

DISASTER TRACK
Sessions at 2018 Poverty Law Conference and Pro Bono Conference

Wednesday, September 5, 2018

8:30 – 9:45 Pro Bono Coordinators Retreat : Utilizing Disaster Volunteers: Best Practices

Speakers: Jai Collier, Mary Chisolm Rios & Pablo Almaguer

This panel will review the Hurricane Harvey Disaster Legal Services Response, National Momentum towards mobilizing Disaster Legal Aid Volunteers through large clearing houses, and major lessons learned.

10:00 – 11:15 PBCR: Disaster Roundtable (Open to Interested Poverty Law Conference Attendees)

Poverty Law Conference 2018 – Workshop Descriptions

1:00-2:15

**The Second Storm: Insurance Issues for Low-Income Disaster Survivors
ROOM: Omni AB**

It is a fact that low-income clients can and do have insurance and that insurance issues are repeatedly named as one of the main hurdles faced by low-income disaster survivors. This panel will discuss some of the common types of insurance policies and coverage seen with a low-income population, the challenges and issues presented after a disaster occurs, and legal aid's role in advocating for these clients versus that of the private bar. It will also look at the special considerations faced by LSC providers.

Presenters: Nicole Worsley Love, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (San Antonio); Sandra Brown, Lone Star Legal Aid (Houston)

2:30-3:45

**Housekeeping for Title: Homeownership Issues for Repair/Replacement During a Disaster
ROOM: Omni AB**

This session explores some of the tools public interest lawyers use to clear title to property, including removing judgment liens, obtaining affidavits of heirships, and proving ownership of manufactured homes, trailers, and RVs. These are especially

necessary when there is a disaster. Many programs require the disaster survivor to have 100% title ownership to receive financial assistance to repair the home. Oftentimes, the legal proceeding may take longer to complete than the program's deadline allows. By anticipating the need in communities prone to disasters and assisting low-income Texans with title "house"keeping, the public interest attorney can help disaster survivors obtain funds needed to repair or replace their homes.

Presenters: Hon. Elizabeth Lockett, Harris County Tax Master (Houston); Michael Rush, Lone Star Legal Aid (Houston); Patricia Tsai, Lone Star Legal Aid (Houston); Raul Noriega, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (San Antonio)

Thursday, September 6, 2018

8:30-9:45

FEMA - An Advocate's Perspective ROOM: Omni AB

Many disaster survivors need financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), but encounter obstacles that hinder their recovery. This session will:

- provide a brief overview of FEMA's financial assistance program for individuals and households;
- identify common obstacles and the types of administrative proceedings available to address them;
- explain how FEMA's eligibility decisions have a farther-reaching impact than just the amount of money one receives from FEMA; and
- include insights gained from litigation against FEMA.

Presenters: Tracy Figueroa, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (Corpus Christi); Sapna Aiyer, Lone Star Legal Aid (Houston)

2:45-4:00

Disasters: Consumer Protection, Employment, and Immigration Issues ROOM: Omni AB

A variety of legal issues arise after disasters. This session will focus on what consumer, employment, and immigration attorneys should be prepared to address in order to help disaster survivors recover. Consumers often face problems such as identity theft and contractor and home repair fraud, as well as challenges providing bureaucracies like FEMA with supporting documents to obtain assistance. Workers may need help accessing disaster unemployment benefits, recovering unpaid wages for post-disaster clean-up and reconstruction work, or redressing a wrongful termination for complying with an evacuation order. Immigrants are an especially vulnerable population during

natural disasters, and are less likely to access assistance and obtain benefits – even when they are entitled to them. This is because of a myriad of barriers, such as fear of police and deportation, cultural obstacles, limited English proficiency, re-traumatization, insufficient understanding of systems, and economic barriers – all of this worsened by national anti-immigrant sentiment and SB4.

Presenters: Tracy Figueroa, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (Corpus Christi); Sapna Aiyer, Lone Star Legal Aid (Houston); Katy Youker, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (Brownsville); Andrea Guttin, Houston Immigration Services (Houston)

4:15-5:30

**Spotting and Addressing Community Development Issues in Disaster Assistance
ROOM: Omni AB**

This panel will discuss how legal services advocates can identify and address community development issues during the preparation, response, and recovery phases of disaster assistance. We will discuss strategies for building your team's capacity, responding to environmental justice emergencies, and advocating for equity in long term housing recovery.

Presenters: Rachel Zummo, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (Austin); Becky Moseley, Legal Aid of Northwest Texas (McKinney); Amy Dinn, Lone Star Legal Aid (Houston); Maddie Sloan, Texas Appleseed (Austin)

Friday, September 7, 2018

10:00-11:15

**Litigating against Landlords after Harvey: Landlord-Tenant Advocacy
ROOM: Omni AB**

After Hurricane Harvey, renters faced numerous practical and legal challenges to maintain their housing. This presentation will discuss how legal aid organizations litigated against landlords after Harvey to enforce tenant rights against landlords, including in public housing. It will discuss the statutory provisions in play, the methods by which such provisions can be enforced, and the pitfalls in such litigation. In particular, the presentation will discuss the equitable lawsuits Lone Star Legal Aid filed on behalf of tenants after Harvey devastated much of their service area.

Presenters: Rich Tomlinson, Lone Star Legal Aid (Houston); Mark Grandich, Lone Star Legal Aid (Houston); Tai Ho, Lone Star Legal Aid (Beaumont); Becky Moseley, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas (McKinney); Nelson Mock, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (Austin)