

Meeting of the State Board of Civil Legal Aid

Date: Friday, January 9, 2026

Time: 10:00 – 2:00

Location: BOCLA, Conf. Room 1

Chair: Christopher Wendt

Facilitator: Kelly Tautges

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

Staff: Bridget Gernander, Susan Beaudet

MINUTES

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Framing

BOCLA Chair, Christopher Wendt opened the meeting by providing an overview of the agenda that focuses on building relationships among board members and staff while laying a foundation for BOCLA's future direction.

Kelly Tautges outlined the goals to develop an identity statement that defines the mission, vision, and roles of the organization and to identify core values that will guide the work of the Board.

Board member, John Murphy, shared a client story from his work at the Anoka County Law Library that highlighted the importance of their clinic partnership with legal aid.

Agenda Item 2: Proposed Approach to Court Pro Hac Vice Project Funding Request

Bridget Gernander provided background on pro hac vice revenue. It began as a recommendation of the Justice for All Task Force to have a more flexible pool of funding for grants that generally expand access to justice in Minnesota without a focus on income eligibility. LSAC opened pro hac vice grants on a rolling basis. BOCLA has received its first application from the Minnesota Supreme Court to support a consumer law task force to review recommendations from the MSBA Access to Justice Committee's Consumer Report and an AI Access to Justice sandbox recommended by MSBA, to explore responsible AI tools. The Board will review and vote by email on this application, using the scoring criteria created by LSAC as the framework.

Agenda Item 3: Progress & Updates

Christopher Wendt shared updates from the December Grantee Listening session, including highlights on grantee discussions and funding topics. Chair Wendt will send a letter to grantees following up with next steps.

Working Group Updates:

- **Legislative** – Jerry Lane: The group has met twice and discussed legislative funding with a focus on preparing for the 2027 legislative session. No new funding proposals are expected for 2026.

- **Standards** – Katy Drahos: The group held its first meeting in December and is focused on improving intake processes and coordination. Plans include learning from SMRLS’s hotline model and exploring national examples and AI tools. Colleen Kelly will join as lead staff for this working group.
- **Operations** – Korey Wahwassuck: The group has met twice and focused on developing a vision and equitable guiding principles. Work on the bylaws is underway, and the draft will be shared with the group soon.

Agenda Item 4: Overview of Identity & Values: Initial Formation for BOCLA

Kelly Tautges provided an overview to introduce the discussion on defining BOCLA’s identity and strategic direction to ensure long-term sustainability. Board members broke out into groups of three and highlighted the importance of a clear mission, vision, and values, and discussed strategic planning as an approach for changing environments. BOCLA’s role includes coordinating civil legal aid, securing sustainable funding, and setting service standards.

Agenda Item 5: Identity Statement

The board discussed creating an identity statement to define its mission, vision, and unique role as a systems-level leader. Key themes included equity, sustainability, accountability, and collaboration. Next steps include refining language and combining feedback into a revised draft.

Agenda Item 6: Core Values

Kelly Tautges emphasized that clarifying core values are essential for guiding decision-making, resolving tensions between competing priorities, and ensuring integrity and sustainability in the organization’s work. Board members were asked to form into pairs and brainstorm a broad list of core values, which will be organized and then discuss the top values. The work done by the Board will move next to the Operations Working Group to determine next steps for finalizing values statement.

Agenda Item 7: Evaluation, Next Steps, Close

Kelly Tautges distributed an evaluation to the board members to provide feedback on meeting length, format, and improvements for future sessions.