, Fines & Fees Justice Center
Presentation: Alex Kornya, Legal Aid Justice Center
Abigail Thibeault, Harrisonburg Public Defender
Ruby Cherian, Legal Aid Justice Center

Description: This session will lay out the federal standards for ability-to-pay hearings for low-income Virginians navigating the court system. It will also offer practical

implementation strategies for local courts and individual practitioners to support their specific clients.

11:15 - 12:15 What's Possible Under the Code: Creative Ways for Jurisdictions to Tackle Court Debt.

Moderator: Anna Kurien, Legal Aid Justice Center

Panelists:

Judge Mayer, Buena Vista General District Court Judge

Llezelle Dugger, Charlottesville Circuit Court

Leah Nelson, Alabama Appleseed

Description: A detailed discussion among practitioners on how Virginia localities can implement new strategies to ease the burden of court costs within the framework of current law. This session will cover innovative ideas for practice and an illustration of court collaboration.

12:15-1:15 Get lunch

1:15 - 1:20 **Introduction:** Anna Kurien, Legal Aid Justice Center

1:20 - 2:00 **KEYNOTE LUNCH:** Tony Messenger, Profits and Punishment

2:00 – 2:45 **Who Pays for This?**

Presentation: Megan Davis, The Commonwealth Institute

3:00-4:15 **Fines and Fees Legislative Panel**

Moderator: Kami Blatt, The Commonwealth Institute

Panelists:

Delegate Phil Hernandez, District 94

Delegate Michael Jones, District 77

Senator Creigh Deeds, District 11

Delegate Cia Price, District 85

Description: Give legislative updates around recent law changes regarding Virginia's fines & fee system, explore potential shortcomings in our current system, and engage in conversation around legislative reforms.