This workshop was held at the 2019 Equal Justice Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Title:
Justice and a Bus? Urban to Rural Delivery Strategies.

Presenters:
Jayme Cassidy, Legal Services of Greater Miami, Miami, FL
Joshua B. Crabtree, Legal Aid of the Bluegrass, Lexington, KY
Julia Wilson, OneJustice, San Francisco, CA

This session will bring together perspectives from organizations that are bridging rural legal needs and urban pro bono resources - primarily through transportation but also testing other tactics. We will present lessons learned and best practices, followed by a group-wide conversation about effective implementation of these strategies and the concept of a national network to connect professionals working on these projects.
Please refer to the below links for the presentation; "Justice and a Bus? Urban to Rural Delivery Strategies"

https://prezi.com/view/0wSykkkYyB3Ujx5bbkjB/


http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/kentucky_legal_aid_bluegrass_justice_bus
Justice . . . and a Bus?!?!?

Equal Justice Conference 2019
Thursday, May 9, 2019

Session Goals & Outline

• GOALS
  • Overview of 3 urban-to-rural projects using transportation
  • Opportunity for some hands-on planning for YOUR region
  • Crowd-source list of similar projects
  • National Conversation? Cohort?

• OUTLINE
  • California, Florida & Kentucky [35 min]
  • Q&A [10 min]
  • Hands On Planning [15 min]
  • Share Out: Ideas & Takeaways [15 min]
Who is in the room?

California
OneJustice
Julia Wilson
www.OneJustice.org

Kentucky
Legal Aid of the Blue Grass
Joshua Crabtree
www.lablaw.org

Florida
Legal Services of Greater Miami
Jayme Cassidy
www.legalservicesmiami.org
California

Poverty density

Percentage low income

Average: 21.4
Source: Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC),
www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1A0S1xz2jwgxrptV3-Gnm9vYm4l&usp=sharing

Pro Bono: Attorney Density
Ratio

The Challenge
Justice Bus Project

Local Partner & Community Need → Justice Bus → Supervising Attorneys (local & distance) → Outreach Collaborations

Pro Bono (private sector & law schools) → Justice Bus → Project Management (COO)

Two Goals

Expand Intake + Pipeline to Local → Limited Scope Services
Criteria for Success

- Routinized
- Document-Driven
- Clear Next Steps
- Positive Client Outcomes
- Volume

You helped 1,383 low-income individuals receive free legal help in 22 counties! Thank you!

Alameda County
Butte County
Contra Costa County
El Dorado County
Fresno County
Kern County
Los Angeles County
Mendocino County
Monterey County
Napa County
Placer County
Santa Barbara County
San Benito County
San Bernardino County
San Joaquin County
San Mateo County
Santa Clara County
Shasta County
Solano County
Sonoma County
Stanislaus County
Tulare County
Ventura County
Where we are now……

Successes
- Awareness!
- Private Sector Commitment
- Serving clients

Challenges
- Labor Intensive
- Build repeat volunteer models
- How to Scale?

Prompting Questions
- The Need & Impetus
- The Model
- Successes
- Challenges
- What’s Next?
Florida

PRO BONO COLLABORATION HAS THE WHEELS TURNING ON THE JUSTICE BUS

Kentucky
Questions?
“Hands On”

Work In Progress

Share Out Your Designs
Scale of 1 to 5

California
OneJustice
Julia Wilson
www.OneJustice.org

Kentucky
Legal Aid of the Blue Grass
Joshua Crabtree
www.lablaw.org

Florida
Legal Services of Greater Miami
Jayme Cassidy
www.legalservicesmiami.org

THANK YOU
Once Upon the Justice Bus

By Joshua Crabtree and Jillian Beach
Legal Aid of the Bluegrass

A long long time ago in a town not far from here the good Director sits at his computer during his dedicated thinking time. “Hmmm” he says staring out the window, “if only we had a new exciting idea to help people get justice” he concludes. Just then BING goes the computer and an email flies into the good Director’s inbox.

The Funder seeks innovative programs and projects to apply for a one-time Opportunity Grant for specific programs and projects that address urgent needs and emerging opportunities.

RING RING “Hello, this is the Business Brain, can I help you?” says Legal Aid’s Business Director. “Hi, it’s me! I just received an email that the Funder is looking to fund innovative projects. What do you think about submitting an application for a mobile office,” asked the good Director. And so it was that the remarkable grants team prepared an application for a Funder Opportunity Grant.

The next day, word traveled to the good Director, that the Funder had selected them as the grant recipient. All was joyous as the Legal Aiders danced and sang into the night. Not long after, the van was purchased and filled with all the things needed to bring justice to the people. The outside was decorated and shown like the sun. And only a few short months later, our trusty steed, the Justice Bus, hit the road spreading justice throughout the land and they all lived happily ever after.

If only we lived in a fairytale. While the project is now complete, the road to get here was a long and strenuous one. It went a little something like this...

In 2016, Legal Aid of the Bluegrass completed a Legal Needs Assessment (LNA) that identified the most pressing legal needs in our service area to determine if we were properly allocating our resources to address those needs. The report included the results of telephone and online surveys, focus groups, a Gaps in Service study completed by the Center for Applied Economics at Northern Kentucky University, and a Social Return on Investment study. Among many other findings, transportation was found to be a barrier to getting legal help in our rural areas (e.g., our LNA identified our ten most underserved counties out of our 33 county Legal Services Corporation (LSC) service area, all which happened to be more than an hour from one of four office locations).

Our original reaction to transportation as a barrier identified in our LNA was that transportation is not our problem. We are a law firm, we provide legal representation and we do not provide transportation. Transportation is an issue for county/state/federal government and is not an issue we resolve in the justice system. We are lawyers and we are not transportation experts so we can lament the need for mass transit, light rail, underfunding of public transportation, dilapidated infrastructure, rising gas prices [insert your own transportation issue of choice]. All of these things are true but, it remained a nagging thought in the back of our heads.

Then the American Bar Endowment (ABE) announced the Opportunity Grants and a light bulb went off. We can bring legal services to rural communities with a mobile office, the Justice Bus. We really do have a remarkable grants team that prepared our application and were awarded a $50,000 Opportunity Grant.

Among many other findings, transportation was found to be a barrier to getting legal help in our rural areas...
from the ABE to start the Justice Bus project. Then life happened.

Multiple staffing changes including an abrupt departure of an Accountant, an interim accountant, an accountant search and hire quickly followed by our annual audit (time frame: departure in December-audit in March 2017) all became a priority. Then followed our planned implementation of an organizational restructure. We finally began our RFP process to select vendors to bring our Justice Bus to life. It quickly became clear that we had grossly underestimated the time/money/staff/resources, etc., that it would take to bring this innovative project to life.

Our team began requesting quotes from dealerships for the purchase of the cargo van and for the outfitting of the interior of the van into an office. The cost of the cargo van was as expected and a high quality Mercedes Sprinter Van (I know...eye roll...legal aid driving around in a Mercedes but it really was the best) was selected. Then the proposals for converting and outfitting the van started coming in. Open the first proposal $90,000! A good laugh over the granite countertops and plush interior. Second proposal $xx,xxx...a genial chuckle. Third proposal $xx,xxx...exhale and sigh. Fourth proposal — onset of general panic.

After overcoming the shock and realizing we would need substantially more money to get the Justice Bus on the road, we went to work raising more funds. Needless to say, this also resulted in a significant delay in getting our great new project into operation.

Fortunately, we secured additional funding from a number of private foundations and funders. One foundation provided all of the funding for the technology package. Another for van wrap that markets our program and services. For the most part this was some of the easiest money we have ever had to raise for a project or program. Everywhere we spoke about the project it was well received and created a great deal of buzz for our organization. On the downside, most of the money that we raised was smaller amounts and we ended our efforts with a still significant gap in funds needed to put the project on the road. Thankfully, our exceptional board of directors agreed for the organization to make up the difference in the funds needed because they believed in the project. (One of the factors in the decision was most likely the time and resources that we had already devoted to the project, but also because the board could clearly see how this was a need in our service area because it was tied to our legal needs assessment).

Now, with the additional funds secured we were finally ready to move ahead. The RFQs were returned, evaluated and a dealership for the van was selected. Same process for selecting a vendor for the outfitting of the mobile office at an affordable cost that could also accommodate our timeline.

With the van purchased and a company hired for the conversion we transported our soon to be outfitted “Justice Bus” to our vendor in Pennsylvania in late November and eagerly waited to take possession in mid to late April 2018.

However, we could not just sit kick back, relax and wait. There was still much work to be done. We needed to equip the van with the necessary technology and equipment to allow us to deliver our services to the most remote areas of our service area. In these areas there is limited or nonexistent broadband/internet services and tough geographical terrain. The answer to this need was not simple, but building on our relationship with our managed IT service provider we were able to determine the needed technology to connect and interface with our case management system from our roving van, provide video conferencing equipment, as well as how to keep our Justice Bus connected via internet in the hollars and hills of rural Kentucky.

As you can guess from the direction of this story, even with the right technology and even having a funder to pay for the needed technology, things with the Justice Bus are never as easy as they may first appear. As the technological pieces came together another major expense came into the horizon. We needed a secondary power source for the technology and office equipment. As issues go with our Justice Bus project this particular issue was rather minor. Our IT provider worked with the outfitting vendor in Pennsylvania to ensure power was run where it needed to be and cradling systems were built in for the technology
and secondary power was built into the design.

Still more work. We needed to have the van wrapped to transform it into the Justice Bus so that we could visibly advertise our presence and services in remote areas. But who is going to do the design? Do we find a local vendor? Do we wait until the van conversion is complete? What about our pending April deadline? Who needs to sign off on the design? Etc., etc., etc. As the conversion was pushing up against our April deadline we selected a vendor in Pennsylvania close to where the bus was being outfitted so these pieces could happen simultaneously and we wouldn't lose any more time. All of these things needed to happen before we would really need to focus on the staffing and implementation plan for service delivery.

We needed a champion to help us figure out the ins and outs of providing legal services in a mobile office and were lucky enough to have an LSC Equal Justice Works Summer Legal Rural Fellow assigned to Legal Aid of the Bluegrass for the summer of 2018. Her role was to develop a manual and protocols for delivering services in the Justice Bus. There were many questions to answer, such as how to maintain client confidentiality in such a small space. We had our champion and awaited our trusty steed.

Word got back to us that the inside of the bus was not going to be ready for the April debut. We had scheduled to reveal our innovative project at the Kentucky Bar Convention in June to coincide with the American Bar Endowment Annual Meeting. The exterior of the bus however, was complete with the wrap installed and the bus was driven to Kentucky for the convention. As the fairy tale above says, the Justice Bus gleamed in the sun and truly made a huge splash at the Annual Kentucky Bar Convention. Judges, attorneys, and other legal professionals responded with praise and excitement for the Justice Bus.

After the convention, the Justice Bus was driven back to Pennsylvania where the outfitting of the bus was completed. On July 27, 2018, the Justice Bus finally arrived at the gates of Legal Aid of the Bluegrass and the Legal Aiders were filled with joy and pride.

If only that was the ending of the outfitting phase. Our IT service provider needed to install and test all the technology. What should have been a simple installation was complicated, as the secondary power source was not generating enough power to install all of the devices needed for the mobile office. While everything worked well with "shore power," we planned to use the Justice Bus where a shore power source will not always be available. Therefore, you guessed it, the Justice Bus had to travel back to Pennsylvania to have additional power added (actually a faulty battery component but since it was there we decided to go ahead and add even more power).

Before the initial power issue was resolved, we decided to take the Justice Bus out for a trial run at one of our local courthouses. Granted that this was not the market that the Justice Bus was created for, we nonetheless took the Justice Bus unannounced and unadvertised to court in one of our urban jurisdictions on the domestic violence docket day. We parked the van on the street beside the courthouse and waited. Within minutes, the elected Circuit Court Clerk was touring the Justice Bus and letting her staff come look. Judges and other court offices came out for a tour as well. Unbeknownst to us the Clerk emailed the state Administrative Office of the Courts who sent the information to all of the court clerks in Kentucky's 120 counties. Within 45 minutes we were being asked to bring the bus to their service areas (unfortunately many of the requests were outside of LABG's service area). The excitement was palpable.

Nevertheless, did we help any clients? Thankfully, the answer is absolutely! Many people with court hearings that day came over to ask questions. We provided many with legal information. We also screened several for eligibility, provided counsel and advice to some of them and were retained by a few others for further representation. Lessons were learned, people were served and buzz was generated; all and all a successful first outing. It was with a pang of sadness that we had to say good-bye to the Justice Bus as it returned to for the aforementioned power issue.

At the time of this writing, the Justice Bus is back in Kentucky and ready to hit the road (I mean barely back. If I met the actual deadline for this article, it would not have been). So you may be asking yourself why take on an innovative project to deliver legal services? Why subject yourself to all of the headache, heartache, time and frustration when you have a solid method of service delivery already? The answer for LABG was straightforward: there are many in need in our community who do not even have a chance to access our services and we feel obligated to give them an opportunity to access our justice system.

Wherever you may be in your process of innovation with service delivery or any other out of the box project or idea we want to share some of the lessons, we learned in hopes that your project will be more like the fairy tale version than the real life one:

1. **Ideas are easy, implementation is hard**: The most
Once Upon the Justice Bus
Continued from page 21

innovative, well planned and best ideas are still
going to take time, energy and hard work to take
from concept to completion. Commit to that in the
beginning and you will be in the right mindset for
the long haul of the project.

2. Projects need to be managed or they manage
you: In hindsight, the biggest item missing from
our Justice Bus project was a dedicated project
manager. Without a singular person responsible for
driving the project, it was easy for it to be stalled or
moved to the back of the list behind the everyday
issues we are confronted with. Next time LABG
undertakes an innovative project like this we will
request funding for the time of a project manager
or to fund someone on staff to take over responsi-
bilities for the development of the project.

3. It takes time, maybe more than you have: Calcul-
ate the time you think the project will take. Now
double it. Now triple that. Now take that number
and you have a general ballpark of how much time
an innovative project will take. Projects take time
(see generally points 1 & 2) and quite possibly take
more time than your organization is capable of
giving up at the moment. Understand that going
into the project some staff will have to give up
existing responsibilities in exchange for others. If
your organization does not have capacity to handle
that or bring on someone, who can carve out time
in the near future for it to happen, it may be best to
take a pass on the opportunity.

4. Good planning saves you additional work and
cost: The point goes almost without saying except
that, it does not. An organization really must plan
and plan well for this type of project. This also
requires gaining the necessary knowledge that
you do not already have to make the right choices
during the concept and early development phases.
As the old saying goes, "you don't know what you
don't know," is very true. E.g., had LABG purchased
a passenger model sprinter van for slightly more
cost instead of the cargo sprinter model we would
have saved a great deal of time and money on the
conversion and outfitting. Since the passenger
model already had finished walls, additional seats,
additional lighting, flooring, etc. it would have elimi-
nated the need and time to add those features later.

5. It's ok to fail, as long as you are failing forward:
My tech friends are always talking about "failing
fast & failing forward." Whenever I would complain
generally about the project one of them would
inevitably espouse on the virtue of failing. In Sil-
icon Valley, it is practically the daily mantra. The
concept is essentially this - always learn from your
failures and evolve. Babies are great at this because
the norms of success and failure have not yet been
imposed on them. Unlike adults who devote signif-
ificant time and energy planning and strategizing to
avoid failure, babies prototype through constant
experimentation. This leads to babies' growth and
development. Now this point may seem in conflict
with the previous point. In this situation, we would
argue that it is not. Definitely invest in planning but
know that not everything will work out as planned.
Just learn when the plan does not work out accord-
ing to the plan.

6. Be committed to the project: This is essential.
Understand from the start that the project is going
to be a challenge and require a great deal of time
and energy. With that understanding then remove
absolute failure of the project as an option. In doing
so it will help you get through some of the more
frustrating days.

7. It's great to build momentum but not too soon:
When we received word that our Justice Bus Pro-
ject was funded, we could not wait to shout it from
the rooftops (in today's language: twitter, Facebook,
blog posts, Instagram, YouTube, etc.). We were right
to be excited. However, by not understanding the
amount of time that the project would take we
created excitement and energy too soon. As a result,
the excitement turned to questions and eventually
doubt that the project would be completed. It prob-
ably also led to some people wondering about our
credibility and competence. Thankfully, most of
that dissipates when they see the finished project,
but it is good never to be in that position to begin
with.

8. Be ready to A-D-A-P-T: Closely related to points
4 and 5 is the need to be adaptable in your project
concept, design and development. Create a win-win
situation no matter what. Whether or not you get
the results you want, put in place measures to keep
growing and moving towards your project goal.
This does not end once the project hits the road.
E.g., we planned on using the Justice Bus to facili-
tate pro bono attorneys from our more urban areas
to provide assistance to rural clients where there
are limited number of attorneys, as well as use it to
allow our clients to meet with LABG advocacy staff,
without either one needing to spend so much time traveling. While we continue with that plan, we also realized that inevitably wherever we go people would want to ask us questions including legal questions. Since we operate a central live phone intake system, we thought we could facilitate calls for people at the bus. However, from an efficiency and customer service perspective, we realized that approach was not the best. So we are now adapting to make sure that during the first hour or two of each visit to a location we will have client intake hours. While not in the original plan, it was needed and easily accomplished if we were willing to adapt to the need that we saw.

9. **Choose wisely:** Just like careful planning, choosing wisely is also necessary, especially with your vendors. For this project, we had great success with the IT even if there were blips because we used our existing managed service provider who worked with us regularly on our system. In addition, we had no issues with the vendor used to purchase the vehicle. Where we had less success was the vendor who did the conversion/outfitting of the Justice Bus. Was this because we did not check out their work product or references? No. We did our due diligence in that regard. We believe this resulted more from the vendor being five hours away. It was not easy for us to check on the progress of our project or receive accurate information (since we could not just drop in to check on the progress) and it was hard for us to keep the pressure on the vendor to adhere to the established timeline. This was a scenario where the cost savings may have been outweighed by going with more costly vendor closer to home.

10. **Technology is great...when it works:** Even the best laid plans can fall apart. You may have put in the work in ensuring you had access to the internet in the hollers of Kentucky, video conferencing equipment to connect clients to attorneys an hour away, and the ability to make copies on the spot, but have a backup plan if that doesn't work. Make paper copies, bring back up equipment such as a hot spot, and plan for your plan to go awry.

11. **Have fun with your project!** We can hear you now counting off the reasons why you cannot have more fun at work or with a project: Your work is serious; clients will not take you seriously; your work is important; and it would waste time. However, there are real benefits of having fun especially when you are extremely frustrated with a new project. Having fun stimulates creativity, relieves stress, increases communication and productivity and builds enthusiasm. You need all of those to handle a project like this.

Now that everything is said and done, would LABG recommend undertaking an innovative project like the Justice Bus? If you approach the project with the right mindset, understanding the commitment necessary and with careful planning, the answer is without a doubt yes, because our clients and our communities are counting on it.

1. Joshua Crabtree is the Executive Director of Legal Aid of the Bluegrass (LABG). Prior to joining LABG, Joshua was the long time managing attorney of the Children’s Law Center. Joshua is the co-editor of The Federal Education Rights of Children as well as a published author of several works regarding the ethics of representing children, the education rights of children and issues regarding child custody. Joshua resides in Ft. Wright, Kentucky with his wife and two children under five where he is learning that the only thing in life that has ever lived up to its hype is raising children. Joshua may be reached at jcrabtree@lablaw.org.

In her role as Communications Manager, Jillian Beach aligns LABG’s communication strategies with its organizational objectives. She has spent the past six years working for legal service providers that serve low-income and indigent people and children. Her expertise in development, event and outreach management, and digital media is an integral function at LABG. Jillian graduated from Northern Kentucky University with a B.F.A in stage management. She was the former Office Manager at Children’s Law Center in Covington, KY until 2015. Jillian continues to embrace the core values of compassion, integrity, and justice. She lives near the Ohio River with her husband Brandon, one year old Sawyer, and rescue dog Nala. Jillian may be reached at jbeach@lablaw.org.
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The residents of Allensworth, an unincorporated community in California’s San Joaquin Valley, struggle to ensure that their water infrastructure can support demand for household water. Throughout the year Allensworth’s water system fails, leaving its 471 residents without running water for days at a time. Allensworth residents do not know whether—or how—the law might protect their right to clean, running water.

James Beatty, a Vietnam War veteran, resides in a senior living facility in Napa County. Napa Valley may be known for its wineries and vacation villas, but low-income residents, such as Beatty, strain to obtain affordable services in an agricultural region with a high cost of living and without convenient public transportation, catering mostly to tourists. Beatty is about to have open-heart surgery. He knows that he needs to prepare an advanced health care directive and a will before the surgery, but he cannot afford an attorney. He wants to organize his affairs before his life-threatening surgery, but he does not know anyone who can help.

In California there are legal resources, such as nonprofit legal services organizations and pro bono attorneys, meant to help Allensworth residents and Beatty. Those resources, however, are concentrated in California’s metropolitan areas, inaccessible to low-income residents of Allensworth and Napa. The legal resources that are geographically and socioeconomically accessible to Allensworth and Beatty—the rural-based legal services nonprofit organizations—are staffed thinly and lack the finances and pro bono support that urban organizations enjoy. Those geographically and socioeconomically accessible organizations have the know-how to help their clients but cannot avail themselves of pro bono resources—such as law firms, corporate in-house legal departments, and law schools—that could help them serve their entire client base.

OneJustice is a statewide nonprofit organization that removes barriers to justice for low-income Californians by supporting nonprofit legal services organizations and their pro bono partners. The Justice Bus Project of OneJustice makes legal help accessible to Allensworth and thousands of similarly rural and isolated communities in California by expanding organizations’ capacity through pro bono partnerships with urban lawyers and law students. The Justice Bus Project is premised on OneJustice’s belief that...
for each underserved rural-and-isolated community in California, there is a coalition of partners—law firms, law schools, and legal services organizations—that can and want to help. OneJustice finds pro bono partners, develops a mode that maximally utilizes pro bono partners’ time, and trains pro bono partners in bringing tangible assistance to rural and isolated communities. The results are Justice Bus trips that both tangibly and timely assist Californians and foster long-lasting bonds between urban pro bono lawyers or law students and rural and isolated communities.

Since 2007, the Justice Bus Project has brought 780 volunteers to twenty-one counties in California and helped 2,030 clients. At the core of each trip is (1) an unmet legal need identified by OneJustice and substantiated by legal services partners around the state and (2) a strategy that taps an urban pro bono resource to meet the need. Here we discuss how the Justice Bus Project is changing, one trip at a time, the legal services landscape in rural and isolated California and the lives of those who desperately need legal help.

Unmet Legal Needs

The tragedy of the lack of legal help in rural and isolated California arises from several factors. High poverty rates lead to more legal need. Clients are geographically and socioeconomically isolated from vital service providers. There are few legal services attorneys and private attorneys to represent low-income Californians in rural and isolated areas, and those legal services organizations that are there are severely underfunded.

Higher Rates of Poverty. Legal need in rural and isolated areas of the country is, in large part, due to the discrepancy in poverty density between rural and urban regions. Between 2009 and 2010, the poverty rate nationwide increased from 14.8 percent to 15.3 percent, and from 42.9 million to 46.2 million living in poverty.1 The rate of poverty in rural and small-town areas of the country is even higher than the national rate.2 In 2010 across the country 16.3 percent of rural and small-town residents were living in poverty.3 And while rural poverty rates fluctuate slightly from year to year, the poverty gap between nonmetropolitan and metropolitan areas has remained consistent.

California is the most populous state in the country, with 37,691,912 people living within its borders. California also holds the top spot for the largest number of people living in poverty. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, almost 6,000,000 people in California are living at or below the poverty threshold.4 Over 5,000,000 Californians live in nonmetropolitan areas of the state, and approximately 1.6 million rural residents are eligible for legal aid services, which are available to seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals with incomes at or below 125 percent of the poverty line.5 Poverty rates in rural areas of California exceed the rate in urban areas. Estimates indicate a poverty rate of 17 percent in rural California, compared to 15.8 percent in urban areas.6 Three of the federally designated persistent poverty counties, so selected because of unrelenting high rates of poverty, are in California: Fresno, Tulare, and Imperial.7

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1 Bishaw, supra note 1.
2 U.S. Census Bureau, How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty (Nov. 5, 2012), http://1.usa.gov/Y0sE60.
4 California Commission on Access to Justice, Improving Civil Justice in Rural California 7 (Sept. 2010), http://bit.ly/Y0pGOO.
6 Persistent poverty counties are those where 20 percent or more of their population live in poverty as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau (Community Development Financial Institutions Fund Program Account, Pub. L. No. 112-74, 125 Stat. 887 (2011)).
One area particularly affected by the gap in access to legal services in California is the Central Valley. This is the largely rural swath of land running down the center of the state, stretching north to south from Shasta to Kern County, and expanding over approximately 22,500 square miles. This valuable region provides 63 percent of California’s $38 billion in agricultural production and nearly one-fourth of America’s food.8

Unique Legal Problems but Fewer Places to Turn. According to a 2011 California Commission on Access to Justice report, at least one-third of low-income people living in rural areas need legal services for basic human needs.9 Free legal help, however, is scarce, and providers are often able to provide only partial assistance.10 Overall legal aid programs throughout California are able to meet only 33 percent of the legal needs of low-income individuals.11

Low-income people in rural and isolated communities in California and low-income people elsewhere in the country face similar legal issues—relating to employment, housing, health, and safety. These communities also have problems specific to their being rural. For example, migrant workers, who reside almost exclusively in nonmetropolitan areas, often live in transient, substandard housing with safety and housing code violations. Worsening the situation, the demand for rural housing far exceeds the supply, and there are few shelters and temporary housing options.12 In highly agricultural areas of the Central Valley, such as the San Joaquin Valley, residents are at risk of the toxic by-products, such as toxic air and water pollutants, of the region’s economy.13 Nearly one-third of the population in the Central Valley, or four million people, contend with high degrees of environmental risk and high degrees of vulnerability to destabilizing life events such as abuse, bankruptcy, or eviction.14 Low-income seniors, more of whom live in rural California, require particularized assistance on benefits, estate planning, and medical matters.15

Underresourced and Inaccessible Legal Services Organizations. There is a significant disparity between the number of legal services organizations in urban and rural areas of California. For instance, about thirty-five legal services organizations serve the low-income populations of both City and County of San Francisco and Los Angeles County, whereas only one legal services organization serves twenty-three mostly rural counties in the northern portion of the state.16 Furthermore, the few legal services organizations in rural areas are severely underresourced. While urban legal services organizations are funded at around $44.38 per low-income person, in rural areas organizations receive only about $18.65 per low-income person.17 The difference means fewer attorneys, less training, fewer support staff members, and fewer branch offices.

Worse, rural populations are up against unique barriers to legal help. For example, most nonprofit legal services organizations are located in higher-density towns and cities, whereas a majority of...
rural Californians live outside population centers. This decentralization results in people living farther from legal services organizations. For low-income residents who rely on public transportation, this can be quite a barrier. Among such residents often are seniors and people with disabilities. Public transportation is scarce in rural locations and generally scheduled to run during typical business hours. Lack of transportation, in many cases, can be the difference between obtaining legal assistance and not. And, with California’s record-high gas prices, even a low-income client with a car might find the cost of driving to and from a services center unfeasible.

A Dearth of Pro Bono Attorneys. California’s pro bono attorneys and law students help low-income communities. Every year thousands of attorneys and law students partner with legal services organizations and other public interest groups to provide pro bono legal services for a broad spectrum of issues. In recent years local bar associations have partnered with law firms and legal services agencies to increase pro bono assistance. There are more attorneys, some 175,000, in California than in any other state, but they largely live and practice in urban centers. Rural and isolated areas suffer from a severe shortage of practicing lawyers. For every lawyer in Kings, Madera, and Merced counties—all rural—there are around three hundred residents at or below the poverty threshold, whereas in Los Angeles there are thirty residents at or below the poverty threshold per attorney and in San Francisco only six residents per attorney. Not only are legal services organizations in rural areas hindered by low funding, but also they lack the pro bono network that could heighten their impact and make their assistance available to more people.

What the Justice Bus Project Does

In 2007 OneJustice piloted the first Justice Bus trips to bridge the gap between urban pro bono resources and rural and isolated communities needing help. OneJustice’s position as a statewide support center bringing together the legal community to help Californians in need meant that it worked closely with the people who could bridge the gap: classrooms full of law students eager to make a difference; law firm associates looking to cut their teeth; hardworking rural nonprofit legal services organizations ready to expand capacity; and foundations, such as the California Bar Foundation and the Van Løben Sels/Rembe Rock Foundation, committed to finding a solution to the urban-rural gap afflicting so many Californians.

Since 2007, OneJustice has engaged twenty-eight pro bono partners in eighty-six trips, helping 2,030 clients in need. Coordinating Justice Bus trips is an exercise in coalition building. OneJustice finds partners who believe in the project and its goals, and OneJustice finds a way to optimize their time, skills, and resources in meeting rural and isolated California’s legal needs. A “successful” Justice Bus trip is simply one that connects pro bono resources to unmet legal needs. At the core of each trip is an unmet legal need around which a coalition of legal services providers—pro bono lawyers, law students, nonprofit legal services organizations—is built to meet the need.

19California Commission on Access to Justice, supra note 5, at 28.
21Id. at 48.
22[Legal Services Corporation], supra note 18.
23California Commission on Access to Justice, supra note 5, at 10.
24U.S. Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts: Merced County, California (Sept. 2012), http://1.usa.gov/V0Ik0j; State Bar of California, Member Demographics (2012), http://bit.ly/UcujPD.
Identifying Needs and Opportunities. As a statewide organization, OneJustice is particularly well placed to assess the legal needs of Californians, whether they live in Los Angeles or Ukiah. As the support center on pro bono delivery for nonprofit legal services organizations funded by IOLTA (Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts), OneJustice works with nearly every provider of free legal services in the state and communicates daily with such providers about their programs and clients. Keeping abreast of shifting client needs and nonprofit projects to meet those needs, OneJustice often aims Justice Bus trips at gaps found between client needs and program existence or capacity. Of course, identifying Justice Bus opportunities requires more than big-picture, statistical observations. For that reason, the Justice Bus team at OneJustice stewards a massive network of community-based organizations—both legal and nonlegal—that look to OneJustice for consultation and coordination around programs aimed to meet needs in particular communities.

A trip always stems from a specific, identified need. In many cases OneJustice contacts a rural legal services organization to find out what needs it is seeing in the community, and from that inquiry comes nascent plans for a Justice Bus trip. In other situations OneJustice explains the Justice Bus Project to nonprofit legal services organizations—whether based in urban or rural areas—and a light bulb goes off as the nonprofit organization sees the potential to utilize urban pro bono resources.

Once a legal need is identified, the next—and vital—step is to develop a services delivery method by which pro bono attorneys or law students can help meet that need with only one-to-two days of service. In many cases, the method of assistance is similar to an urban clinic model. For example, $x$ number of pro bono lawyers or law students meets with $x$ number of clients, and $y$ number of legal services attorneys supervise and support the lawyers. Sometimes, however, determining an appropriate mode of assistance requires a bit more creativity. For instance, during a Justice Bus trip with law students from Southwestern Law School in downtown Los Angeles to Lancaster, law students approached people waiting at the local Department of Public Social Services, the public benefits agency in Los Angeles, and answered questions about those people’s rights to applying for, and appealing decisions about, their public benefits.

Building Trip Coalitions. With a legal need identified and a mode of assistance developed, OneJustice begins building a coalition for the trip. At a minimum each Justice Bus trip brings together (1) a pro bono partner and (2) a host nonprofit legal services organization.

Pro Bono Partners. Key to any Justice Bus trip—and to the great hope of closing the justice gap in rural and isolated communities—are pro bono attorneys and law students. From the beginning, OneJustice has relied on strong partnerships with California law schools and law firms to plan and staff trips. The Justice Bus Project’s pro bono partners believe in the mission of the Justice Bus Project, and they all understand the substantive and skill-building experiences that trips represent for their attorneys and law students.

As an organization originally founded by and for law students to help them build public interest law careers, OneJustice has a long history of working with California’s law schools. Current partners of the Justice Bus Project include Golden Gate University School of Law; Pacific McGeorge School of Law; Pepperdine University School of Law; Southwestern Law School; Stanford Law School; University of California, Davis, School of Law; University of California, Irvine, School of Law; and University of San Francisco School of Law. Their administrators and professors are vital Justice Bus partners and help develop trip plans and recruit students to participate in trips.

For participating law students, the benefits of a Justice Bus trip are numerous. Besides an opportunity to meet and serve actual clients, a rarity during law school’s three year casebook- and examination-driven program, the Justice Bus trips introduce law students to potential employers, among them the partner non-
profit legal services organization and any law-firm trip participants, and help them build their résumés. Justice Bus participants also accrue pro bono hours that go toward school-specific pro bono honors programs.

The Justice Bus Project partners with law firms in two different capacities. First, for the last four years, OneJustice has partnered with large law firms to bring their summer associates on Justice Bus trips. These firms include Cooley; Fenwick & West; Hanson Bridgett; Kirkland & Ellis; McDermott, Will & Emery; Morrison Foerster; Paul Hastings; Pillsbury Winthrop; Simpson Thatcher; and Skadden Arps. Second, in recent years, OneJustice has worked with law firms to coordinate trips with the firms’ associates and partners outside the summer time frame.

Corporate in-house counsel have also partnered with OneJustice on Justice Bus trips, very often in coordination with a law firm which serves as outside counsel to the corporation. Justice Bus trips increase in-house counsel departments’ pro bono opportunities; the trips bring together law firm and client for billable opportunities and strengthen their personal and professional bonds. In 2012, Fenwick & West, Morgan Lewis, and Skadden Arps each partnered with a client—Facebook, Hewlett-Packard, and Zynga, respectively—on Justice Bus trips, and OneJustice is preparing to expand such trips.

Legal Services Organizations. Every trip has at least one legal services organization partner, and occasionally more than one. The legal services partner generally has substantive expertise relevant to the particular trip and usually a foothold in the target community. Most often the target community is within the organization’s service region, but the organization faces geographic and resource barriers in serving that community. For some trips, however, the nonprofit organization has not historically served the target community but wants to expand a linkage to that community.

The most common type of trip involves working with a legal services organization in a rural area to expand that organization’s capacity to serve its home community. For instance, OneJustice has organized trips to expand the capacity of Legal Aid of Napa Valley in Napa, Central California Legal Services in Fresno, and the Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment in Delano in regularly serving clients where those organizations have offices. In many cases, these organizations and offices are understaffed and underresourced, and the arrival of pro bono attorneys or law students, even if just for a day, can make a difference.

For rural nonprofit legal services organizations, pro bono may have little or nothing to do in their typical delivery of services mostly because pro bono resources are unavailable in the region. Justice Bus trips can teach such organizations how to utilize pro bono assistance, whether from urban areas afar (via the Justice Bus Project or technology) or the local region.

A growing trend for Justice Bus trips is to expand the geographic reach of partner legal services organizations. In some cases this means helping an organization serve a population it has never served; in other cases, better serving a population it rarely serves. An example of the latter is a trip OneJustice coordinated with Public Counsel in Los Angeles in Lancaster. Technically in Los Angeles County, Lancaster is within Public Counsel’s service region. But, for residents of Lancaster, especially low-income residents, the trip from Lancaster to Public Counsel’s offices in downtown Los Angeles can be formidable. By car the trip takes about an hour and fifteen minutes. By public transportation, the only option for some low-income residents, it could take hours to make the one-way trip. This is not an option for many residents, leaving them without access to free legal services. Moreover, Public Counsel lacks the resources to bring its services to Lancaster often enough to meet demand. The Justice Bus Project helps expand the geographic reach of organizations such as Public Counsel so that they can serve areas such as Lancaster more often.

The Justice Bus in Motion

The Justice Bus Project’s impact is best understood through examples. Two re-
cent Justice Bus trips show how the project customizes services to the skill sets of the pro bono attorneys and to the needs of the rural Californians they are helping.

**Hewlett-Packard and Morgan Lewis.** Delano, California, is located in the San Joaquin Valley, the home of Cesar Chavez’s labor movement. The Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment works in the city, and in 2011 the organization welcomed an Equal Justice Works fellow to help on economic development in rural communities. The fellow, Camille Pannu, was working with community-based organizations, both incorporated and unincorporated, on their transactional law needs so that those organizations could better serve their communities when her fellowship sponsors, Morgan Lewis & Bockius and Hewlett-Packard, contacted her to see how they could help. OneJustice’s deep working relationships with all three entities meant that, before long, OneJustice was contacted to help coordinate a trip that would best use pro bono attorneys from both Morgan Lewis and Hewlett-Packard in helping the community-based organizations with which Pannu and the Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment were working.

Together the coalition of a law firm, corporation, nonprofit legal services organization, and OneJustice developed a method of assistance. First, the coalition decided that to utilize best the few hours Morgan Lewis and Hewlett-Packard attorneys would spend in Delano during the day trip, someone would conduct thorough client interviews beforehand. To this end, a preliminary trip with law students from Pacific McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento was planned and completed. The law students met with representatives from each community-based organization, interviewed them about their plans and interests, and drafted memoranda to be shared with OneJustice, the Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment.

Based on the issues identified by the McGeorge students, a training regimen was developed to prepare the pro bono attorneys. The training sessions were conducted by experts in their fields mostly online via webinar. And, in advance of the trip, Morgan Lewis and Hewlett-Packard attorneys conducted research to help them respond to particular needs and interests of the client organizations.

On July 20, 2012, fifteen seasoned attorneys from Morgan Lewis and Hewlett-Packard traveled with OneJustice to Delano. Experts in the fields of water rights, tax, and employment law met with representatives from six different community-based organizations. Well prepared, the pro bono lawyers were able to advise their clients.

Among the clients was an Allensworth community-based organization looking to understand its water rights so that it could start a community garden. Morgan Lewis had just the attorney who could help: a California water-rights expert who worked for the firm. The Justice Bus had delivered to Allensworth exactly the pro bono legal help it needed.

**Paul Hastings.** Only one attorney in Napa County has a full-time job of helping low-income seniors in the area for free. Seeing the great need for her assistance, Kristi Lesnewich, a Legal Aid of Napa Valley staff attorney, committed to increasing her capacity to serve. OneJustice knew that law firms in San Francisco swelled during the summer with law student interns. Paul Hastings, one of the largest law firms in California, Napa’s need compelling and committed to helping. OneJustice brought Paul Hastings and Napa together; One Justice trained Paul Hastings’s summer associates and organized a day-long clinic in Napa for seniors.

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On June 19, 2012, OneJustice travelled with twelve Paul Hastings summer associates to Napa to help seniors in need. With Lesnewich supervising, the summer associates helped forty-two seniors draft advance health care directives, simple wills, and trusts. In four hours the summer associates were able to increase the one attorney’s productivity considerably.

Most appreciative among the clients was Beatty. Scheduled to have open-heart surgery in a week, he had given up hope of being able to sort his affairs in time. Then the Justice Bus rolled into town.

The statistics behind the Justice Bus Project tell do not tell the whole story of lives changed by urban volunteers. The impact of Justice Bus trips goes much deeper than a legal problem solved, or a simple will drafted. Communities feel assured that the law is on their side and that they have enforceable rights. Attorneys become aware of the plight of rural populations and, more important, of their capacity to help. Law students, trained to serve the particular needs of rural and isolated California, end up convinced to seek careers in those areas. With every trip, stories of a bus that brings justice to California communities spread, drawing the attention of more lawyers, more law students, and more people who can help deliver a more just future.
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PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS from Akerman and Legal Services of Greater Miami boarded the Justice Bus and mapped a course to Marathon Key to provide free legal assistance to Keys residents still struggling with the after effects of Hurricane Irma.

More than a year after Hurricane Irma ravaged the Florida Keys as a Category 4 storm, many low-income Keys residents are still struggling to stay afloat. Many residents continue to experience hurricane-related and other legal issues that have impacted their economic stability.

Pro bono volunteers from Akerman and Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., boarded the Justice Bus and mapped a course to Marathon Key. In an effort to narrow the access to justice gap, attorneys from Akerman and LSCMI partnered to provide free legal assistance to Keys residents during a one-day intensive legal clinic. Joining the Miami volunteers were attorneys representing the Monroe County Bar Association, along with case managers from Florida Restores, a nonprofit focusing on hurricane recovery in the Keys.

“It’s a fact that many residents of the Florida Keys are still struggling post Hurricane Irma with various legal issues including FEMA, family law issues, employment issues, and housing,” said LSGMI Pro Bono Advocacy Director Jayme Cassidy.

“Unfortunately, there simply aren’t enough resources in the Keys to assist every low-income family facing legal issues,” said Whitney Untiedt, Akerman’s director of Pro Bono Initiatives. “The time and expense to travel to Miami to meet with pro bono lawyers can be an insurmountable hurdle for many of these families.

The Justice Bus was born of the idea that justice is best served when lawyers come into the community to meet with people facing legal challenges.”

During the five-hour clinic, the pro bono volunteers collectively assisted 30 families with a range of legal issues, from a Korean War veteran rebuilding his home with his own hands, to a Coast Guard employee struggling with a difficult family situation.

The pro bono collaboration was sponsored by Akerman and hosted by the Marathon Community United Methodist Church.
THOUGHTS ON PREPARING A JUSTICE BUS EVENT

FRAMING OUT GOALS OF EVENT
- Know your two target groups (pro bono attorney & client base).
- What is your goal?
- What is the goal for clients?
- What is the goal for your agency?
- What is the goal for pro bono involvement?
- What is your reality?

CLIENTS
- Who are the clients to be serviced and why?
- Define the scope of representation for the project.
- Will this be a pre-registration or walk in event?
- Will the clients have appointment slots?
- If this is a walk in event, how are you going to vet clients for eligibility?
- What legal issues will be counseled?
- Will you need interpreters?

PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS
- Define expectations for representation:
  - Limited scope?
  - Full representation?
- Recruit pro bono partners based on defined expectations.
- Prepare training materials for pro bono volunteers based on defined expectations.
- Set up training schedule if you don’t have CLE on demand webinars.

TRAVEL LOGISTICS
- Start planning semantics of organizing pro bono partners for day of event.
  - Meeting place
  - Time for takeoff
  - Meals
  - Anticipated stops
  - Return time and place
  - Will pick up and drop off location accommodate bus?

WHAT TO BRING
- Meals, snacks, bus,
  - Who is organizing each
  - Who is paying?
- Equipment

LEGAL SERVICES
OF GREATER MIAMI, INC.
Jayme Cassidy Esq.
Pro Bono Advocacy Director
Laptops
- Scanners
- Pens
- Paper
- Special forms/pleadings

Printer
- Extension cords
- Jet packs
- Backup power
- Power cords

LOCATION
- Will the location have power?
- What is the layout?
- Are there Restrooms?
- How many people will the location accommodate?

AGENCY STAFF ATTORNEYS
- Brief on types of cases – identify leaders, supervisors
- Scope of representation
- Interaction with pro bono partners
- Training for staff?

MARKETING/ADVERTISING
- Know your audience.
- How do the people in the community communicate?
  - Is it the local newspaper?
  - The local pub?
  - The biweekly newsletter?
- Do the people in the community use social media?
- Do the people in the community have access to social media?
- Contact significant local organizations:
  - Churches
  - Fire departments
  - Supermarkets
  - Schools
  - Hospitals
  - Support groups
  - Medical centers
  - Support groups, etc.
- Ask to post flyers?
- Gain support of community leaders:
  - Churches
  - Schools
  - Fire stations
- Have a marketing and advertising plan.

LEGAL SERVICES
OF GREATER MIAMI, INC.

Jayme Cassidy Esq.
Pro Bono Advocacy Director