MONTGOMERY

Community members in attendance:
- Jackie Aranda, Southern Poverty Law Center, Jackie.aranda@splcenter.org
- Ryan Becker, Equal Justice Initiative, Attorney, cmorrison@eji.org
- Beth Biggs, Executive Director, Family Promise, bethmarra@aol.com
- Paul Butler, Dept. of Human Resources
- Kimble Forrister, Executive Director, Alabama Arise, kimble@arise.org
- Sue McInnish, Executive Director, Alabama Civil Justice Foundation, sue@acjf.org
- Ed Patterson, Asst. Executive Director, Alabama State Bar ed.patterson@alabar.org
- John Pickens, ED, Alabama Appleseed, john.pickens@alabamaappleseed.org
- Jaffe Pickett, Legal Services Alabama, jpickett@alsp.org
- Sen. Quinton Ross, State Senator District 26, Quinton.ross@alsenate.gov
- Jada Shaffer, Campaign Manager, Voices for Alabama’s Children, jshaffer@alavoices.org
- Ann Sikes, Executive Director, Montgomery Education Foundation annmsikes@gmail.com
- Susan Watson, Executive Director, Alabama ACLU, swatson@aclualabama.org
- Micah West, Economic Justice Lawyer, Southern Poverty Law Center, micah.west@splcenter.org
- Lillian Zaworski, Alabama Rural Coalition for the Homeless, lillian@archconnection.org

Welcome and Purpose of Roundtable
Ted Small, Chair ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty:
- The purpose of this roundtable is to convene stakeholders who are already engaged in addressing one or more manifestation of poverty areas and to facilitate the exchange of ideas about how these different programs can increase the level of existing collaboration across discipline areas.
- We do NOT believe we can help you solve poverty in a few hours. Instead we are here to share diverse perspectives of Commissioners and liaisons from across the nation and to exchange ideas about ways to address poverty in a holistic and interdisciplinary manner.
- I believe that we can make a difference by bringing together the type of smart people who care passionately about helping those less fortunate, as described in your biographies.
- We have held two previous roundtables in Alabama this week. We held a poverty roundtable in Birmingham with active community members from various service organizations. The Birmingham participants identified a need to focus on families and child support, as well as a need to collaborate and utilize available data collection resources at local colleges and universities in order to collect data that is useful to support advocacy for additional funding and programming for groups addressing various manifestations of poverty areas. In Selma yesterday, community members identified the need for community policing, as well as the need to establish a homeless shelter.
- We currently have 7 (of 10) blueprints for action available on our website [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/homelessness_poverty/poverty_initiative.html] to provide best practices, strategies and information on manifestations of poverty such as inadequate education and lack of opportunity for full employment at a living wage and isolation from community and political infrastructure.

1. What is the best approach for legal services providers to collaborate with those providing education, housing, healthcare and other supports for the homeless and people living in poverty?

Jaffe Pickett, Legal Services Alabama:
- Collaboration among service organizations is important, far too often do we work alone like a one-way street. We need cross roads and consistent collaboration.
Access to services is a key issue in Montgomery.
There needs to be legal services involvement in the continuum of care.

Craig Baab, Alabama Appleseed:
- Legal services in Alabama are not funded by the state.

Sue McInnish, Executive Director, Alabama Civil Justice Foundation:
- We need to enhance civil legal aid.
- We have too many hubs and not enough access to legal services.
- Our biggest problem is funding. We have four volunteer lawyers programs. We have done studies and found that there is great return on our investment when social services are combined with legal services.

Jaffe Pickett:
- Legal Services of Alabama is the least funded in the nation. We need to strengthen state-wide rural gaps that are without services.

Renato Izquieta, Legal Aid Society of Orange County:
- Collaboration of services is vital to success. It is important to constantly build relationships among fellow service providers because it’s in your best interest to collaborate. It is also important to educate the bar on the importance of lawyers collaborating with service providers.

Beth Biggs, Executive Director, Family Promise:
- We have to put legal services where the community is. We cannot create legal hubs if people can’t get to them. We need to keep up collaborations/contacts constantly among service providers.
  - Described program (cost $70,000.00) where they hired a police officer to embed within programs.
- Suggestion of including lawyers/legal services within a community’s continuum of care

Amy Horton-Newell, Director of ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty:
- My Continuum of Care in Montgomery County, MD engaged the police department in our work and this led to a reduction of criminalization.

Ada Shen-Jaffe, Race Equity & Leadership Consultant, Coach and Trainer:
- San Diego’s homeless outreach team is a great example of police engagement. The San Diego police department partners officers with homeless shelter outreach workers to go out into the community and interact with homeless people in need of services.

Dina Schlossberg, Deputy Director/Senior Attorney for Multifamily Housing, Regional Housing Legal Services:
- IOLTA money can be used for foreclosure prevention or community redevelopment.

Paul Butler, DHR:
- It is important to educate the community about legal rights. We need to utilize judges and other community members of influence in order to eliminate the stigma associated with seeking services.
- DHR’s child support program is open to both noncustodial and custodial parents, both get services and representation.
- Such collaborative programming should win support because it ultimately reduces the need for government funding for safety net programming.
- Inquiry about how individuals in Alabama can get child support orders modified to avoid accumulation of arrears?

Amy Horton-Newell, Director of the ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty:
- Responds that one of the best ways to overcome barriers is to engage a “friendly face” to modify child support in a less formal setting.

ACTION ITEM: Amy will contact Paul Butler with information on best practice child support model.

Micah West, Southern Poverty Law Center
Comments on need for more public awareness to debunk the myth of “dead beat dads”

Hon. Elizabeth Finn, Presiding City Judge:
- Description of Arizona’s program of using self-help centers to provide assistance with protective orders.

Ada Shen-Jaffe, Race Equity & Leadership Consultant, Coach and Trainer:
- Description of Washington State’s audit of legal resources which concluded that nearly 50% of cases can be handled by non-lawyers with implementation of a triaging system by case managers in legal aid offices.
- Shen-Jaffe offered to make herself available to consult with interested persons about how to replicate this audit/study of resources in Montgomery and Alabama generally.

Jaffe Pickett:
- Important trainings include – educating senior citizens of rights (including tenant rights). We must prioritize certain services over others. We should use a scan/audit system to assign particular issues to particular attorneys (maximize time and resources).

**ACTION ITEM:** Ada will contact Jaffe Pickett during follow-up meeting on May 19th at 10:30am and others interested in using the pyramid concept to determine needs and focus on current resources to fill gaps.

2. Two crippling manifestations of poverty are “stigma and lack of personal dignity” and “isolation from community and political infrastructure,” often resulting from interactions with law enforcement, the courts and the correctional system. How can we better collaborate with these entities, and legislative bodies, to remove inappropriate and damaging collateral consequences of criminal convictions?

Ryan Becker, Equal Justice Initiative, Attorney:
- There needs to be police officer training on implicit bias. This needs to dovetail with data collection.

John Pickens, ED, Alabama Appleseed:
- The U.S. Attorney’s Office has arranged to have legislators and the governor go through re-entry stimulation. There is also pending “ban the box” legislation.

Amy Horton-Newell:
- Suggestion that we look to data already available for programming by the Veteran’s Administration. There are VA re-entry statistics available to the public.

Jackie Aranda, Southern Poverty Law Center
- Need to advocate for more programming dealing with stigma and non-legal consequences of incarceration by making people human in the eyes of legislature.

Jaffe Pickett:
- We need to think beyond legal consequences. We should focus also on non-legal issues (such as mental health). MHM is the largest provider of mental health care, not the government. We need to have an understanding of what the mentally ill ex-offender has gone through and the effects of isolation from supportive infrastructure.

Craig Baab:
- We are doing great harm by not legally allowing felons to vote. There is recent legislature introduced that would mean anyone with a felony conviction would lose access to all social services.

Ted Small:
- There should be a conversation with the legislature about the reintegration of ex-offenders. That conversation should also facilitate some programming where ex-offenders who have successfully re-integrated themselves into local churches and communities can tell their own stories of how
they feel being without civil rights even after they have been forgiven and accepted back into their families and churches. The conversation needs to be centered on humanizing ex-offenders instead of discussing them merely as statistics without a face, family or experience. He described how in his hometown of DeLand, Florida, a group of community leaders decided that the best initial step to address poverty was to increase public awareness and build a constituency for other action steps. Their public awareness project is called Humanizing Poverty Panels and is available for download from the Commission’s Anti-Poverty Quilt “patch” webpage, http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/homelessness_poverty/poverty_initiative/quilt.html.

John Pickens:
- There have been initial efforts to form a re-entry coalition, but we must insure that action is taken with regard to next steps.

Josephine McNeil, Executive Director, Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton Development Organization, Inc.:
- I suggest making personal contacts with those experiencing re-entry. Church communities could reach out to these people and host roundtable meals.

Susan Watson, Executive Director, Alabama ACLU:
- There is no bail reduction in Alabama at the first hearing. It would be beneficial if there was bail reduction available state-wide at the first hearing.

**ACTION ITEM:** Ted Small will contact ABA Civil Rights and Social Justice Section to consider conducting panel on the Alabama Constitution.

Craig Baab:
- There needs to be policy changes regarding the pardon process. The standards to determine pardon are vague and ineffective.

John Pickens:
- There should be automatic restoration of rights, rather than the pardon process. There is an upcoming meeting in Birmingham on re-entry and there we can bring up the idea of humanizing panels. Local government should be in attendance, as well as the homeless continuum of care, and the ACLU.

Sue McInnish:
- Our state has one of the best pre-kindergarten programs in the country and the foster care system is relatively successful. We need to look towards these successes as a model for future programs.

Ada Shen-Jaffe, Race Equity & Leadership Consultant, Coach and Trainer:
- Suggestion of approaching all programming with overly optimistic goals:
  - Aspire high and expect low
- Mention of successful programming regarding school to work pipeline and juvenile diversion.
- Need to make the economic impact case to obtain funding for more pre-K and aging out of foster care programming.

3. How can we more candidly collaborate across racial lines to better educate the public and public officials, about the functional reality of the relationship of race and poverty?

Beth Biggs:
- We have a program called “Family Promise” that is effective in engaging church volunteers that wouldn’t have necessarily interacted from both predominantly white and predominantly black churches. It is a relationship-building and trust-enhancing program.

Ted Small:
- One idea to enhance collaboration among different groups is through meal programs, where groups can eat together and establish relationships around one table.
Sue McInnish:  
- Churches could partner to do collaborative volunteer work and/or dinners. My church is involved in a similar program called “Circles of Transformation.”

Ann Sikes, Executive Director, Montgomery Education Foundation:  
- Sometimes organized gatherings, while well-intentioned, can be fruitless. Meaningful engagement should be the focus (i.e. informal mentorships and casual relationships).

Next Steps

**ACTION ITEM:** Follow-up meeting on Thursday, May 19th at 10:30am at Alabama Civil Justice Foundation (hosted by Sue McInnish).