



## **2025 LISTEN AND LEARN REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We are grateful to the many participants of this listening tour; their generosity of time, and candid feedback made this report possible. We are also deeply grateful to Colorado Supreme Court Justice Melissa Hart, who led and moderated the listening sessions. We also thank the many partners and volunteers who helped bring such a broad range of perspectives to the listening sessions, especially the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS), which generously lent guidance during the planning and processing of this listening tour.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY WITH KEY TAKEAWAYS

## OVERVIEW

The 2025 Listen & Learn Tour engaged 317 stakeholders statewide in 23 live focus group sessions to understand the current civil legal needs, barriers to justice, and promising solutions. Community concerns were remarkably consistent across Colorado: the justice gap persists, particularly in housing and family law, for low-income and rural Coloradans, immigrants, people with disabilities, and those navigating complex systems without legal help. While some advances have been made since 2021, major structural challenges remain.

## TOP CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS



### HOUSING

- Evictions dominate statewide, driven by high housing costs, rapid court timelines, and confusing procedures and terminology
- Tenants are almost always unrepresented, leading to high default judgments and great disadvantage in eviction proceedings
- Rural and resort communities reported extreme rents and absence of local legal support
- Vulnerable groups—especially people with disabilities and LEP litigants—struggle the most



### FAMILY LAW

- Divorce, custody, and child support cases are overwhelming courts and families
- Self-representation is the norm, producing prolonged legal disputes and inequitable results
- Survivors of domestic violence face retraumatizing processes, inadequate trauma-informed practice, and loss of supportive services mid-case





### **FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC STABILITY**

- Debt collection, wage theft, consumer scams, and public-benefit access problems are widespread
- Lack of financial literacy and aggressive creditor tactics leave many unprotected



### **IMMIGRATION**

- Undocumented immigrants often fear any form of court involvement
- Language accessibility barriers keep many from reaching any help at all
- Rural areas in particular lack immigration law and other legal resources

## **POPULATIONS FACING THE GREATEST BARRIERS**

Youth in family and juvenile legal matters and seniors managing probate and benefits face significant and unique challenges. People with disabilities encounter fragmented services and cost barriers. Veterans often have multiple overlapping civil and disability-related needs. People experiencing homelessness and limited-English speakers face barriers sometimes so steep that they never make it to the justice system at all. Many immigrants face such language barriers plus critical immigration attorney shortages in a field of law too complex for most to navigate without professional help.



## SYSTEMIC & STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES



### Inadequate Access to Legal Services

- Legal aid organizations are under-resourced
- Private attorneys in rural areas are aging; legal deserts persist
- Affordable representation options are rare



### Court System Strain

- Courts are understaffed, overburdened, and slow to issue orders
- Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators—courthouse staff that help people find forms and resources—are effective but too few
- Physical access barriers to courthouses, outdated or inaccessible technology



### Procedural & Forms Complexity

- Unrepresented litigants are legally held to attorney-level standards
- Forms are confusing and not in plain language
- Local variation in legal processes creates inconsistency and confusion



### Technology Barriers

- Limited public technology (printers, Wi-Fi, devices)
- Virtual hearings are difficult for low-tech users
- Judicial Department website is hard to navigate even for legal professionals; electronic filing is inaccessible and unaffordable to many



### Language Barriers

- Forms, notices, and orders are in English only
- Interpreter access is limited outside courtrooms
- Less common languages remain unsupported



### Social Challenges

- Poverty, housing instability, transportation, childcare burdens
- Fear and mistrust cause some individuals to never seek help

## WHAT'S WORKING: PROMISING SOLUTIONS



### **Expanded access to free or affordable professional legal help and curated legal information**

- State funding for legal aid
- Self-represented Litigant Coordinators (“Sherlocks”) provided by the Judicial Department in courthouses
- Right-to-counsel eviction models and dedicated eviction docket days
- Early mediation
- New Licensed Legal Paraprofessionals (LLPs)—accredited non-attorneys that can legally represent clients in certain circumstances



### **Community-anchored services**

- Library-based programs, legal clinics, Virtual Pro Se Clinic in rural communities
- Interest in creating community justice workers program to train existing professionals on providing legal guidance to their clients and patients



### **Coordination & Wraparound Support**

- Housing navigators, social workers, human services providers, integrated into legal settings
- Holistic partnerships helping with long-term outcomes



### **Housing & Procedural Reforms**

- Improved eviction summonses and language access
- Longer cure periods for nonpayment
- Expanded e-filing access



### **Technology Improvements**

- Remote hearings eliminate many barriers
- Ideas: courthouse printers and public Wi-Fi, short instructional videos, text reminders
- AI assisted legal help tools with consumer protections



### **Policy & Legislative Ideas**

- Increased legal aid funding
- Rural-practice incentives like loan forgiveness programs
- Probate and eviction statute updates

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Maintain/increase legal aid funding
- Fund more judges, Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators, and Family Court Facilitators
- Incentivize rural practice (e.g. loan forgiveness programs)
- Invest in statewide legal help website and tech tools

## TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Improve transportation to courthouses
- Ensure ADA access in and around courthouses
- Support and coordinate collaboration among service providers

## TO THE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

- Add more Judicial Officers, Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators, and Family Court Facilitators; initiate court navigators program
- Redesign the Judicial Department website for usability
- Expand e-filing access to all case types and eliminate e-filing fees for low-income filers
- Simplify and standardize forms and processes
- Expand Licensed Legal Paraprofessionals to other areas of law beyond family law





### **TO LAW SCHOOLS**

- Expand rural pipelines and clinics
- Increase stipends for rural/public interest work
- Integrate access to justice into core curricula
- Teach legal tech and cultural competency skills

### **TO LAWYERS & FIRMS**

- Increase pro bono and modest-means work
- Integrate modest means clients into your business model through limited scope and sliding fee scales
- Join pro bono recognition programs

### **TO ACCESS-TO-JUSTICE ADVOCATES**

- Pursue community justice worker programming in Colorado
- Support policy reforms that expand access to legal help beyond traditional lawyer-client legal services
- Support your local Access to Justice Committee



## CONCLUSION

Colorado's 2025 Listen & Learn Tour confirms that, despite meaningful progress since 2021, the justice gap remains a defining barrier for communities across the state. Housing instability, family law challenges, language and technology barriers, and scarce legal help—especially in rural and low-income communities—continue to shape people's experiences with the civil legal system. At the same time, Coloradans are innovating. New paraprofessionals, expanded community-based support, coordinated service models, and technology-enabled solutions show real promise.

The needs identified are clear, and so is the path forward—strengthen coordination, expand affordable legal assistance, prioritize language justice, modernize court processes, and invest in the workforce and tools that make access possible. With sustained commitment from policymakers, courts, service providers, and communities, Colorado can continue closing the justice gap and build a civil justice system that more people can navigate and trust.







# INTRODUCTION

The words “Equal Justice Under Law” are carved above the entrance to the Supreme Court of the United States. However, for many people living in our nation, those words ring false. Across the country and in Colorado, many individuals fall into the “justice gap,” the divide between people’s civil legal needs and the resources available to meet those needs.<sup>1</sup> The justice gap extends beyond people living in poverty, although they are particularly vulnerable to a justice system that fails to meet their needs. Middle-income families struggle to afford the high costs of professional legal services, and most people struggle to engage with a complex system of laws and procedures. Rural communities with aging attorney populations and limited services struggle with the justice gap.<sup>2</sup>

The Colorado Access to Justice Commission (“the Commission”) works to address systemic issues within the justice system through collaboration, coordination, and advocacy. In recent years, the Commission has grown to support the most critical issues facing Coloradans in the civil justice system. This work includes activities like advocating for greater funding for legal aid organizations, piloting projects in rural Colorado, and collaborating to support pro bono services across the state. The Commission’s expansion has resulted in the creation of the Equal Justice Authority, a Rural Legal Resources Project, the revitalization of the Virtual Pro Se Clinic, and the development of Colorado’s first Pro Bono Resource Center, as well as the upcoming launch of a legal help website.

Since its inception in 2003, the Commission has organized statewide convenings to learn about the challenges and barriers communities across the state are facing as they try to access the legal system or address problems that might have legal solutions. In 2007 and 2013, the Commission conducted in-person hearings across the state to identify the greatest unmet needs at those times. In 2021, the Commission again engaged in this process, this time titling its effort the “Listen and Learn Tour.” Due to health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission adopted a virtual format for these meetings. Holding meetings in each of Colorado’s judicial districts, the Commission received critical feedback from the community that helped prioritize its work over the past several years.

This year, 2025, the Commission embarked on this listening project once again. Because of its effectiveness in reaching a diverse range of participants across the state, the virtual meeting format remained from the 2021 Listen and Learn Tour. Concerns about the steadfastness of the rule of law and the public’s confidence in the judicial system have dominated the dialogue this year. These problems

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1 See generally, *The Justice Gap: The Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans* (Legal Services Corporation, 2022), <https://justicegap.lsc.gov/the-report/>.

2 See generally, Lisa R. Pruitt et. al., “Legal Deserts: A Multi-State Perspective on Rural Access to Justice,” *Harvard Law & Policy Review* 13-1 (2018): 15–156, <https://journals.law.harvard.edu/lpr/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2019/04/4.-Legal-Deserts.pdf>. See also, *Profile of the Legal Profession 2021*, (American Bar Association, 2021), <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2021/0721/polp.pdf>. See also, David J. Peters, Emma Bartling, and Emily Meyer, “Understanding Rural Legal Deserts to Inform Public Policy: Identifying and Describing Lawyer Gaps in Non-Metropolitan Counties,” *South Dakota Law Review* 70, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.70657/SDLR.V70.I2.253>.



greatly affect access to justice within the civil justice system and present an urgent need for the Commission to address the challenges communities and direct service providers are experiencing.<sup>3</sup>

This report summarizes the findings of our 2025 Listen and Learn Tour. Participants identified the civil legal areas of greatest need and barriers to legal system access by community members. Participants also discussed existing and potential solutions to those challenges. Based on these findings, the Commission offers recommendations to various stakeholder groups on how to improve access to justice across our state.

## METHODOLOGY

The Colorado Access to Justice Commission designed the 2025 Listen and Learn Tour as a way for the Commission to learn from service providers across Colorado about the legal needs in their communities and the experiences they and the people they work with have in accessing the justice system. The tour was a follow-up to the 2021 Listen and Learn Tour and was designed to revisit the same communities and gather qualitative feedback from the same types of stakeholders who participated in the tour four years ago.

The tour began in March 2025 and ran through July 2025. The Commission held a total of twenty-two virtual Listen and Learn sessions during that period. Each judicial district outside the Denver metro area had a dedicated session (except the 6th and 22nd Judicial Districts, which held a combined session). Five sessions were held for the combined Denver metro area judicial districts. These sessions were combined because a number of legal resources span the metro area and are not confined to a single judicial district. Each of the five metro area sessions was open to participants from the 1st, 2nd, 17th, 18th, and 23rd Judicial Districts.

During the tour, the Commission heard from 317 stakeholders. That number included 126 Judicial Department staff, 63 attorneys and legal services providers, and 128 community organizations and government providers. Judicial Department representatives and legal providers included judges, magistrates, court clerks, court executives,



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**126** Judicial Department staff



<sup>3</sup> See generally, Elisa Overall and Kimberly Gent, “The Unravelling Thread: How Undermining the Rule of Law Imperils Access to Justice,” *The Colorado Lawyer*, August 2025, <https://cl.cobar.org/departments/the-unraveling-thread/>.

Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators (or “Sherlocks”), family court facilitators, probation officers, legal aid attorneys, local access to justice committee members, local bar members, and mediators. Community organizations and government providers included Department of Human Services representatives, medical providers, community centers, senior services providers, housing support providers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), domestic violence organizations, disability services, libraries, veterans services, educators, social service providers, immigrant support organizations, and elected officials.

For each Listen and Learn session, invitees included a broad range of stakeholders identified by local legal and community service providers as well as the invitees from the 2021 Listen and Learn Tour. Invitations were sent via email and extended through direct phone calls. The invitees were asked to sign up for the meeting being held in their community. They were also asked to share with the Commission the contact information for any other groups or individuals in their community that should be invited, to which invitations were also extended. Reminder emails were sent before the event to ensure the best possible attendance.

Listen and Learn sessions were held over Zoom and scheduled for one hour and thirty minutes. Each session began with a brief introduction and a standard set of instructions from Colorado Supreme Court Justice Melissa Hart and Access to Justice Commission Executive Director Elisa Overall. During the introduction, participants were assured that their comments would remain anonymous and that they would not be directly quoted or identified without their consent. Participants were also told that the sessions were being recorded for note-taking purposes only and were reminded that they could leave at any time.

Each session was structured around three questions:

- What are the main civil legal issues that you see your communities are facing?
- What barriers do your constituencies face in resolving their civil legal issues?
- What solutions have you seen that are effective or could be effective in addressing those barriers?

Each participant was given an opportunity to answer the questions and respond to the thoughts and comments of other participants.

Following each session, attendees were sent a follow-up email that included a survey and contact information for all attendees who consented to have their information shared. This inclusion was intended to facilitate attendees’ ongoing connection after the meeting.

The Access to Justice Commission maintained robust notes from each session, created by staff, law student interns, and an artificial intelligence (AI) review of meeting transcripts. These notes served as the basis for our analysis of the data collected during the Listen and Learn Tour. From the notes, the Commission staff and interns developed a coding system and then analyzed meeting transcripts using that coding system to identify the legal needs, barriers to access, and solutions discussed throughout

the tour. Four separate data analyses were run on two different AI systems. The analyses examined transcripts, AI notes, and human notes. Those analyses were then compared between AI systems and humans to ensure the data analysis was as complete and comprehensive as possible.

Though the Commission has endeavored to engage and learn from as broad a spectrum of its community as possible, the Listen and Learn Tour was not without limitations. The information gathered should be viewed in light of those limitations. First, the information is limited by who attended the Listen and Learn sessions. Numerous additional individuals and groups across the state could have meaningfully contributed to this report but were not in attendance. Their absence was due to factors like limitations in the identification of local organizations, restrictions of the invitation and registration process, and the timing of sessions.

The composition of participants in each session impacted the information collected. For example, some sessions were more heavily attended by judicial and court staff, while others had greater representation of community organizations. The perspectives shared in each group were likely influenced by the balance or lack thereof between types of stakeholders present. Comfort level and power imbalance could also have impacted the data. Participants may have been reluctant to share their true thoughts and feelings with authority figures and supervisors present.

In addition to the limitations previously mentioned, the Listen and Learn Tour was conducted in English only, which limited representation from service providers with limited English proficiency. The English dominance and lack of penetration into minority communities place limits on this report's insights into the barriers faced by these communities. Despite this limitation, participants noted challenges with language access during the sessions. This topic is discussed in greater detail in the sections that follow.

Finally, the Commission's use of AI in its analysis presents the possibility of missed data and AI-fabricated data. Commission staff have taken the steps previously noted to check for and identify such issues. Those steps reduce the likelihood of such errors. Sample testing suggests that the level of error in transcription and analysis is similar to, or less than, human error.



**FOR EACH LISTEN AND LEARN SESSION, INVITEES INCLUDED A BROAD RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFIED BY LOCAL LEGAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS.**

## MAIN CIVIL LEGAL ISSUES

The first of three questions that participants in each session were asked was, “What are the main civil legal issues that you see your communities are facing?” The following are the areas of legal need that were most prevalent in discussions.

### CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS

Participants identified several major legal issues that their communities face. Across all judicial districts, community partners and court staff highlighted housing and family law issues as the most prevalent among people without attorneys. Other areas of need included probate, guardianship, immigration, consumer, and employment issues.

Housing was the primary civil legal issue identified in the Denver metro area sessions, but it also featured heavily as an area of concern in rural areas. Residential evictions remain a primary issue across the state. Participants reported that people in their communities struggle with rapid timelines in eviction proceedings. Specifically, sessions in the metro area reflected that the expedited timelines for evictions leave little room for litigants to successfully navigate rental assistance programs. Antonio Bendezu, an attorney with Community Economic Defense Project, stated, “Oftentimes the timing for evictions is not a good match with the cure periods in play.” The high cost of housing in many communities—both urban and rural—adds to the challenges surrounding evictions. For example, participants in Steamboat Springs noted that it is not unusual to see rent of \$2,500 per month or more for one-bedroom units.

Complicated procedures in eviction cases also create challenges for litigants. Several people noted that litigants struggle to understand the summons (the initial notice of eviction) and face numerous other procedural hurdles. One factor contributing to these difficulties is that few tenants receive legal assistance and representation in their eviction cases, which leads to high default rates for the cases. Across the state, while many landlords are represented during this process, most tenants are self-represented, creating an imbalance of knowledge and skill in the courtroom. Some participants noted that unrepresented landlords also struggle with the eviction process, which causes delays for the court. Vulnerable populations in particular, like people with disabilities and people with language barriers, experience challenges in navigating housing cases on their own. The consequences of losing housing are far-reaching, impacting physical safety, health, custody, schooling, employment, and overall stability.

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND COURT STAFF  
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Family law was the other primary civil legal issue identified across the rural and urban sessions. For family law specifically, divorce, custody, and child support cases were the most discussed legal issues. Litigants, attorneys, and the courts are frustrated by the delays and backlogs these cases create in the system. Family law cases see the highest rates of unrepresented litigants in the court. When one party is represented and the other is not, cases can result in grave inequities.

Survivors of domestic violence particularly struggle with family law cases because the process often feels retraumatizing; court staff and judicial officers who are not knowledgeable about trauma or the cycle of domestic violence can cause undue distress in survivors. Participants in metro area sessions noted that some judges lack compassion in the way they interact with self-represented survivors. The system itself and the complex nature of presenting evidence often hinder survivors from obtaining relief, including protection orders for safety. An additional concern for survivors is that changes in federal and state funding are causing supportive programs that help survivors meet basic needs to lose funding before family law cases are resolved. As a result, individuals are left without the means to support themselves and their children during complicated and traumatic litigation.

Probate and guardianship issues were also frequently discussed as an area of legal need. Participants noted that there is a rising need for support in guardianship and conservatorship cases for both minors and seniors. The paperwork is often very challenging, and the statutes and procedures are not well suited to the needs of many families or the digital era. Often, guardians and foster care providers need authority to support the children in their care, and the slow nature of the court processes does not allow for timely decisions. One dire consequence is that legal proceedings can delay the ability of guardians and foster families to establish medical and behavioral health care for children in their custody.

Related to probate concerns, participants noted a need for estate planning support, as they are seeing family disputes and confusion over property ownership, particularly in rural areas. In the worst cases, a disagreement over inherited property can result in homelessness. One such situation was described by Geoffrey Barta, the Colorado Legal Services managing attorney in La Junta. “People get in a situation where there’s a dispute over the house. Like an eviction where you’re talking about somebody potentially losing their home. Legally, it’s kind of in limbo.”

Participants raised financial legal issues as commonly unmet needs. Debt collection cases are a concern, as are increasingly aggressive creditor and collection agency tactics. In general, participants noted a lack of community education and awareness surrounding financial literacy. Community members seem to be unaware of their rights and the limitations surrounding what actions debt collectors can take. As a result, defendants in money suits are easily defeated by represented creditors and can end up paying multiple collection agencies for the same debt or paying money not actually owed to collection agencies.

Other concerns about financial legal needs conveyed by participants include employment law, specifically wage theft, workplace discrimination, and reentry barriers after a period of incarceration.

Some individuals also struggle to navigate public benefits eligibility, for programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), Medicaid (medical benefits), and other supportive programs. People generally experience long wait times between applying for benefits and receiving the assistance for which they are eligible and urgently need. Representatives from rural communities also noted a need for small businesses to access affordable legal services. Taken together, these concerns highlight a need for legal support around economic stability in most communities. These types of issues greatly impact individuals' and families' ability to maintain financial stability.

Particularly in rural areas, participants noted the need for greater immigration law support for individuals. This is discussed in greater detail below.

## **VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

A common theme identified throughout the sessions was the need for targeted support for certain vulnerable populations. Participants noted that several groups in particular struggle with the judicial system because of unique vulnerabilities. Thus, they are in need of greater, more tailored support.

Both youth and seniors tend to need more specific support from their communities. Participants generally agreed that youth lack support services or adequate representation, particularly children in the foster care system. The probate and guardianship issues previously noted contribute to the lack of appropriate behavioral health care for these youth. Seniors also face unique challenges. Many struggle with obtaining estate planning help, guardianship support, and general legal advice.

Participants also noted that people with disabilities struggle to receive the help they need in the legal system, especially disability-related support. Behavioral health disabilities can also present distinct challenges for individuals navigating complex legal systems. People with disabilities often struggle with fragmented intake systems for services as well as unexpected costs and fees related to legal cases, as many of these community members live on a fixed income. The intersection of disability and legal issues often complicates situations and hinders the resolution of cases for families.

In a metro Denver session, Casey Frank, an attorney, veteran, and volunteer for veteran's clinics, stated, "There are about 330,000 veterans in Colorado. Just about any civil issue that you can think of, veterans have them. They often have five or six of them. The majority of them that appear in the walk-in clinic anyway have mental health issues. They have PTSD or TBI or both." He went on to note that veterans face significant challenges in the justice system. The US Department of Veterans Affairs classifies many legal matters as "disability related" rather than distinctly "civil" or "criminal" law.

Immigrants and noncitizens often have specific legal needs in the justice system, in addition to language barriers. Participants in most rural communities noted a need for more immigration law assistance. However, others also reported a need for more general legal assistance. Many undocumented immigrants are unable to be served by legal aid organizations because of federal funding restrictions

imposed on them by statute. There are several exceptions; undocumented immigrants who meet specific criteria, including survivors of domestic violence, are served by Colorado Legal Services. Furthermore, fear dissuades many of these individuals from using the justice system at all. Angelica Raya Trejo of San Luis Valley Immigrant Resource Center in Alamosa noted the need for more family law legal services for immigrant survivors of domestic violence. She explained that many immigrants fear that filing for a protection order or a divorce will jeopardize their immigration status, or that they might even get deported if they start the process. Most of those funding restrictions have some exceptions, such as for survivors of crime. However, the inconsistency creates the impression that legal aid is not available for undocumented immigrants, hindering their ability to seek help.

Language access was a frequently discussed need for immigrant and non-citizen users of the justice system. Inside the courtroom, court interpreters provide professional interpretation services. However, people with limited English proficiency face barriers that prevent them from ever stepping foot inside the courtroom, or using the justice system at all. Outside the courtroom non-English speakers do not know whether they'll be able to speak with someone in the language they know when they go to the courthouse to file or gather information about their case. The same is true of other support services offered throughout the community that might otherwise be able to help them access and use the justice system. Furthermore, forms must be filed in English, instructions are in English, and things like court orders and critical instructions are in English.

## **SYSTEMIC AND STRUCTURAL NEEDS**

Participants across the state noted systemic and structural needs, most prominently the lack of coordination between service providers. Disconnected efforts among the courts, legal services, and community providers lead to an inability to meet the holistic needs of people engaging with these systems. The impact is particularly striking in rural communities, where transportation barriers and limited options for service providers also exist. The geographic distances between people and essential services, including legal services, creates a need for better transportation and collaboration between service providers in communities.

Participants also noted pronounced gaps in community education on a variety of topics. Generally, participants reported that members of the community were surprisingly ill-informed about the legal system and what a court can and cannot do. This lack of knowledge often leads to additional frustration with the complex processes and rules people must obey in court. Additionally, while solutions such as virtual court hearings have led to expanded court access, a significant portion of the community struggles with the technological skills to navigate virtual and tech solutions. Added to the financial illiteracy previously discussed, these issues demonstrate a need for greater community education for adults around legal, technical, and financial issues.

## BARRIERS TO RESOLVING CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS

The second of three questions participants were asked was, “What barriers do your constituencies face in resolving their civil legal issues?” The greatest barrier identified throughout the sessions was a lack of access to professional legal services. The complexity of the legal system was intrinsically linked to the need for legal services. Participants also noted barriers connected to the courts themselves, as well as a wide range of social barriers.



Sessions revealed that a lack of access to attorneys is a prominent barrier throughout the state. Several participants noted the value of the legal aid organizations and other pro bono services to their communities, but they noted that the need for those services greatly exceeds the availability of the resources. Participants in the 15th Judicial District said that there was one Colorado Legal Services attorney on staff to serve the entirety of the 15th and 16th Judicial Districts. Geoffrey Barta of Colorado Legal Services stated, “The number of cases is overwhelming, and I’m the only legal aid attorney for this whole area, so a lot of people just don’t get representation.” The legal aid organizations across the state simply lack enough resources to meet the demands of the community.

These legal aid organizations play a critical role in communities. C.J. Montoya, the Court Executive from the 16th Judicial District, noted that “it would be great to have more attorneys here, but I think what they’re gonna end up doing is representing people who aren’t indigent, who still can’t afford their services.” Often, legal aid organizations provide the only legal services available in rural areas. Moreover, several participants conveyed concerns about funding cuts to legal services organizations, particularly those tied to state and federal government funding. (It should be noted that the participants expressed concerns about the impact of funding cuts on other community service organizations, as well). Declining rates of pro bono volunteer work since 2021 and inconsistent coordination on pro bono matters further complicate the problem. Without reliable funding and volunteerism the lack of attorney access is likely to worsen.

Many participants also mentioned the cost of legal services as a major barrier to people who do not qualify for income-based legal aid. Organizations struggle to find and refer clients to attorneys who work on sliding scales, offer flat fees, or provide unbundled services. Identifying “low bono” or modest-means assistance remains a significant barrier for people who live just above the income limits for legal aid. The gap between people who receive legal aid and those who can afford private counsel is a consistent barrier in both rural and urban areas.



A major obstacle for rural areas is the lack of attorneys generally. Some attorneys remain practicing in rural and mountain communities; however, several of those attorneys are nearing retirement. Very few younger lawyers are moving to rural communities to start a practice. Some communities have almost no private attorneys, particularly those practicing in specialized fields. These “legal deserts” remain a significant hurdle to accessing the legal system.

One way to settle civil legal matters outside of a courtroom is through a specific subset of professional legal services known as alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Most participants noted that ADR is a very effective way to resolve disputes ranging from landlord-tenant issues to family law. Chief Judge Carl McGuire of the 13th Judicial District (northeast Colorado) stated, “ADR is not a silver bullet, but it can keep people out of protracted disputes.”

However, the cost of ADR remains a barrier for many litigants, and skilled ADR practitioners (mediators and arbitrators) are limited and hard to find in several jurisdictions. Jessica Goldberg of the City of Fort Collins’s Conflict Transformation Works noted, “There’s a really uneven landscape of access to community mediation across our region. People in Loveland or Wellington don’t have access to free mediation. That makes it difficult for people.” While mediation is effective, it is not universally available.



## PROCEDURAL COMPLEXITY

Numerous participants pointed to the procedural complexity of the civil justice system itself as a major barrier for people using the system to resolve legal issues. Participants noted how complicated forms and procedures were for litigants representing themselves. Family law, eviction, and probate forms and procedures were mentioned as the most challenging for people to navigate. Variations in local procedures and court rules added to this complexity, creating confusion for litigants and inconsistency across the state. Updates and changes to forms, often made with the intention to simplify the forms, sometimes had the opposite effect and added to individuals’ confusion, especially when the updated forms lacked plain language guidance. Several participants noted that pro se litigants are held to the same standards as lawyers—standards they cannot meet, resulting in default judgements, sometimes monetary penalties, and unnecessary case dismissals.



## COURT AND JUDICIAL SYSTEM ISSUES

The court and judicial systems themselves create several barriers for people seeking to resolve their legal issues. Participants representing both urban and rural areas conveyed that the courthouses are underfunded and understaffed to meet the needs of the public. Judicial officers themselves are overworked and have extraordinarily high caseloads, leading to delays in case resolutions. In a Denver metro area session, attorney Bonnie Saltzman stated, “Some of the things that I see our community struggling with are really overworked judges and magistrates. Because we’re not getting orders for nine months, ten months. I honestly believe that it’s overworked judicial officers. I don’t think it’s any type of negligence on their part at all.”

Combined with the volume of work, several participants noted that judicial officers lack specialization and knowledge in key areas. Input from metro area sessions revealed that, particularly in family law, judges lack comprehensive understanding of family law and trauma-informed practices. This knowledge deficit can lead to a perception by some litigants and legal professionals that judicial officers lack compassion.

Another major barrier to members of the community is the limited self-represented support for litigants without attorneys. Most participants mentioned the success of the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator (SRLC), or Sherlock, Program. SRLCs are professional employees of the court who provide legal information and guidance to self-represented litigants. They cannot provide legal assistance or advice, but they can refer litigants to other programs, and they often organize legal clinics, legal resource days, and other programs where people can obtain free legal advice from volunteer attorneys. However, participants also noted that the program is not sufficiently staffed. Some judicial districts, particularly in rural areas, have only one SRLC to cover a very large geographic area and multiple courthouse locations.

Related to the underfunding of the court system, some participants pointed to barriers in the courthouse itself. They noted situations with failed technology, including, notably, an inoperable elevator—severely limiting court access for people with mobility disabilities.



## SOCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Participants discussed several barriers related to cultural and societal issues. Interestingly, a number of participants noted that geography itself could be a substantial obstacle. Representatives from rural and mountain communities told of how traveling between a person's home, the courthouse, and service providers creates transportation challenges. When inclement weather occurs, people's access to the courts is further restricted.

Technology presents both a solution to problems, such as transportation issues, and a barrier for some users of the justice system. Several participants noted that many of the people in their communities who sought help struggled with a lack of technological skills, making expanded approaches such as virtual court hearings more difficult to access. Chief Judge Amanda Hunter of the 11th Judicial District said, "For self-represented litigants who are not comfortable with technology, they often feel intimidated, like they don't have a voice, especially in virtual hearings."

A sizeable body of participants expressed deep frustration with the usability of the Colorado Judicial Department's redesigned website. These included attorneys and judges, as well as people who interface with self-represented litigants. The new website makes it difficult for both litigants and attorneys to locate information and forms. One SRLC shared that since the redesign "a lot of folks just don't know how to access the right forms or use the judicial website. They come to me after getting lost trying to do it themselves." One longtime judicial staff member who interfaces frequently with the public listed the inability for people to intuitively navigate the Judicial Department website as the number one barrier in access to justice. Judges echoed this sentiment personally, complaining that they themselves could not figure out how to find forms on the website.

**PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTING BOTH URBAN AND RURAL AREAS CONVEYED THAT THE COURTHOUSES ARE UNDERFUNDED AND UNDERSTAFFED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC. JUDICIAL STAFF THEMSELVES ARE OVERWORKED AND HAVE EXTRAORDINARILY HIGH CASE LOADS, LEADING TO DELAYS IN CASE RESOLUTIONS.**

Language barriers also create substantial challenges for people using the civil justice system. People with limited English proficiency struggle significantly when trying to access the courts. Participants noted that many court systems reinforce language barriers. Some of these systemic barriers include:

- The requirement for forms and pleadings to be submitted in English only
- The fact that court orders and other notices are provided to litigants in English only
- A lack of access to interpreters outside of the courtroom itself
- An inconsistent ability of the court to accommodate less common language needs (for example, Somali)

These language barriers prevent non-English-speaking community members from receiving the same court services as other members, often leading to a lack of trust in the judicial system.

Poverty itself creates a sense of mistrust between litigants and the legal system. Unstable employment circumstances, housing, and communication inhibit many litigants from making court hearings or paying for court-related fees. A lack of affordable childcare also hinders low-income litigants from fully participating in the court system. As mentioned previously in the “Needs” section, people with disabilities often struggle to receive accommodations that would allow them to access the courts, as well. Marginalized and vulnerable communities are particularly affected by past negative experiences with the judicial system, sometimes finding engagement with the system to be retraumatizing. These challenges all lead to a degree of mistrust in the legal system.

People whose lives are at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities—like poverty, unstable housing, and migratory status—may never interact with the judicial system at all, despite their need for legal help. Laurel Herndon of the Immigrant Legal Center of Boulder County explained that there’s a large pool of potential litigants that the justice system never sees because the barriers are so steep that they never find their way to the courts at all.



**PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES ARE AT THE INTERSECTION OF MULTIPLE VULNERABILITIES—LIKE POVERTY, UNSTABLE HOUSING, AND MIGRATORY STATUS—MAY NEVER INTERACT WITH THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM AT ALL BECAUSE THE BARRIERS ARE SO STEEP THAT THEY NEVER FIND THEIR WAY TO THE COURTS.**

## ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Finally, participants were asked, “What are solutions have you seen that are effective in addressing those barriers?” Participants discussed methods to increase access to legal professionals in both urban and rural settings, specific policy changes, ways to improve collaboration, and harnessing technology in accessible ways.



Many participants discussed both ideas and existing programs that address access to legal services. Several desired to expand existing pro bono resources. Colorado Legal Services had recently advertised for contract attorneys to provide services at a rate of \$105 per hour to their clients. However, recruitment remained difficult. Some participants suggested that a unified intake system across legal aid organizations might support better access to services and more coordination between pro bono programs. The Colorado Access to Justice Commission’s upcoming Pro Bono Resource Center offers some promise of enhanced coordination and support for pro bono programs, although it is still in development.

Some participants brought up the idea of allowing court-appointed counsel in high-stakes civil cases, similar to the approach in the criminal justice system. One model from the 13th Judicial District called the Flying Squad provides pro bono legal support to litigants identified by court staff as needed. Chief Judge McGuire of that district described it as having attorneys “who are ready and able to help people if they would like to have some sort of legal assistance if they show up, pro se.” Other jurisdictions called for more low bono and modest-means panels, including limited scope or unbundled services.

Specifically addressing inequities in representation in residential eviction cases, many participants noted the value of a “right to counsel” in eviction proceedings. This was a high priority in the Denver metro area. The 20th Judicial District has implemented a voter ordinance of “No Eviction Without Representation” (also called the Eviction Prevention and Rental Assistance Program), which provides legal assistance and mediation at eviction show-cause dockets. This program was cited as a good model for other courts. Other jurisdictions discussed the utility of designating a dedicated eviction docket day to better coordinate free legal assistance at the courthouse. Similarly, recent statutory changes providing early access to mediation were noted as successful innovations. The 4th Judicial District’s Court-Assisted Recovery from Eviction, or CARE, program was highlighted as a way to support the community through mediation and avoid evictions.

Shortly before the commencement of the Listen and Learn Tour, Colorado created a licensed legal paraprofessional (LLP) program. These professionals train and take an exam to address family law



**“WE NEED COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKERS IN COLORADO. A LOT OF TIMES PEOPLE JUST NEED SOMEONE TO WALK THEM THROUGH AND HELP WITH FILLING OUT FORMS THAT NEVER MAKE ANY SENSE.”**

**- Julie Reskin, Executive Director, Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition**

matters within a specific scope of practice. The program was created to address the need for more professional legal assistance in family law cases. Participants were encouraged by this program and provided positive feedback during the sessions.

One participant, Rob Jones of Uncompahgre Volunteer Legal Aid in the 7th Judicial District shared that he had recently been admitted as an LLP and was excited about how the training would help him better serve clients. He stated, “Most of our clients are having great personal dilemmas and trauma and that is a factor. But our clients are not well-off people. They have serious problems, and they cannot afford a significant retainer for a private attorney. So they come to us, and we do what we can right now.” While there are currently a small number of LLPs in Colorado (approximately one hundred), early feedback indicates that the program helps address the need for more legal assistance in family law cases.

Participants also noted the promise of the Rural Justice Internships organized by the Colorado Access to Justice Rural Legal Resources Project. This program provides twelve paid legal internships in rural communities across the state. Students spend part of their internship with the court and part with a community organization. In listening sessions, some rural participants mentioned this program as a positive for their communities, and others mentioned their desire for the program to expand to their rural communities.

Session attendees also explored the would-be benefit of community justice workers in Colorado. Community justice workers do not yet exist in Colorado, but in other states they are community service providers from many professions who are trained and certified in how to help individuals navigate the legal system. Such programs range in scope, but they often serve as crucial support for people confronting a complex and challenging system. Community justice workers were discussed in greater detail in the metro sessions as a potential future resource. Julie Reiskin of the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition stated in a Denver metro session, “We need community justice workers [in Colorado]. A lot of times people just need someone to walk them through and help with filling out forms that never make any sense. That’s something else that could help with the shortage of lawyers, is to have that second layer under them.”

Participants in both rural and urban jurisdictions shared the value and importance of community education and outreach programs, with several mentioning the need for legal clinics and dedicated nights where community members could seek legal information and advice. Legal Resource Days also provide useful opportunities for people to learn about the law. Greater efforts for legal literacy outreach could be effective. Several participants noted that public libraries are common access points for community members with legal problems to seek help. The Colorado Access to Justice Commission and Colorado Lawyers Committee have partnered to continue the Virtual Pro Se Clinic, a program where dozens of rural public libraries serve as the conduit for their community members and free legal advice sessions held via zoom. Attendees in several sessions discussed the effectiveness of this program in supporting rural legal services.



## HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Some solutions specific to housing issues were highlighted by participants. Expanded access to rental assistance programs has been helpful in avoiding evictions. Additionally, legislative reforms have supported a more equitable legal process. The new requirements for eviction summonses, including those for language access, have improved litigants' ability to understand why they are facing eviction. Additionally, longer cure periods for nonpayment of rent have supported the tenants' ability to cure the nonpayment and avoid homelessness. Participants also drew attention to the new laws requiring electronic filing—a form of access previously extended only to attorneys for represented parties—to be available to all defendants in all eviction cases, the vast majority of whom are not represented.



## SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENTS

In response to concerns about the judicial system itself, participants discussed several solutions. They emphasized the continued need for plain language and simplified court forms. Additionally, they noted the elimination or reduction of certain types of court fees, specifically those for printing blank forms, as a way to improve access to the courts.

Participants suggested repeatedly that better coordination would help eliminate many barriers in the legal system. In general, efforts to provide holistic services to community members with legal challenges would support better long-term outcomes for those individuals and their communities. Laura McKernan of The Justice Center stated in the Colorado Springs area, “We partner with community members like Colorado Legal Services, like the ARC [for people intellectual and developmental disabilities], like the city, and the legal librarian. So we work with each other to provide different resources to the community.”

One suggestion emerged for SRLCs to utilize more comprehensive referral networks within the current scope of their work. Other participants noted that problem-solving courts provide strong models for how to integrate services. Still others proposed locating social workers and housing navigators in eviction courts to better help people struggling with a lack of stability. Charlie Collop, a social worker with Colorado Legal Services in Denver, stated:

“We need more support staff that are not legal support staff in our organizations, in the courthouses, and all over. We’re not necessarily addressing why people need the court in the first place. But if we can bring social workers, housing navigators, case managers, those types of individuals into the courthouses, into legal firms, into anything regarding the law, we can really support the individuals that are facing these trials and hearings.”

In general, participants expressed that community-based support is a significant factor for the long-term success of litigants.

In discussions related to family law cases, participants suggested specific improvements, such as the need for changes like the proposed Colorado Rules of Family Procedure. This shift is toward a distinct, family-focused procedural system designed to make family law cases less adversarial, more efficient, and more accessible, especially for self-represented litigants. Additionally, participants favored new models where the same judge (or judicial team) handles all cases involving the same family—such as divorce, custody, child support, and protection orders—to ensure consistency, efficiency, and more informed, holistic decisions.

Many participants suggested language-access improvements, like expanding interpreter services. Additionally, they noted that enabling forms to be translated or submitted in languages other than English would help solve part of the language barriers for non-English speakers. Attendees from the 20th Judicial District discussed its efforts to recruit bilingual staff members to the courts.

But some metro area participants noted that language *access* is itself too small of a goal. Instead, they proposed we should seek language *justice*, which demands that non-English speakers be able to participate more fully in all aspects the legal system in the language they speak. Language justice measures for the judicial department could include multilingual signage, all forms in multiple languages, orders in the language of preference, and the acceptance of court forms submitted in the language of preference for the court user. Judicial help staff fluent in at least Spanish would be dependably available. Currently, the courts do dependably provide court interpreters during official court proceedings, however, court interpreters can serve only as intermediaries, relaying what is spoken by others. They are not permitted to do things like converse with litigants to explain or clarify.

**“WE NEED MORE SUPPORT STAFF THAT ARE NOT LEGAL  
SUPPORT STAFF IN OUR ORGANIZATIONS, IN THE COURTHOUSES,  
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PEOPLE NEED THE COURT IN THE FIRST PLACE.”**

- Charlie Collop, a social worker with Colorado Legal Services in Denver

## TECHNOLOGICAL AND RURAL SOLUTIONS

Some technology-based solutions have been implemented across the state. Participants discussed how remote proceedings, telehealth, and other virtual services have provided options for people with barriers related to transportation or disabilities. Stakeholders from rural communities suggested that funded ride-share programs could also help address transportation challenges. In general, session attendees were optimistic about the promise of tech-based apps and tools to support legal needs. Participants noted that courthouses could be enhanced with minimal technological solutions like working public printers and public access to Wi-Fi.

One SRLC suggested that a monitor playing “how to” videos for pro se litigants could help promote legal knowledge and education. “Get those videos on the TV in here and play them on a loop.”

Another idea discussed is the use of digital technologies to support communication between courts and litigants. For example, litigants could receive text notifications about upcoming court hearings. Greylin Bennett, the assistant shelter manager for the City of Loveland noted, that her program uses such a text system and compared it to systems set up to remind people of medical appointments.

### POLICY CHANGES

Some of the solutions that community representatives proposed would require policy or legislative changes. They continued to advocate for increased funding for legal aid programs across the state to provide communities with expanded resources. Additionally, participants called for an increase in judicial officers to better serve the state’s population. Policy reforms offer an additional approach to addressing key challenges. Participants discussed the updating of probate statutes, the proposed family court rules, longer cure periods for nonpayment of rent, raising the amount-in-controversy for county court, clear legislative boundaries for Immigration and Customs Enforcement presence at the courthouse, and revising the ghostwriting rules for attorneys offering unbundled services. Policy reforms will be discussed in more detail in the “Recommendations” section.

**IN GENERAL, SESSION ATTENDEES WERE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROMISE OF TECH-BASED APPS AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT LEGAL NEEDS. PARTICIPANTS NOTED THAT COURTHOUSES COULD BE ENHANCED WITH MINIMAL TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LIKE WORKING PUBLIC PRINTERS AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO WI-FI.**

## SINCE THE 2021 LISTEN AND LEARN TOUR

In the years since the last Listen and Learn Tour, the access-to-justice landscape has shifted. Society has evolved to a post-pandemic reality, as have the major players influencing access to justice. Many of the barriers and solutions conveyed during this Listen and Learn are similar to those shared in the last tour. However, some differences between then and now also surfaced, as described in the following sections.

### CHANGES OBSERVED

In 2021, stakeholders expressed significant concern about whether there would be uniform access to virtual hearings moving out of the pandemic. There was no consensus about the types of hearings, how many should be available virtually, and even whether virtual hearings were beneficial. While access to virtual hearings remained an important topic in 2025, discussion centered on how to make them most effective and widely available, not whether they should exist or be offered uniformly.

Session participants in 2021 and 2025 identified technology access both a significant barrier and a potential solution. However, in 2025, the concern about broadband access that emerged in 2021 was much less pervasive; it remained an issue in only few judicial districts. Instead, technology discussions were more focused on device access and technological literacy, particularly among populations limited in both.

This year, discussions often focused on non-attorney support as a means of meeting legal needs. In particular, participants emphasized the need to expand access to LLPs, increase the number of SRLCs and court navigators, build training programs for non-legal professionals, and other efforts to bolster resources. In 2021, conversations about non-lawyer support also occurred, but the focus was limited to SRLCs and family court facilitators (FCFs).

Understaffing is another theme that was identified in 2021 but greatly expanded on in this tour. In 2021, participants largely addressed how overwhelmed legal aid attorneys were. In 2025, this barrier remained highly prominent in discussions, but equally prevalent was how court staff and the court system are themselves overwhelmed. Session attendees expressed that courts are overburdened and understaffed, and existing staff are undertrained, placing significant strain on their ability to meet the needs of court users.

### PROGRESS MADE

In the 2021 Listen and Learn report,<sup>4</sup> the Commission made recommendations to the General Assembly, the Judicial Department, law schools, lawyers, and access-to-justice advocates. Since then, Colorado has seen progress in many of the areas the Commission focused on. The following are some examples.

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<sup>4</sup> *Findings and Recommendations Following the 2021 Statewide Listen & Learn Tour* (Colorado Access to Justice Commission, 2021), <https://www.coloradoaccessjustice.org/listen-learn-tour-2021>.



The **General Assembly** has taken important steps to support access to justice:

- In 2023, the General Assembly formally codified the Colorado Access to Justice Commission into statute with HB23-1280.
- In 2024, the General Assembly established the Equal Justice Fund Authority with the passage of HB24-1286. This fund is to distribute money from a new equal justice filing fee to support nonprofit organizations that provide legal representation and advice to low-income Coloradans. The fund is expected to bring in an additional \$4 million annually for legal aid, although external economic circumstances may change this figure year to year. It is worth noting that no expansion of general funds for civil legal aid has been made since 2021.
- The General Assembly received and dispersed funding for infrastructure to support virtual court appearances and technology used federal funding provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a continued access-to-justice tool.
- In 2025, the General Assembly passed SB25-024, adding fifteen new judges across Colorado to reduce backlogs and improve timeliness. This number is a portion of what was needed and requested by the Judicial Department.

The **Judicial Department** has also taken some of the steps recommended by the Commission and expanded on efforts it was already taking.

- Remote appearance options are now available for a wide range of court proceedings, and the Judicial Department is actively developing new technology infrastructure for virtual proceedings. Remote proceedings are being used regularly across the state for short hearings.
- The Judicial Department has developed several new elective trainings for judges and judicial staff on providing trauma-informed services to the public.
- The Judicial Department's Pathways to Access Committee (PAC)—which focuses on internal efforts the Department can make to increase access—has been operating since 2023. PAC includes or has included subcommittees on language access, housing, remote proceedings, and forms. The forms subcommittee has worked on converting certain regularly used forms to plain language and has been working with SRLCs and FCFs from districts across the state to better tailor forms for end users as the court makes changes.
- The LLP program, which was sanctioned by the Colorado Supreme Court, is in its second year of operation, and more than one hundred LLPs have been licensed. In 2025, the Colorado Supreme Court expanded the responsibilities that LLPs can take on for their clients.

**Law schools** have also implemented programs designed to increase access to justice and perhaps expand the pool of attorneys working in rural Colorado:

- Both the University of Colorado Law School and the University of Denver Sturm College of Law participate in the Commission's Rural Justice Internships, a program that exposes law students to legal practice in rural Colorado.
- Both the University of Colorado Law School and the University of Denver Sturm College of Law offer loan repayment assistance for graduates working in public interest careers.

**Lawyers and access-to-justice advocates** have focused on many of the same actions recommended in the 2021 report. Some of the most important highlights include:

- Legal Entrepreneurs for Justice and the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System have established the Above the Line Network, a community of attorneys committed to serving people who do not qualify for free legal services but cannot afford to pay an attorney at the current market rates. The Above the Line Network has created a curriculum that prepares attorneys to establish practices serving this population—the majority of people.
- More than one hundred attorneys and firms have continued to meet the Colorado Supreme Court's pro bono pledge each year. This means that either the individual attorney or every Colorado attorney in a firm has contributed at least fifty hours of pro bono work to the community.
- Attorneys and access-to-justice advocates have begun to investigate and push for a new category of legal helper—a community justice worker—to assist people in particular communities and with specific issues, such as domestic violence. This effort is part of a growing national effort and has been supported by the Commission.

While these advances are commendable, considerable work remains to be done. Many of the recommendations from the 2021 report have not been implemented, and new challenges have emerged. The recommendations that follow reflect the continued need for active engagement and collaboration to address the legal access challenges that Colorado's people face.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on insights gleaned from the 2025 Listen and Learn Tour, as well as ongoing work the Commission has been doing with local access-to-justice committees across the state, the Commission recommends the following steps from stakeholders committed to making the justice system fair and responsive to the needs of the public.



### FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **Increase or maintain funding for civil legal aid.** People consistently report that the most impactful type of support they receive when facing a legal problem is help from a lawyer. Given the current state budget realities, increases to funding for legal aid may not be possible in the near term, but enhancements to these resources should remain a longer-term goal. At the state level, the most pressing priority presently is to maintain existing funding levels for the Family Violence Justice Fund, the Eviction Legal Defense Fund, and the Immigration Legal Defense Fund.
- **Provide necessary funding support for the Judicial Department.** The need for more judges in almost every Colorado district is profound. Many courts are significantly backlogged, and judges are often working seventy to eighty hours per week. The system needs more judges to ensure that cases are resolved in a timely manner. However, beyond funding for more judges, the Judicial Department could also allocate resources for additional SRLCs, FCFs, and other staff to help meet the needs of the public.
- **Consider incentives to encourage attorneys to practice in rural communities.** Many states around the country are using financial incentives to encourage rural practice. For example, Maine gives a tax rebate. In South Dakota, attorneys who commit to working for five years in a rural community receive a payment from the state for each year of service.
- **Provide sustained state funding for the soon-to-be-released statewide legal information website, Law Help Colorado.** This site is rooted in best practices in usability, psychology, and adult education to provide up-to-date, easily understood legal information for self-represented litigants to navigate their legal issues. The first iteration of the site will include just three areas of law: family, housing, and money/debt. Coloradans need this type of legal information in many more areas of law, like employment, public benefits, safety, crime, and civil rights. However, other states with robust sites are supported by state funds and a minimum of two full-time staff; the Commission will be sustaining the scaled-back version with one half-time staff member and will need state funding to grow this resource to scale.



## FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- **Increase public transportation options and accessibility to courthouses.** Currently, many courthouses are inaccessible by public transportation. Situating bus stops near courthouses is essential to enabling public access.
- **Ensure that courthouses are accessible to all.** Court buildings are owned and operated by the counties in which they operate. Some courthouses are not accessible for people in wheelchairs or in need of other forms of accommodation. Counties should work to make every courthouse accessible to the entire public.
- **Facilitate and support collaboration between service providers**—both legal and non-legal—to help them leverage one another’s services to better serve common communities rather than duplicate work, fall short in addressing needs, and/or operate in silos.



## FOR THE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

- **Request funding for and strategically place more judges and other essential court staff.** Judicial workloads are unsustainable, and the backlog in certain case types thwarts access to justice. The Judicial Department should continue to press the General Assembly for funding to add judges and support staff like SRLCs and FCFs.
- **Implement court navigator programs.** Courtroom navigators, used in a number of states and local jurisdictions, are volunteers who are available to support self-represented litigants in the courtroom. SRLCs provide essential services outside of the courtroom, but many people need support and some explanation of the process once they are in the courtroom. Navigators can provide that support. They do not offer legal advice, but they provide basic information about what will happen during a proceeding and explain the roles of different people in the court.
- **Establish equal access to e-filing for self-represented litigants.** Currently, self-represented litigants can only e-file in limited types of cases. Even in the types of cases where they can e-file, substantial barriers remain. In housing cases, tenants have a statutory right to e-file, but they often do not know the case number (or there is no case number) so they cannot exercise that right. In all cases, e-filers are required to pay fees using a credit card, which many self-represented filers do not possess. Even when a party has been

granted a fee waiver due to financial hardship, that waiver is meaningless when e-filing; they are required to pay all e-filing fees, which is generally prohibitive. These barriers must be addressed.

- **Improve the Judicial Department website.** The current Judicial Department website is not user-friendly. It is difficult to find a courthouse, a Judicial Department form, or most basic information. The website should be redesigned with a user-centered approach, recognizing that it must serve as a navigational tool for the vast majority of court users.
- **Continue to improve technology infrastructure for remote court appearances.** Virtual court options have been beneficial in reducing transportation barriers, providing safety for domestic violence survivors, accommodating people who have moved away from Colorado, and lessening the time people must spend away from work and family for court proceedings. The Judicial Department should continue to improve the platform used for remote appearances and train court staff and judges on its use.
- **Simplify and standardize court forms and processes.** Continue to create simplified forms and use them uniformly in courts around the state. Simplify and standardize court processes, particularly for cases involving self-represented litigants. Establish uniform standards for form requirements. For family cases involving self-represented litigants, for example, consider shifting from an adversarial system to an inquisitorial system in which the judge asks questions of the parties and witnesses.
- **Remove existing financial barriers.** Update the fee waiver guidelines to reflect local economic realities instead of federal poverty guidelines. Additionally, eliminate filing fees for individuals who have had their court costs waived.
- **Increase language access.** Significant language barriers persist in the civil justice system. The Judicial Department should invest in translating forms, pleadings, court orders, and other notices into commonly used languages, particularly Spanish. The Department should also encourage the use of interpreter and bilingual services for people who may speak conversational English but struggle to understand complex court concepts.
- **Rethink the unauthorized practice of law rules.** For those who assist people with housing, domestic violence, benefits, healthcare, and a range of other basic needs, current unauthorized practice of law rules leave many of them afraid to provide basic assistance with filling out a form or understanding a court process. The rules need to be clarified and should establish which types of advice non-lawyers can provide without fear of running afoul of those rules. Furthermore, the Colorado Supreme Court should consider waivers to the unauthorized practice of law rules for non-lawyers who have received specialized training in circumstances where consumer protections are in place.



- **Expand the Licensed Legal Paraprofessional (LLP) Program to other areas of law beyond family law.** The current LLP Program reflects a major milestone with the Colorado Supreme Court creating an innovative policy solution to the justice gap. Immense need remains for affordable legal advice in many more legal areas where LLPs can competently represent clients who would otherwise not be able to afford representation.
- **Partner with other community resources.** Libraries and other community venues can serve as non-threatening places for legal education and services. In addition, reentry centers, social work programs, and other nonprofits that provide engaged support through court processes will help clients navigate and feel more at ease using the court system. The Judicial Department should find ways to partner with these resources to maximize the assistance they can provide.
- **Encourage development of artificial intelligence and other technological tools.** The recent advances in artificial intelligence and other technologies have the potential to narrow the access to justice gap by providing self-represented litigants with information and guidance on navigating their way through the legal system and finding a free or low-cost lawyer. At the same time, mass market generative artificial intelligence tools, which were not designed for legal research or drafting, could harm self-represented litigants through inaccurate query results and outputs. The Judicial Department should foster the development and availability of artificial intelligence tools that provide litigants who cannot afford a lawyer with reliable, user-friendly technological means of representing themselves and protecting their legal rights.



## FOR COLORADO LAW SCHOOLS

- **Continue recruiting law students to practice in rural areas.** Law schools can continue doing this by advertising and promoting the Commission's Rural Justice Internships and highlighting the work-life balance that rural practice can offer.
- **Offer more pop-up legal clinics.** These should expand upon existing clinic services and bring them directly to communities rather than requiring people to come to courthouses or the law schools. Hosting these clinics in libraries, schools, and community centers helps students gain hands-on experience while meeting people where they are, an approach that has proven highly effective in the Commission's Virtual Pro-Se Clinic model.

- **Consider formal programs that focus on the rural practice of law.** Creating a certificate, clinic, or course series on rural practice would help students understand the realities and opportunities of serving non-metro communities. Structured programs—paired with mentorship and field placements—can turn short-term internships into long-term professional pipelines.
- **Offer or expand on existing stipends to students engaging in public service and/or rural work.** Many students want to pursue public service or rural placements but face financial barriers. Law schools should expand stipends and loan support to make these opportunities feasible. The Commission’s Rural Justice Internships have shown that paid placements attract talented students who might not otherwise consider rural practice.
- **Integrate access to justice into the core curriculum** or require it as a mandatory course. Access to justice should be treated as a foundational element of legal education. Incorporating These topics into first-year courses, professional responsibility, or as a standalone class would ensure every graduate understands the justice gap and lawyers’ role in addressing it.
- **Prioritize student education on technology tools, communication, and cultural competency skills.** Students should learn the technological and communication skills needed to serve clients effectively across distance and difference. Training in virtual client interaction, cultural humility, and plain-language communication prepares graduates for modern, inclusive lawyering, especially in rural and multilingual communities.



## FOR COLORADO LAWYERS AND LAW FIRMS

- **Commit to providing meaningful pro bono service annually.** Per the Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 6.1, all attorneys should strive to provide fifty hours of pro bono service each year. Recognizing that the fifty-hour goal may be difficult for many attorneys to meet, any significant amount of service commitment would benefit the public. If every Colorado attorney provided a meaningful amount of pro bono service each year, they would help thousands of Coloradans faced with addressing their civil justice needs without legal assistance.
- **Take and fulfill the Colorado Supreme Court’s pro bono recognition program pledge** to dedicate fifty hours or more of pro bono legal services every year. Each year, the Court recognizes Colorado-licensed attorneys—solo practitioners as well as the those in law firms and in-house counsel or government groups—that have achieved the annual goal of providing fifty hours of pro bono legal services.

- **Commit to supporting or providing affordable legal services** such as unbundled, low bono, and sliding scale services. Legal services are unaffordable for the majority of Coloradans. In addition to pro bono work, lawyers can do well financially *and* do good by offering at least some of their services at more affordable rates, reaching clients who would otherwise go without legal advice.
- **Encourage the use of Pro Bono CO to find pro bono opportunities.** Pro Bono CO will launch on March 16, 2026. It will be a statewide digital clearinghouse for pro bono opportunities across the state.
- **Designate a pro bono contact (pro bono coordinator, pro bono counsel) or create a pro bono committee.** This professional or group of professionals can provide consistent communication, develop firm policies, and ensure that law firms engage in strategic and systemic pro bono service.



## FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE ADVOCATES

- **Advocate to establish community justice worker programs.** States around the country are establishing programs through which non-lawyers supervised by lawyers can assist community members with legal problems. Community justice workers could provide important additional legal support in Colorado, and access-to-justice advocates should develop proposals for their implementation.
- **Support new legislative policies** that break down barriers and/or create bridges in access to justice for people who cannot afford an attorney or otherwise struggle to access justice like people with disabilities and limited English proficiency. These include policies that ensure due process, expand meaningful participation in one's court case, and/or help avoid the courts by addressing problems "upstream."
- **Assume a leadership role on your local access-to-justice committee.** Nearly every region in Colorado has an active, local access-to-justice committee eager for more motivated, passionate advocates to help organize locally tailored community-driven solutions.

## CONCLUSION

Colorado has made tremendous strides in its work to address the justice gap and improve access to justice across the state. Community partners, the Judicial Department, legal aid organizations, and the Commission have worked together to innovate solutions to some of the most pressing challenges the civil legal system faces. This report highlights much of the work that continues to be needed on these important issues.

Much has changed since the 2021 report, yet some problems persist or have worsened. Access to professional legal services continues to be limited, particularly for rural communities. Language justice remains an area of concern. Overall, the court system is complex and difficult to navigate, and most litigants would benefit from greater coordination between the courts and service providers. Yet, these challenges are nuanced and call for greater innovation and creativity in developing solutions.

Colorado has a wealth of dedicated professionals working in various capacities to address the state's most urgent needs. Legal aid organizations, court staff, and other nonprofit service providers are experimenting with ways to improve access to our civil justice system. Some solutions that show promise are in development and need more time to produce results. At the same time, the threat of federal and state funding cuts to these programs undermines the work that the Commission and its partners have done. The future will show which vision for civil justice in Colorado prevails going forward. Collaboration, partnership, and compassion are the best ways for Coloradans to continue the critical and life-saving work of closing the justice gap in our state.

**LEGAL AID ORGANIZATIONS, COURT STAFF, AND OTHER NONPROFIT SERVICE PROVIDERS ARE EXPERIMENTING WITH WAYS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO OUR CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM. AT THE SAME TIME, THE THREAT OF FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING CUTS TO THESE PROGRAMS COULD UNDERMINE THE WORK THAT THE COMMISSION AND ITS PARTNERS HAVE DONE.**





## APPENDIX: ATTENDEES

### 3RD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Sam Benson**  
3rd Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**James Chamberlain**  
Huerfano County Commissioner

**Lorraine Cisneros**  
3rd Judicial District, Clerk of Court,  
Probate Registrar

**Les Downs**  
Law Office of Les Downs

**Pierce L. Fowler**  
3rd Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Kerry Gabrielson**  
3rd Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Kim Gonzales**  
Las Animas Huerfano Counties  
District Health Department

**Heather Hillis**  
Town of La Veta

**Carrie Keating**  
Health Solutions

**Bob Krieman**  
3rd Judicial District,  
Court Executive

**Dawn Mann**  
3rd Judicial District,  
County Court Judge

**John “Clay” McKisson**  
3rd Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**John Mochel**  
3rd Judicial District,  
County Court Judge

**Joanne Montero**  
3rd Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court, Probate Registrar

**Krissy Sanchez**  
Walsenburg Housing Authority

**Jaque Sikes**  
Walsenburg Housing Authority

**Katie Silvey**  
Southern CO Developmental  
Disabilities Services

**Stephen Talbot**  
3rd Judicial District,  
County Court Magistrate

**Jamie Tupper**  
Las Animas County Human Services

**Valerie Vecellio**  
Las Animas County  
Rehabilitation Center

**Heather Wellman**  
Huerfano County Human Services

**Caitlin Young**  
Law Office of Caitlin A. Young, LLC

**Carl Young**  
Colorado Office of  
Economic Development and  
International Trade

### 4TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Ariel Baty**  
Colorado Legal Services

**Reesa Bohanan**  
Brothers Redevelopment

**Christina Butero**  
The Arc Pikes Peak Region

**Angela Carron**  
Fostering Hope

**Darryl Glenn**  
TESSA

**Deborah Hamilton**  
Pikes Peak Library District

**Nancy Hartsfield**  
Aspen Mine Center

**Pamela Knothe**  
The Resource Exchange

**Laura McKernan**  
The Justice Center

**Andrea Paprzycki**  
4th Judicial District,  
Magistrate, Civil

**Crystal Rayos**  
El Paso County Bar Association

**Daphne Robinson**  
4th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented  
Litigant Coordinator

**Aaron Simeraro**  
Silver Key Senior Services

**Monycka Snowbird**  
Haseya Advocate Program

**Scott Sosebee**  
4th Judicial District, Court Executive

**Thomas Treinen**  
4th Judicial District, Magistrate,  
Probate

**Daryl Trujillo**  
The Arc Pikes Peak Region

**Jessica Virkler**  
Licensed Legal Paraprofessional  
Section/Pikes Peak Paralegals

**Lisa Younger Anderson**  
4th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

## 5TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**MaryAnne Avery**  
Alpine Springs Counseling

**Kristi Bloodworth**  
Bright Future Foundation

**Cathy J. Cheroutes**  
5th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Paul R. Dunkelman**  
5th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Rachel J. Olguin-Fresquez**  
5th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Claudia Gallardo**  
5th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Daniel Garcia**  
Colorado Legal Services

**Becky Gray**  
5th Judicial District,  
Protective Proceedings Monitor

**Wendy Hayden**  
5th Judicial District,  
County Court Clerk

**Carrie Holton**  
Colorado Legal Services

**Cynthia J. Jones**  
5th Judicial District, County Court  
Judge, Magistrate

**Laurie Mactavish**  
5th Judicial District, Family Court  
Facilitator

**Guadalupe Ontiveros**  
Eagle County Child Support Services

**Mike Staten**  
Bridges of Colorado

**Marie Toyama**  
5th Judicial District,  
Peer Training Specialist

**Lori Tully**  
Advocates of Lake County

## 6TH AND 22ND JUDICIAL DISTRICTS

**Donna Mae Baukat**  
Community Compassion Outreach

**Rachel Brock**  
Durango Family Law

**Beth Crane**  
Crane and Tejada, P.C.

**Tracy Cross**  
Tracy Cross, Durango CO Attorney

**Richard “Rico” Gallegos**  
22nd Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Ryan Gallegos**  
6th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Amy Harris**  
22nd Judicial District, Self-Represented  
Litigant Coordinator

**Katrina Patterson**  
Women’s Resource Center  
of La Plata County

**Todd Jay Plewe**  
22nd Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Miriah Sandoval**  
6th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Kim S. Shropshire**  
6th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Eileen Webster**  
Colorado Access to Justice  
Commission, Virtual Pro Se Clinic

**Jeffrey R. Wilson**  
6th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

## 7TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Destiny Farr**  
San Miguel Resource Center

**Leslie German**  
7th Judicial District,  
Court Executive

**Joy Hamilton**  
Hilltop Community Resources

**Meghan Ingle**  
Hilltop Community Resources

**D. Cory Jackson**  
7th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Rob Jones**  
Uncompahgre Volunteer Legal Aid

**Carlton Mason**  
CASA of the 7th Judicial District

**Michelle McKeehan**  
Montrose Child Support Services

**Jon Merritt**  
Montrose County Human Services,  
Child Support Services

**Christopher Ottinger**  
City of Montrose

**Traci Silverberg**  
7th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Christine Sorenson**  
Montrose Child Support Services

**Michelle Wingfield**  
City of Montrose

**Carlie Wright**  
Project Hope of Gunnison Valley

## 8TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Tammy Barnoski**  
8th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Greylin Bennett**  
City of Loveland

**Susan Blanco**  
8th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Ian Bonner**  
8th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Denise Cosgrove**  
Bridges of Colorado

**Jess Goldberg**  
Conflict Transformations Works

**Lisa Graham**  
8th Judicial District, Supervisor

**Eliza Hensley**  
Area Agency on Aging

**Brianna Jones**  
Loveland Public Library

**Jillian Kolman**  
Alternatives to Violence

**Kathleen Madden**  
8th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court

**Deborah Mayer**  
Colorado Poverty Law Program

**Perrie McMillen**  
Conflict Transformations Works

**Joey OBryan**  
Alternatives to Violence

**Laurie Pasricha**  
Fuerza Latina and ISAAC

**Andrea Shahmardian**  
8th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Alyssa Stephens**  
City of Fort Collins

**Annelise Tate**  
The Arc of Larimer County

**Joan Woodbury**  
Colorado Legal Services

## 9TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Christina Basham**  
Catholic Charities, Glenwood

**Alana Billings**  
9th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Hannah Horn**  
Response

**Kerry Kleisner**  
MidValley Family Practice

**Liz Mackin**  
9th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court

**John F. Neiley**  
9th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Danette Stark**  
Mind Springs Health

**Jenny Wherry**  
Alpine Legal Services

**Eli Zain**  
Colorado Poverty Law Project

## 10TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Michala Barnett**  
10th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Allison P. Ernst**  
10th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Nicole Ferguson**  
Mariposa Center for Safety

**Danielle Fry-Casias**  
10th Judicial District,  
Peer Training Specialist

**Sal Katz Jr.**  
Mt. Carmel Veteran Service Center

**Bob Keating**  
Colorado Legal Services

**Steven Laman**  
10th Judicial District, Magistrate

**Teah Miller**  
Health Solutions

**Rose Quintana**  
10th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court

**Stephanie Roque**  
10th Judicial District, Supervisor

**Gregory J. Styduhar**  
10th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Charity Tafoya**  
10th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Josh Wills**  
Mt. Carmel Veteran Service Center

## 11TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Julie Akers**

11th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Jeanna Baitlon**

Colorado Legal Services

**Mary Pat Bowen**

Park County Sheriff's Office,  
Victim Services

**Jamey Briddle**

Park County Human Services,  
Child Welfare

**Andrea Carlstrom**

Chaffee County Public Health

**Cheryl Easter**

11th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Sabrina Fritts**

PeaceWorks Inc

**Vallie Gerl**

11th Judicial District,  
Court Judicial Assistant

**Lori Hale**

11th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Josh Hanover**

Park County Sheriff's Office,  
Victim Services

**Amanda Hunter**

11th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Debbie Quintana**

The Alliance

**Lisa Rowe**

11th Judicial District,  
Court Executive

**Susan Sakamoto**

Canon City Public Library

**Caitlin Schleicher**

The Alliance

**Lauren Swan**

11th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Shay Taylor**

Park County Human Services

**Dayna Vise**

11th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Susan Walton**

Park County Human Services

**PT Wood**

Chaffee County

## 12TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Marcia Candy**

San Luis Behavioral Health

**Kimberly Cortez-Rodriguez**

12th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Gaynell Elliott**

12th Judicial District,  
Local ADA Coordinator

**Kaylene Guymon**

12th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Marisol Hernandez**

12th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court

**Chad Keizer**

Colorado Legal Services

**Jason Kelly**

12th Judicial District,  
County Court Judge

**Caitlin Mizell**

12th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Ronnie Mondragon**

12th Judicial District,  
Legal Research Attorney

**Angelica Raya Trejo**

San Luis Valley Immigrant  
Resource Center

**Jamie Snow**

Bridges of Colorado

**Mikela Tarlow**

Storylab360

**Jazmin Vigil**

San Luis Behavioral Health

## 13TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Lisa Ault**

13th Judicial District,  
Probate Registrar

**Susanne Brown**

Morgan County Human Services

**Dawn Gerk**

13th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Candy Gilliland**

Sara House

**Pam Hernandez**

Rising Up Morgan County

**Leslie A. Laird**

13th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court, Jury  
Commissioner, Probate Registrar

**Stephanie Mayer**

13th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Carl S. McGuire III**

13th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Shantel Nelson**

Morgan County Human Services

**NaTausha Ray**

SARA House

**Carrie Schmeeckle**

Morgan County Human Services

**Debra Welsch**

13th Judicial District, Clerk of Court

**Shaun Wilson**

Hope House

## 14TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Jen Cuesta**

Colorado Legal Services

**Ben Dahlby**

Bud Werner Memorial Library

**Kayla Dorney**

Grand County Advocates

**Victoria Elenz**

Bridges of Colorado

**Daniel Garcia**

Colorado Legal Services

**Katie Grobe**

Routt County Human Services

**Mick Hale**

Routt County Attorney's Office

**Carrie Holton**

Colorado Legal Services

**Kevin Kohlbrenner**

The Health Partnership

**Elizabeth Kuker**

14th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Cora Louthan**

Routt County Human Services,  
Child Support Services

**Stella Munoz**

14th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Casey Quillen**

Northwest Colorado Bar Association

**Brittany A. Schneider**

14th Judicial District, District Court  
Chief Judge

**Lynaia South**

Routt County Attorney's Office

**Erin Wilson**

14th Judicial District,  
County Court Judge

**Tara Wojtkiewicz**

Moffat County Youth  
Services Department

## 15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Lance P. Clark**

15th Judicial District,  
County Court Judge

**Shawny Comer**

Prowers County Human Services,  
Child Support Services

**Diane Crow**

15th Judicial District, Court Execu-  
tive, ADA Coordinator

**Becky Fletcher**

15th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court, Jury Commissioner,  
Probate Registrar

**Tarryn L. Johnson**

15th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Sharon Mauch**

Public Health, About F.A.C.E.

**Lisa Thomas**

Public Health, About F.A.C.E.



## 16TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Geoffrey Barta**  
Colorado Legal Services

**David Book**  
16th Judicial District,  
Chief Probation Officer,  
ADA Coordinator

**Anne Boswell**  
Southeast Colorado  
Power Association

**Bill Bradford**  
Applied Behavioral Concepts, LLC

**Andrea Cruz**  
16th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court

**William J. Culver**  
16th Judicial District,  
County Court Judge

**Rodney D. Fouracre**  
16th Judicial District,  
District Court Magistrate

**Brooke Leonard**  
Arkansas Valley Resource Center

**Mark A. MacDonnell**  
16th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Stacey Milenski**  
City of Rocky Ford

**C.J. Montoya**  
16th Judicial District,  
Court Executive

**Jenny Navarrette**  
Domestic Safety Resource Center

**Daniel Ramirez**  
16th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Kathy Tompkins**  
16th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Samuel S. Vigil**  
16th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

## 19TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Vanessa Arellano**  
A Woman's Place

**Marla Bohling**  
19th Judicial District, Supervisor

**Angelene Bolen**  
19th Judicial District, Supervisor

**Erin Clark**  
19th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Rachael Erickson**  
19th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court

**Allison J. Esser**  
19th Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Cory Flummerfelt**  
19th Judicial District,  
Chief Probation Officer

**Amanda Flynn**  
Rock Found Reentry

**Kathryn Hall**  
Colorado Legal Services

**Marci Hoffman**  
19th Judicial District,  
Court Executive

**Julie Hoskins**  
19th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Maria Maas**  
19th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Sonja Richardson**  
19th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

## 20TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Jason Allen**

City of Boulder,  
Eviction Prevention

**Ingrid Bakke**

20th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge (retired)

**Sandra Diaz**

Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley

**Desiree Firle**

20th Judicial District  
Attorney's Office

**Laurel Herndon**

Immigrant Legal Center  
of Boulder County

**Melanie Jensen**

Safehouse Progressive Alliance  
for Nonviolence

**Jen Jepsen**

Recovery Cafe Longmont

**Molly Jickling**

Bridge to Justice

**Elizabeth H. Kelley**

20th Judicial District,  
District Court Magistrate

**Rachel Kunath**

Colorado Legal Services

**Blair Larson**

20th Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Shaun Lee**

Wild Plum Center

**Amy Mahan**

Safehouse Progressive Alliance for  
Nonviolence

**Alisiana Medina**

Colorado Legal Services

**Julie Piller**

Sister Carmen Community Center

**Charlotte Randall**

20th Judicial District,  
Collection Team Lead

**Nancy W. Salomone**

20th Judicial Court,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Tracey Sogi**

20th Judicial District,  
Court Executive

**Thomas M. Ward**

20th Judicial District,  
District Court Magistrate

**Bruce Wiener**

Bridge to Justice

**Ailsa Wonnacott**

Association for Community Living

**Mallory Woodman**

Safehouse Progressive Alliance  
for Nonviolence

## 21ST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**Thomas Acker**

Grand Valley Peace & Justice

**Ann Brigham**

21st Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court, ADA Coordinator

**Scott J. Burrill**

21st Judicial District,  
County Court Judge

**Brian J. Flynn**

21st Judicial District, District Court  
Chief Judge

**Lourdes Galvan**

21st Judicial District,  
Self-Represented Litigant  
Coordinator

**Dave Murphy**

Grand Valley Peace & Justice

**Elyse Parker**

Office of the Alternate Defense  
Counsel/Joseph Center

**Sherry Price**

City of Grand Junction Housing  
Division

**Daniella Shively**

Colorado Legal Services

**Joy Thompson**

CASA of Mesa County

## DENVER METRO JUDICIAL DISTRICTS (1ST, 2ND, 17TH, 18TH, AND 23RD)

**Michelle Amico**

18th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Angela Arkin**

Retired Judge,  
Judicial Arbiter Group

**Mark T. Bailey**

2nd Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Jill Beathard**

Project Safeguard

**Antonio Bendezu**

Community Economic  
Defense Project

**Amanda Blasingame**

Colorado Legal Services

**Todd Bovo**

Bovo Law

**Kristin Bronson**  
Colorado Lawyers Committee

**Claudia Cardoza**  
Focus Points Family  
Resource Center

**Ariana Castro**  
Family Tree, Inc.

**Charlie Collop**  
Colorado Legal Services

**Jordan Cotleur**  
Colorado Poverty Law Project

**Katie Davis**  
Denver Probate Court,  
Supervisor

**Jose Escobar**  
Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center

**Lucrecia Escobedo**  
Focus Points Family  
Resource Center

**Cecelia Espenosa**  
Colorado General Assembly

**Lindsay Fallon**  
Towards Justice

**Michele Fitzgerald**  
1st Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Casey Frank**  
Casey Frank,  
Attorney and Counselor

**Luz Galaviz**  
Towards Justice

**Jadyn Hardee**  
17th Judicial District, Self-Rep-  
resented Litigant Coordinator

**Melina Hernandez**  
18th Judicial District, County  
Court Judge

**Anastasia Hill**  
Denver Asset Building Coalition

**Kazi Houston**  
Rocky Mountain Victim  
Law Center

**Karissa Johnson**  
City and County of Denver

**Simone Jones**  
17th Judicial District,  
Deputy Court Executive

**Stephanie Kaufman**  
Colorado Poverty Law Project

**Colleen Kent**  
17th Judicial District,  
Managing Court Interpreter

**Bridget Kiely**  
Jeffco County Library

**Shana Klock**  
18th Judicial District,  
Clerk of Court, Registrar

**Ryan P. Loewer**  
1st Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Lois Lupica**  
Community Economic  
Defense Project

**Melissa C. Meirink**  
Colorado Court of Appeals,  
Court of Appeals Judge

**Nicole Nahm**  
18th Judicial District  
Attorney's Office

**Isabel Olsen-Valdez**  
Denver County Court, Self-  
Represented Litigant Coordinator

**Viviann Pereda**  
Adams County Human Services

**Anthony Pereira**  
Metro Volunteer Lawyers

**Ricardo Perez**  
Hispanic Affairs Project

**Rebekah Pfahler**  
Colorado Legal Services

**Amy Pohl**  
Project Safeguard

**Carolyn Powell**  
MCR Development

**Staci Pratt**  
University of Colorado  
Law School

**Julie Reiskin**  
Colorado Cross-Disability  
Coalition

**Bonnie Saltzman**  
Law Offices of  
Bonnie E. Saltzman, LLC

**Shea Schneider**  
17th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Kyle Seedorf**  
17th Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Miriam Sifuentes**  
17th Judicial District,  
Family Court Facilitator

**Ryan J. Stuart**  
23rd Judicial District,  
District Court Chief Judge

**Sharon Sturges**  
Colorado State Court  
Administrator's Office

**Angie Tims**  
Denver Rescue Mission

**Jenni Turnidge**  
18th Judicial District,  
Court Executive

**Dianne VanVoorhees**  
Harmony Path Mediation

**Jose Vasquez**  
Colorado Legal Services

**Sarah B. Wallace**  
2nd Judicial District,  
District Court Judge

**Candace Whitaker**  
Faegre Drinker  
Biddle & Reath LLP

**Katalin Wishart**  
Project Safeguard

**Anne Zogg**  
Hawkins Gordon

**Elie Zwiebel**  
Transformative Justice Project



## **ENGAGE WITH US**

<https://www.coloradoaccesstojustice.org/engage-with-us>



We are deeply grateful for the many volunteers, partner organizations,  
and funders without whom our work would not be possible.