

Meeting of the State Board of Civil Legal Aid

Date: Friday, September 19, 2025

Time: 10:00 – 3:00

Location: BOCLA Office

Chair: Christopher Wendt

Recorder: Susan Beaudet

Board Members: John Gordon, Korey Wahwassuck, Ana Pottratz Acosta, Tarryl Clark, Holley Horrell, Emily Cooper, Katy Drahos, Jerry Lane, John Murphy, Summra Shariff

Absent: None

Other: Bridget Gernander, Kelly Tautges

MINUTES

Agenda Item 1: Opening and Setting the Stage for the Meeting

Discussion:

Chris Wendt, Board Chair, opened the meeting by sharing a client impact story to set the tone for the meeting. All Board meetings will begin with client stories. Goals for the meeting include:

- **Strengthen relationships and build connection** among board members and senior staff
- Participatory training & activity on the **board leadership competency of managing change**, including in implementing significant change in functional move from LSAC to BOCLA
- Begin to establish shared understanding of board roles and best practices
- Engage in **board discussion to guide approach to key strategic issues** from LSAC recommendations to BOCLA
- Establish **initial committee structure**

Agenda Item 2: Board Leadership Competency: Managing Change

Discussion:

Change management activity where Board members and staff explored their personal change styles:

- Leapers: Embrace bold change, spark innovation.
- Bridge Builders: Seek consensus, value both tradition and innovation.
- Resource Conservers: Value continuity, cautious about change.

Each group shared strengths, challenges, and tips for collaboration across styles.

Agenda Item 3: Board Leadership: Roles, Responsibilities & Best Practices

Discussion:

The board reviewed principles from BoardSource Framework – The 12 Principles of Exceptional Boards.

Discussed the importance of transparency and independent mindedness. Board asked staff to gather more information on judicial branch access rules and practices to guide future policy development.

Agenda Item 4: Operational Updates

Discussion:

Staff provided information on the successful transition from LSAC to BOCLA operations, including operational challenges that were overcome. A new IOLTA database implemented with improved security measures. Two new staff positions to be posted soon for BOCLA:

- Finance Manager
 - Grants Manager
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Agenda Item 5: LSAC Recommendations to BOCLA: Overview and Framing of Work Ahead

Discussion:

The board reviewed six recommendations in the report provided by LSAC committee members:

1. Develop Standards –Implementation to begin with two new staff hires.
2. Continue Statewide Data Project –Approved strategy.
3. Revisit Statutory Formula – Board discussed in detail in Agenda Item 6.
4. Establish Legislative Working Group – Board discussed in detail in Agenda Item 7.
5. Regular Grantee Convenings – Approved; replaces previous coalition / partners meetings.
6. Support Grantee Led Initiatives – Approved strategy; funding decisions to follow.

John Gordon moves to approve the strategies described in LSAC recommendations 2, 5, and 6. Seconded by Jerry Lane. Vote to approve.

Agenda Item 6: Strategic Discussion: Statutory Formula

Discussion:

The Board members broke into small groups to discuss Minn. Stat. 480.242, subd. 2 and LSAC's recommendation to prioritize revisiting the statutory funding formula. In the full group discussion, there was an emphasis on understanding historical context, current system mapping, and future vision. Staff will gather the requested data for the next meetings to keep this moving forward.

The Board thanks Randi Roth and all the LSAC members for their contributions to advancing civil legal aid and for the work that went into the report to help BOCLA get off to a strong start.

Agenda Item 7: Committee Structure

Board discussed the need for an Operational Working Group and a Legislative Working Group (as recommended in the LSAC report). Board members indicated which working groups they would be interested in and staff will convene working groups in the coming months.

At the November meeting, the Board will discuss the need for work on civil legal aid standards as described in the statute and discuss the formation of a Standards Working Group.

Agenda Item 8: Evaluation, Next Steps, and Closing

Upcoming meetings will be on the second Friday of the month from 11:00 – 12:30.

Chris Wendt closed with reflections on the importance of the Board's work and gratitude for members' contributions.