



/ 2025 Disaster Resilience Symposium: Detailed Agenda

SYMPOSIUM LOCATION

Stetson University College of Law
 1401 61st Street South
 Gulfport, FL 33707
[Campus Map](#)

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

Monday, March 17

Time	Session
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Welcome Reception for Equal Justice Works Fellows and Alumni <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Spa Beach Bistro, St. Pete Pier</i>
6:00pm -7:30pm	Welcome Meet & Greet for all Disaster Resilience Symposium Guests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Spa Beach Bistro, St. Pete Pier</i>

Tuesday, March 18 - Stetson University College of Law

Time	Session
8:30am-9:25am	Registration & Exhibitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration (Building T Foyer) • Exhibitors (Building T Foyer) Shuttle Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:00am: Shuttle 1 departure from Hilton • 8:30am: Shuttle 2 departure from Hilton
8:30-9:25am	Breakfast (Mann Lounge)
9:30am-9:45am	Welcome to the Disaster Resilience Symposium (Great Hall)
9:45am-10:00am	BREAK & EXHIBITORS (Building T Foyer)
10:00 am - 11:00 am	CONCURRENT SESSIONS
	Session 1: Legal Issues in Disasters 101: Foundations for Effective Response (Classroom A)
	Session 2: Shaping Resilience: Recent Regulatory Reforms in FEMA's Individual Assistance Program (Classroom D)



11:00 am - 11:10 am	BREAK & EXHIBITORS (Building T Foyer)
11:10 am - 12:10 pm	CONCURRENT SESSIONS Session 3: Understanding the FEMA 50% Rule: Local Government Implementation and Options for Homeowners (Classroom A)
	Session 4: Beyond Natural Disasters: Expanding Legal Aid's Role in Crisis Response (Classroom D)
12:10pm - 1:25pm	Lunch & Keynote Remarks (Great Hall) <i>Hurricane Katrina: 20 Years Later - A Legacy of Resilience, Justice, and the Future of Disaster Recovery</i> <i>Featuring keynote speaker, Ranie Thompson, with guests Laura Tuggle & Davida Finger</i>
1:25pm - 1:35pm	BREAK & EXHIBITORS (Building T Foyer)
1:35pm - 2:35pm	CONCURRENT SESSIONS Session 5: Navigating Tax Challenges in the Wake of Disaster (Classroom A)
	Session 6: Effectively Engaging Pro Bono Volunteers in Disaster Legal Response (Classroom D)
2:35pm - 2:45pm	BREAK & EXHIBITORS (Building T Foyer)
2:45pm - 3:45pm	CONCURRENT SESSIONS Session 7: Empowering from the Outside In: Transformative and Conscious Approaches for Community-led Advocacy and Mobilization (Classroom A)
	Session 8: Advocating for Legislative reform to increase financial preparedness and recovery in disasters (Classroom D)
3:45pm - 4:00pm	SNACK BREAK & EXHIBITORS (Building T Foyer)
4:00pm - 5:00pm	CONCURRENT SESSIONS Session 9: Moving Beyond the Buzzwords of Whole Community Inclusion in Emergency Management (Classroom A)
	Session 10: Blue Sky Planning for Efficient and Effective Disaster Response (Classroom D)
5:00pm-6:00pm	Networking Reception (Banyan Courtyard) Shuttle Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:15pm: Shuttle 1 departure from Stetson



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:45pm: Shuttle 2 departure from Stetson
--	--

Wednesday, March 19 - Stetson University College of Law

Time	Session Title
8:30am-9:30am	Registration (Building T) Shuttle Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:15am: Shuttle 1 departure from Hilton • 8:45am: Shuttle 2 departure from Hilton
8:30am - 9:30am	Networking Breakfast (Banyan Courtyard)
9:30am - 12:30pm	Session 11: Disaster & Poverty Interactive Workshop (Great Hall)
12:30pm - 2:00pm	(Mann Lounge: Food Buffet and Session: Classroom A) Lunch & Disaster Resilience Discussion Food served (Mann Lounge) Seating (Classroom A)
2:00pm - 2:15pm	BREAK & EXHIBITORS (Building T Foyer)
2:15pm - 3:45pm	CONCURRENT SESSIONS Session 12: Adaptability to Manage Dynamic Disasters: As a Disaster Evolves, Can Your Plan Keep Up? (Mann Lounge)
2:15pm - 4:00pm	Session 13: Empowering Advocates: FEMA Appeals Training for Legal and Community Response (Classroom A)
2:00pm-4:00pm	Equal Justice Works' Office Hours: Explore Disaster Resilience Opportunities EJW Exhibitor Booth (Building T Foyer)
4:00pm	Symposium Adjourns Shuttle Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4:00pm: Shuttle 1 departure from Stetson • 4:30pm: Shuttle 2 departure from Stetson



DETAILED AGENDA

/ Monday, March 17:

5:00 - 6:00pm **Welcome Reception for Equal Justice Works Fellows and Alumni**

📍 Location: Spa Beach Bistro, St. Pete Pier
501 2nd Ave NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Kick off the 2025 Disaster Resilience Symposium at our exclusive Welcome Reception for Equal Justice Works Fellows and Alumni! This gathering is a special opportunity for past and present Fellows to reconnect, share experience, network with EJW staff, and build their networks in disaster law and resilience. Enjoy refreshments, meaningful conversations, and an inspiring jump start to the symposium as we celebrate the impact of our Fellows in disaster-affected communities.

6:00 - 7:30pm **Welcome Meet & Greet for All Disaster Resilience Symposium Guests**

📍 Location: Spa Beach Bistro, St. Pete Pier
501 2nd Ave NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

All Disaster Resilience Symposium attendees are invited to this Welcome Meet & Greet at the scenic Spa Beach Bistro, located at the St. Pete Pier! This informal gathering is the perfect opportunity to network, connect, and unwind with fellow advocates, legal professionals, and disaster response experts before the symposium officially begins. Whether you're a returning attendee or joining us for the first time, this event provides a great space to exchange ideas, meet new colleagues, and build partnerships in a relaxed, waterfront setting. Refreshments will be provided. Don't miss this chance to start the symposium with great conversations and new connections!

/ Tuesday, March 18:

8:30 - 9:25am **Registration**

📍 Location: Building T

Please stop by the registration table to check in. Once registered please visit our Exhibitors and network with other attendees.



Registration (Entry lounge), Networking, and Exhibitors 9am-5pm
(Building T Foyer)

8:30 - 9:25am

Breakfast

📍 Location: Mann Lounge

Start your morning with a complimentary breakfast before diving into a full day of engaging discussions and sessions at the 2025 Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Symposium. This is a great opportunity to fuel up for the day, connect with fellow attendees, and begin building relationships with disaster resilience professionals from across the country.

9:30 - 9:45am

Welcome to the Disaster Resilience Symposium

📍 Location: Great Hall

Join us in the Great Hall for the official Welcome to the 2025 Disaster Resilience Symposium! Hear from our symposium organizers and hosts as they set the stage for two days of collaborative learning, innovative discussions, and action-oriented solutions for disaster resilience. This welcome session will provide an overview of the symposium's goals and themes, ensuring you're ready to make the most of the experience.

Welcome Remarks from:

- Associate Dean Jason Palmer, *Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Law*, Stetson University College of Law
- Verna Williams, *CEO*, Equal Justice Works
- Linda Anderson Stanley, *Senior Director of Programs*, Equal Justice Works

9:45 - 10:00am

Break

📍 Location: Building T Foyer
Visit the exhibitors!

10:00 - 11:00am

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

1. Legal Issues in Disasters 101: Foundations for Effective Response

📍 Location: Classroom A

This session will provide a basic overview of disaster legal services and the disaster legal issues cycle. Attendees will be able to spot

basic legal issues for disaster survivors. This session will also focus on the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with disaster stakeholders.


Speaker:

- **Shirley Peng**, *Disaster Relief Project Managing Attorney*, Legal Aid of Nebraska

Description:

Disaster Survivors can face a myriad of legal issues, both immediately and over the months and years after a disaster. Disaster legal services providers can improve outcomes for disaster survivors, and earlier legal interventions can help do so. Providing case managers, who are the frontline, with training on the disaster legal issues cycle and basic legal issue spotting can help identify disaster-related legal issues earlier, and referring those disaster survivors to legal aid organizations earlier than may occur otherwise. Building relationships between case management organizations and legal aid organizations to better make case referrals can benefit these organizations and disaster survivors, whether in a formal MOU or an informal capacity. Part presentation and part participatory, the presentation will share information on the disaster legal services cycle, disaster legal issues and issue spotting, and building relationships among legal aid organizations and case management organizations.

2. Shaping Resilience: Recent Regulatory Reforms in FEMA's Individual Assistance Program

 **Location:** Classroom D

This session explores recent regulatory reforms to FEMA's Individual Assistance Program, highlighting updates from 2021 and 2024. Attendees will learn how these changes improve accessibility, equity, and efficiency, address systemic barriers, and impact disaster recovery. Ideal for those seeking insights into evolving disaster assistance policies and their practical applications.

Panelists:

- **Jeanne Ortiz-Ortiz**, *Director, Public Interest Center / Adjunct Professor*, St. John's University School of Law
- **Hannah Dyal**, *Guardianships Team Manager and Mental Health Project Director*, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid
- **Stephanie Duke**, *Supervising Attorney/Disaster Resilience Coordinator*, Disability Rights Texas


Description:



The Individual Assistance Program and Policy Guide, commonly referred to as the IAPPG, is the foundation of FEMA's disaster response, providing critical support to individuals and households impacted by major disasters. Recent regulatory reforms in 2021 and 2024 have introduced significant changes to FEMA's programs, to improve accessibility, equity, and efficiency in disaster recovery efforts. This session will provide an overview of these regulatory updates, their implications for disaster survivors, and the broader disaster recovery framework. Panelists will examine how these changes address long-standing challenges, including eligibility criteria, documentation requirements, and support for communities and individuals facing systemic barriers. Attendees will gain insights into the policy shifts driving these reforms and their practical impacts on communities across the United States. The session is for anyone seeking to understand recent changes to programs supporting disaster survivors and how these updates will shape future disaster recovery efforts.

11:00 - 11:10am


Break

 **Location:** Building T Foyer
Visit the exhibitors!

11:10am-12:10pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

3. Understanding the FEMA 50% Rule: Local Government Implementation and Options for Homeowners

 **Location:** Classroom A

This panel will discuss in detail FEMA's 50% rule limiting the cost to rebuild, and how local governments implement this policy through the difficult process of declaring properties "substantially damaged" triggering long-term choices for homeowners.


Panelists:

- **Christine E. Cerniglia**, *Professor of Law, Leroy Highbaugh, Sr. Chair, and Director of Clinical and Experiential Education, Stetson Law*
- **Ernie Abbott**, *Of Counsel, Baker Donelson*
- **Jordan Corbitt**, *Associate, Baker Donelson*
- **Alexander Luca**, *Director of Exemptions and Legal Counsel, Pinellas County Property Appraiser's Office*

Description:

After the recent hurricanes impacting Florida many homeowners are navigating the cost to rebuild, elevate or move. The FEMA 50% rule allows homeowners a certain percentage of cost to rebuild in a flood prone area, which creates additional strain on homeowners, local government and builders to understand how to comply. The panelist include attorneys with direct experience relevant to FEMA policies and a local government attorney from the property appraiser's office entrenched with understanding the policies. The presentation will first explain a background of the NFIP requirements and how FEMA enforces NFIP requirements through local government/ participating communities. Next, the panel will hear about various ways local governments have implemented 'substantial damage' assessments and ideas to improve the systems in the future. The panel will analyze facts of four hypothetical property owners and discuss how each is impacted by the FEMA policy and local government implementation, and what decisions the property owners face going forward. The panelist hope to generate ideas to better prepare communities in the future.

4. Beyond Natural Disasters: Expanding Legal Aid's Role in Crisis Response

 **Location:** Classroom D

This session examines how legal aid organizations adapt disaster response expertise to address legal needs from non-weather-related crises like mass shootings and building collapses. Attendees will learn scalable strategies for effective crisis response, fostering collaborative partnerships, and providing client-centered, trauma-informed legal advocacy to support communities in times of tragedy.

Panelists:

- **Brittanny Perrigue Gomez**, *Disaster Benefits Team Manager, Staff Attorney*, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid
- **Christa Figgins**, *Director of Mission Advancement*, Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc.
- **Jason Susalla**, *Managing Attorney - Disaster Relief*, Team Bay Area Legal Services, Inc.
- **Melissa Waggoner**, *Staff Attorney*, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas

Description:

Legal aid organizations across Texas, Oklahoma, and Florida have long been at the forefront of providing essential legal services to low-



income clients impacted by natural disasters. However, their expertise is increasingly sought after to address the legal needs arising from non-weather-related crises such as mass shootings, building collapses, and industrial accidents. This session will explore how disaster legal aid providers pivot their experience and adapt their response strategies to assist individuals and communities facing these new types of crises. Attendees will learn how legal aid programs can develop scalable models to respond effectively, collaborate with stakeholders, and provide holistic support to clients in the wake of life-altering tragedies.

12:10 - 1:25pm

Lunch & Keynote Remarks

Hurricane Katrina: 20 Years Later - A Legacy of Resilience, Justice, and the Future of Disaster Recovery

 **Location:** Great Hall

Please join us for a complementary lunch featuring keynote speaker Ranie Thompson and special guest appearances by Laura Tuggle and Davida Finger.

Keynote Speaker:

- Ranie Thompson, *Equal Justice Works Katrina Legal Fellow Alumni & Executive Director*, Disability Rights Louisiana

Special Guests:


- Laura Tuggle, *Executive Director*, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
- Davida Finger, *Clinic Professor & Director*, Loyola University New Orleans College of Law

Description:

This keynote panel will reflect on the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, exploring its lasting impact on disaster response, legal advocacy, and community resilience. Panelists will examine how disaster policies, legal frameworks, and community empowerment efforts have evolved since 2005, highlighting lessons learned and ongoing challenges. The discussion will center on the intersection of disaster recovery, equity, and climate justice, while also looking ahead to innovative strategies for building resilient communities in the face of future disasters.

1:25 - 1:35pm

Break

 **Location:** Building T Foyer
Visit the exhibitors!



1:35 - 2:35pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

5. Navigating Tax Challenges in the Wake of Disaster

📍 Location: Classroom A

This panel explores the intersection of tax law and disaster resilience, focusing on how tax professionals, legal advocates, and policymakers can assist disaster survivors in navigating complex tax challenges. This discussion emphasizes equitable advocacy and policy solutions to reduce post-disaster economic burdens.

Panelists:


- **Ted Afield**, Associate Dean for Experiential Education and Director of Clinical Programs; Director, Philip C. Cook Low Income Taxpayer Clinic; Mark and Evelyn Trammell Professor & Clinical Professor of Law, Georgia State University College of Law
- **Bruce McGovern**, Professor of Law and Director, Tax Clinic, South Texas College of Law-Houston
- **Bao Le**, Managing Attorney at Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic, Gulfcoast Legal Services
- **Andrew VanSingel**, ABA Standing Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness

Description:

Disasters often leave survivors grappling with not only the immediate loss of homes and livelihoods but also complex tax challenges that can hinder recovery. This session brings together legal experts from academia, government, and the LITC communities, to discuss critical tax issues faced by disaster survivors and explore practical solutions to alleviate their financial burdens. The panel will examine key topics such as reconstructing lost records, understanding the tax implications of disaster relief payments, and accessing extended filing deadlines. The discussion will emphasize the importance of systemic advocacy and equity in disaster recovery, focusing on underserved populations such as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals and ITIN filers who often face additional barriers to accessing assistance. Panelists will also delve into the collaborative roles of the IRS, FEMA, and state agencies in implementing policies and practices that enhance resilience and provide timely relief to affected communities. Attendees will gain insight into how legal professionals can engage in systemic advocacy, utilize pro bono networks, and leverage state and federal tax mechanisms to support disaster survivors effectively. Our suggested timeline is an hour to an hour and a half. The panel will

involve a mix of perspectives from subject matter experts who literally wrote the book chapter on this topic in a major tax treatise to on-the-ground advocates who have direct experience navigating these issues, particularly in light of recent hurricanes that have impacted Florida.

6. Effectively Engaging Pro Bono Volunteers in Disaster Legal Response

 **Location:** Classroom D

Disaster legal response calls for an “all hands on deck” approach that effectively engages the willingness of attorneys, paralegals and law students to provide pro bono service to those affected. This program explores models for pro bono disaster legal response services.

Panelists:

- Alex Rogers, *Director of Programs*, North Carolina Bar Foundation
- Max Gibbons, *Director of Pro Bono Services*, Pisgah Legal Services
- Brad Piland, *Assistant General Counsel*, NC Department of Public Safety; NCBA Young Lawyers Division Pro Bono Committee

Description:

When natural disasters devastate communities, the legal professionals can be counted on to step up and offer support in the form of pro bono legal service to those affected. The willingness of lawyers, paralegals and law students to help is heartening, but effectively engaging and coordinating pro bono volunteers can present a significant challenge to legal services programs and organizations involved in the disaster legal response effort. To be effective - especially under the pressures presented by disaster response - pro bono programs must have a solid plan for volunteer recruitment, training, and pro bono case management before a disaster hits. This session will include a panel representing some of North Carolina's disaster response organizations, including Pisgah Legal Services, the NC Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and the NC Bar Foundation. Participants will share about pro bono volunteer engagement and support as part of the disaster legal services response to Hurricane Helene in North Carolina. Topics discussed will include volunteer outreach and recruitment, training and mentoring, remote and in-person service opportunities, and volunteer recognition.

2:35 - 2:45pm

Break


 **Location:** Building T Foyer

Visit the exhibitors!

2:45 - 3:45pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

7. Empowering from the Outside In: Transformative and Conscious Approaches for Community-led Advocacy and Mobilization

 **Location:** Classroom A

This interactive presentation seeks to guide individuals and organizations wishing to support communities or community-led initiatives through a conscious, non-extractive, and non-paternalistic approach. Participants will gain access to community-centered models and tools proven to deepen trust and sustain collaboration between communities and external allies, including legal advocates.

Panelists:

- **Adianez Velez-Martínez**, *Advocacy Associate Firms*, Unidos y Resilientes con la Abogacía, Inc. (FURIA)
- **Nayda Bobonis-Cabrera**, *Executive Director*, Firms, Unidos y Resilientes con la Abogacía, Inc. (FURIA)

Description:

FURIA is a nonprofit organization with a mission to foster community resilience through participatory advocacy, offering educational services and support to communities and groups in Puerto Rico that seek to uphold and protect their fundamental and human rights. As an organization founded by community leaders, lawyers and organizers who wished to empower other community leaders amidst the aftermaths of Hurricane Irma and María in 2017, we have collected and developed tools and models that have successfully empowered initiatives for fair recovery. Our organizational model is composed of three intertwined programs: legal services, participatory advocacy and community organizing. Throughout the years, we have learned that the ability to sustain meaningful connections based on mutual learning is key to activate and mobilize communities, especially when it comes to disaster resilience. We have also learned that projects and initiatives with outside-in paternalistic approaches are bound to fail. This is why we will focus our session on how individuals and organizations that work closely with communities can transcend these practices. We will use as a model our “Manual for Community-Based Activation and Support” published by FURIA in 2023.

The presentation will be an interactive one where participants will be provided real-life examples of community-based approaches to disaster recovery initiatives and will be exposed to hypothetical (but



realistic) situations where they are expected to make decisions with a community-based lens.

8. Advocating for Legislative Reform to Increase Financial Preparedness and Recovery in Disasters

📍 Location: Classroom D

Adequate homeowner's and renter's insurance coverage and prompt payouts are essential to households' quicker recovery and in helping reduce the long term effects of disaster losses. Insurance solutions help reduce the burden on the public purse. Few states offer comprehensive legislation insuring homeowner's and renters protections in a disaster.

Panelists:

- **Sherry Peterson**, Maui Wildfire Liason/Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Fellow, United Policyholders

Description:

The workshop will be broken down into these elements:

- Introduction: Identifying how many participants have worked with disaster survivors and insurance claims. Then identifying how many participants know how they would be covered in a disaster
- Based on case studies, identify issues survivors have with insurance claims post disaster
- Identify 5 measures on how those issues can be headed off with state laws that will increase pre-disaster preparedness
- Identify 15 measures on how those issues can be addressed with state laws that will provide adequate coverage facilitating post disaster recovery
- Based on experience, demonstrate how individually we can get insurance legislation advanced.
- Explore with participants ideas for community coalition building and how individually we can create better outcomes for insureds.

3:45 - 4:00pm

Snack Break & Exhibitors

📍 Location: Building T Foyer

Enjoy some refreshments and visit the exhibitors!

4:00 - 5:00pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

9. Moving Beyond the Buzzwords of Whole Community Inclusion in Emergency Management

📍 Location: Classroom A

This session will introduce participants to best practices and models to implement true whole community inclusion that goes beyond the buzzwords. Participants will learn the who (to include), the why (inclusion matters) and the what (tools available) for true whole community emergency management.


Panelists:

- **Bryan Russell**, *Emergency Management Coordinator*, Disability Rights Florida
- **Stephanie Duke**, *Supervising Attorney/Disaster Resilience Coordinator*, Disability Rights Texas
- **Sadie Martinez**, *Access and Functional Needs Program Supervisor*, Colorado Office of Emergency Management

Description:

Over 60 million U.S. adults live with a disability that significantly impairs daily life activities. Additionally, persons with disabilities are also 2 to 4 times more likely to die in a disaster. This interactive presentation and discussion will introduce participants to best practices and models to implement true whole community inclusion that goes beyond the buzzwords. Presentations will focus on legal obligations for including the disability community in planning and response programs; what resources are available to ensure access and inclusion and how to collaborate with disability-focused organizations to ensure access and inclusion.

10. Blue Sky Planning for Efficient and Effective Disaster Response

 **Location:** Classroom D

It is crucial that disaster response service organizations and programs use "blue sky" opportunities to coordinate the who, what, where, when and how's of disaster legal services response BEFORE a disaster hits. This session will explore best practices for "blue sky" disaster legal services planning, drawing on North Carolina experience.

Panelists:

- **Kim Bart Mullikin**, *Senior Director*, North Carolina Bar Foundation
- **Elizabeth "Brooks" Savage**, *ABA District 9 Representative*, NC Disaster Legal Services Coordinator, NC Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
- **Alicia Edwards**, *Director*, Disaster Relief Project, Legal Aid of North Carolina

Description:

When a natural disaster hits, the demand for efficient and effective responsive services -- including legal services -- is immediate and



profound. It is crucial that responsive service organizations and programs use "blue sky" opportunities to coordinate the who, what, where, when and how's of disaster legal services response. Since 2018, through lessons learned in disaster legal services response to Hurricane Florence, North Carolina's legal services entities have met annually to discuss and coordinate disaster legal services planning efforts. These meetings provide space and time to think about North Carolina's needs and challenges, as well as each organization's resources and abilities, when it comes to disaster legal services response. Through CLE programming, panels, workgroups, and shared meals, the "blue sky" planning participants a handful of summertime days each year to the essential task of planning. This session will include a panel representing some of North Carolina's disaster response organizations, including Legal Aid of NC, the NC Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and the NC Bar Foundation. Participants will share about the process of annual "blue sky" planning for disaster legal services in North Carolina, including essential questions and considerations, logistics planning, resource commitment, community education, and more.

5:00 - 6:00pm

Networking Reception

 **Location:** Banyan Courtyard

Continue to grow the connections you've made throughout the day at our networking reception. Get to know other attendees while enjoying some drinks and light bites from our sponsor.

/ Wednesday, March 19:

8:30 - 9:30am

Registration

 **Location:** Building T

8:30 - 9:30am

Networking Breakfast

 **Location:** Banyan Courtyard

Please join us for a complimentary breakfast as we kick off day two of our Symposium with welcoming remarks from Florida VOAD and an opportunity to network with attendees. Mann Lounge in case of rain.

9:30am - 12:30pm

11. Disaster & Poverty Interactive Workshop

 **Location:** Great Hall



Our responses to the intersection of poverty and disaster are only useful when they are accessible to people and meet their real needs. The Disaster & Poverty Interactive Workshop highlights the practical barriers to accessing resources and emergency relief. Participants will navigate challenges of meeting daily needs with low or no income, both before and after a disaster hits. After the workshop, both experienced and newer advocates will have greater insight and be prepared to ask better questions about how to make help genuinely accessible in their community.

Panelists:

- **Tiela Chalmers**, Tiela Chalmers Consulting
formerly Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel, Alameda County Bar Association and Legal Access Alameda

12:30 - 2:00pm

Lunch and Disaster Resilience Discussion

📍 **Location:** Classroom A (Lunch served in Mann Lounge, please pick up food first to be bring into Classroom A)
Join us for a complementary lunch and discussion on building disaster resilient programs.

Panelists:

- **Brittanny Perrigue Gomez**, *Disaster Benefits Team Manager, Staff Attorney, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid*
- **Kathy Gruenwald**, *Senior Disaster Coordinator Attorney, Legal Services of North Florida, Inc.*
- **Whitney Bailey**, *Disaster Response Attorney, AppalReD Legal Aid*
- **Samuel Hitchcock**, *Disaster Relief Project Manager, New Mexico Legal Aid*
- **Kelley Millet**, *Disaster Unit Community Outreach Coordinator, Acadiana Legal Services Corporation*
- **Matthew Flood**, *Disaster Team Staff Attorney, West Tennessee Legal Services*
- **Christa Figgins**, *Director of Mission Advancement, Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc.*


Description:

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Disaster Legal Services (DLS) Mentorship Program fosters a community of learning through peer-to-peer engagement, meaningful partnerships, and skill development. This panel presentation will highlight the collaborative efforts between programs in Texas, New Mexico, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee and Oklahoma to establish a robust DLS program in response to the 2022 LSC Disaster Grant. As mentors, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Legal Services of North Florida, and Legal Aid

Services of Oklahoma have leveraged its extensive experience in disaster legal aid to guide programs in building their capacity to provide comprehensive legal services to disaster survivors. Through this session, we will discuss the strategies and tools used to support mentee programs in their program development, including structured mentorship plans, resource sharing, and customized training. Attendees will gain insights into the essential components of a successful DLS program, including creating partnerships, developing legal resources, and delivering holistic legal services to disaster-affected communities.

2:00 – 2:15pm

Break

 **Location:** Building T Foyer
Visit the exhibitors!

2:15 – 3:45pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

12. Adaptability to Manage Dynamic Disasters: As a Disaster Evolves, can your Plan Keep up?

 **Location:** Mann Lounge


Join us as we expand on the morning's Disaster & Poverty Interactive Workshop and learn about Georgia Team Ready's experience with Hurricane Helene. To improve readiness in a rapidly changing environment, participants work in teams on a hypothetical disaster, discuss their response, and confront new complications, forcing them to adapt and gaining experience they can use in an actual and rapidly changing disaster situation.

Speakers

- **Cari King**, Deputy Director, Pro Bono Unit Partnerships and Collaborations, Georgia Legal Services Program
- **Sarah Anderson**, Deputy Director, Pro Bono Unit Clinics and Compliance, Georgia Legal Services Program
- **Jessica Oglesby**, Young Lawyers Division Director, State Bar of Georgia

2:15 – 4:00pm

13. Empowering Advocates: FEMA Appeals Training for Legal and Community Response

 **Location:** Classroom A

Join us for an interactive community service training session designed to equip attorneys and non-attorneys with the knowledge and skills needed to support disaster survivors through FEMA appeals. Attorneys will receive in-depth training on the FEMA appeals process, preparing them to assist at a FEMA appeals clinic in March—local attorneys will have the opportunity to participate directly, while non-local attendees will gain valuable skills applicable to disaster



legal response nationwide. Non-attorneys will benefit from a refresher on FEMA appeals, with opportunities for discussion and Q&A to deepen their understanding of common challenges and solutions. This session will ensure that all participants are well-prepared to contribute to effective disaster legal response efforts, regardless of their location.

Panelists:

- **John Lawless**, *Staff Attorney, Disaster Relief Team, Bay Area Legal Services*
- **Christine E. Cerniglia**, *Professor of Law, Leroy Highbaugh, Sr. Chair, and Director of Clinical and Experiential Education, Stetson Law*
- **Linda Anderson Stanley**, *Senior Director, Equal Justice Works*
- **Brittanny Perrigue Gomez**, *Disaster Benefits Team Manager, Staff Attorney, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid*
- **Stephanie Duke**, *Supervising Attorney/Disaster Resilience Coordinator, Disability Rights Texas*

2:00 - 4:00pm

Equal Justice Works Office Hours: Explore Disaster Resilience Opportunities

 **Location:** Building T Foyer

Join us during EJW Office Hours at our exhibitor booth for an interactive and informative session about the Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Program! Whether you're curious about disaster law, looking for opportunities to get involved, or interested in supporting our work, we invite you to stop by and connect with our team.

During this dedicated two-hour block—and throughout the symposium—you can:

- *Learn where Disaster Resilience Fellows are currently serving and the impact they are making*
- *Explore opportunities to become a Fellow, host a Fellow, or sponsor a Fellow*
- *Discover law student opportunities to engage in disaster response work*
- *Get details on additional Equal Justice Works Fellowship opportunities*



- *Check out our latest Disaster Resilience Attorney Guidebook and Disaster Legal Needs Assessment*

Don't miss this chance to chat with our team, ask questions, and find out how you can be part of the growing network of legal professionals strengthening communities before, during, and after disasters!

4:00pm

Symposium Adjourns

CLE INFORMATION

The Disaster Resilience Symposium has been approved by the Florida Bar for 13 hours of general CLE credits.

Once attendance is verified, you will receive an email after the conclusion of the Symposium with everything you need to self-report.

Please contact conferences@law.stetson.edu for any CLE related questions.

ACCOMODATION AND TRAVEL

Symposium Location

Stetson University College of Law
1401 61st Street South
Gulfport, FL 33707
[Campus Map](#)

Local Airports

- [Tampa International Airport](#)
- [St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport](#)

Ground Transportation & Shuttle Schedule

Transportation will be provided from the Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront to Stetson College of Law in the morning and back to the hotel in the evening.

Tuesday, March 18

- **Morning:** Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront → Stetson University College of Law (Meet in the Hotel Shuttle Pick up Area)
 - 8:00am: First shuttle departure from Hilton
 - 8:30am: Second shuttle departure from Hilton
- **Evening:** Stetson University College of Law → Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront



- 6:15pm: First shuttle departure from Stetson
- 6:45pm: Second shuttle departure from Stetson

Wednesday, March 19

- **Morning:** Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront → Stetson University College of Law
 - 8:15am: First shuttle departure from Hilton
 - 8:45am: Second shuttle departure from Hilton
- **Evening:** Stetson University College of Law → Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront
 - 4:00pm: First shuttle departure from Stetson
 - 4:30pm: Second shuttle departure from Stetson

Both Uber and Lyft are readily available in the Tampa Bay area. Stetson's campus is a short 15-minute ride from the hotel block. Both airports are approximately a 20-30-minute ride to the hotel block. Ride sharing is encouraged!

Hotel Room Block

Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront

333 1st Street South, St. Petersburg FL

The hotel room block is closed as of March 3, 2025.

LOCAL RESTAURANTS

Gulfport

- Pia's Trattoria
- Gulfport Brewery + Eatery

Downtown St. Petersburg

- Doc Ford's Rum Bar and Grille St. Pete Pier
- Red Mesa Cantina
- BellaBrava
- Craft Kafe Downtown (gluten free)
- Good Intentions (vegan)
- 3 Daughters Brewing

St. Pete Beach

- RumFish Grill
- Crabby Bill's in St. Pete Beach
- Sea Dog Brewing Co.

Other Things to Do/See

- Spend the day one of the many beautiful beaches like St. Pete Beach and Fort. De Soto Park or take a short trip to honeymoon Island State Park or Caladesi Island State Park.



- Visit a museum like the Dali Museum, the Museum Chihuly, The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art or The Florida Holocaust Museum.
- Explore the St. Petersburg Pier.
- Check out some spring training baseball.
- Rent kayaks or go hiking at Weedon Island Preserve.
- Book a tee time at one of the many golf courses.
- Take the official Walking Mural Tour of St. Pete.

Check [here](#) for current events and other happenings in the Tampa Bay area during your trip!

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Adianez Velez-Martínez

Adianez Vélez-Martínez is an Advocacy Associate at Firmes, Unidos y Resilientes con la Abogacía, Inc. (FURIA), a nonprofit organization focused on building community resilience through participatory advocacy and offering educational services and support to communities and groups in Puerto Rico. Her role involves analyzing and promoting public policy related to housing rights, property rights, land planning, and post-disaster recovery, while also providing guidance to communities in their organizational and power building journey. She is pursuing a dual Juris Doctor and Master's in Planning degree with a concentration in Community Economic Development at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. Adianez holds a bachelor's degree in Justice Systems with a minor in Journalism from the University of Sagrado Corazón. She also serves as a spokesperson for the Pro Bono Democracy and Participation at the University of Puerto Rico School of Law, continuing her commitment to community service. With nearly 8 years of professional experience in non-governmental organization, as well as public sector at both the state and federal levels, she has demonstrated strong leadership in community advocacy. Today she aims to promote a culture of mutual care and knowledge in the relations between organizations, communities and the public sector.

Alexander Luca

Alexander Luca works as a Director of Exemptions and Legal Counsel at Pinellas County Property Appraiser, which is a Real Estate company with an estimated 4 employees; and founded in 2013. They are part of the Legal Counsel team within the Legal Department and their management level is Director. Alexander is currently based in Clearwater, United States.

Alex Rogers

Alex Rogers is the Director of Programs for the North Carolina Bar Foundation. In her role, she oversees the Pro Bono and Civic Education programs of the NCBF, including Disaster Legal Services, Wills for Heroes, Lawyers for Literacy, the Entrepreneurs Assistance Program, NC Free Legal Answers, and others. Alex earned her J.D. from Elon University School of Law and her B.A. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Alicia Edwards



Since September 2023, Alicia has served as the Director of the Disaster Relief Project, a statewide project assisting those who have suffered legal issues as a result of a natural disaster. In 2005, Alicia started working in the Winston-Salem office of Legal Aid before moving to the Greensboro office in 2009. Throughout her Legal Aid career, she has handled a variety of different cases, but before joining the Disaster Relief Project, she focused mostly primarily on foreclosure and debt collection defense cases. Alicia grew up in New Jersey and graduated from Boston College and UNC School of Law.

Andrew VanSingel

Andrew is the Territory Manager for the IRS; Stakeholders, Partnerships, Education, and Communication (SPEC) office in Chicago. SPEC is the outreach and education function of IRS' Wage and Investment (W&I) Division. SPEC's strives to help taxpayers in satisfying their tax responsibilities by building and keeping partnerships with key stakeholders who inform, educate, and communicate with our shared customers. SPEC achieves its mission by combining resources and goals with other organizations for better access to lower income and underserved populations in local communities. This approach, known as a "leveraged" approach, places an emphasis on partner involvement and introduces relationship management as a key element in its operations. SPECs partners consist of corporate, faith-based, non-profit, educational, financial, government and military organizations. SPECs community coalition members must work together to help lower income individuals in their own neighborhoods. The coalitions have greater access to taxpayers, higher potential for expanded resources, and own the important intangibles of taxpayers' credibility and trust. SPEC uses a three-pronged approach to serve the W&I taxpayer: Tax Preparation, Tax Education (Outreach), and Financial Education and Asset Building. Previously, Andrew served as the Local Taxpayer Advocate with the Taxpayer Advocate Service in Chicago. He holds a JD from Touro University Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center and a BBA in Finance and Economics from Western Michigan University-Haworth College of Business.

Bao Le

Bao Le is a CPA and attorney and is the managing attorney at the low-income taxpayer clinic of Gulfcoast Legal Services in St. Petersburg, Florida and brings an on-the-ground perspective regarding the impacts of recent hurricanes on a community of low-income taxpayers. Bao holds a law degree from Barry University Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law and a B.S. in accounting from the University of South Florida.

Brad Piland

James Bradford "Brad" Piland is an attorney at North Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS). Prior to joining DPS, Brad was a staff attorney at Legal Aid of North Carolina where he worked with volunteer-based community groups engaged in disaster recovery from Hurricanes Matthew, Florence, Dorian and Fred on matters including non-profit formation, board governance and compliance. Brad has been the Co-Chair of the North Carolina Bar Foundation's Disaster Legal Services since 2019. Brad earned his bachelor's in News Editorial Sequence/Journalism from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his J.D. from Campbell University Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law.

Brittany Perrigue Gomez



Brittanny Perrigue Gomez is the Disaster Benefits Team Manager at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA), the largest legal service provider in Texas and the second-largest in the nation. In her role, Brittanny advocates for low-income individuals affected by natural disasters, focusing on assistance with FEMA and SBA programs. She also provides crucial legal support to help disaster survivors clear title to their homes, enabling access to financial disaster relief. From 2018 to 2020, Brittanny served as an Equal Justice Works Disaster Recovery Legal Corps Fellow, where she honed her skills in disaster recovery law. Before joining TRLA, she worked as an attorney for the U.S. Small Business Administration. In this capacity, she assisted disaster survivors across Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and California in navigating the complexities of disaster recovery and rebuilding their lives. Brittanny is a proud graduate of Texas A&M University in College Station and St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio. Her education and professional experience have fueled her passion for ensuring equitable access to disaster recovery resources for vulnerable communities.

Bruce McGovern

Bruce McGovern is a member of the faculty at South Texas College of Law Houston, where he also serves as Director of the school's Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic. Previously, he served for many years as the school's Vice President and Associate Dean for Academic Administration. He received his undergraduate degree from Columbia University and his law degree from Fordham University School of Law. After law school, he served as a judicial clerk for Judge Thomas Meskill on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York. He then practiced law with the law firm of Covington & Burling in Washington, D.C. He subsequently earned an LL.M. in Taxation from the University of Florida Levin College of Law, where he taught as a visiting faculty member before joining the faculty at South Texas College of Law Houston.

Professor McGovern teaches and writes in the areas of business organizations and taxation. He is a co-author of the treatise *Federal Income Taxation of Individuals* (Thomson Reuters 3d ed. 2024) (with Boris I. Bittker, Martin J. McMahon, Jr., and Lawrence A. Zelenak) and a co-author of the casebook *Agency, Partnerships, and Limited Liability Companies* (Carolina Academic Press 2013) (with Gary S. Rosin and Michael L. Closen). His courses include Federal Income Taxation, U.S. Taxation of International Transactions, and Partnership and Subchapter S Taxation. He frequently speaks on recent developments in federal income taxation. Professor McGovern is a member of the Council of the State Bar of Texas Tax Section, a former Chair of the Houston Bar Association Section of Taxation, and a Fellow of the American College of Tax Counsel.

Bryan Russell

Bryan Russell is the Emergency Management Coordinator with Disability Rights Florida where he works to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are included in emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts across the state. Prior to this role, Bryan was the Program Manager for the Florida Department of Health's Disability and Health Program where he focused on adapting and implementing public health interventions for persons with disabilities. During emergencies and disasters, Bryan serves as the State Access Coordinator with the Florida State Emergency Response Team providing guidance and recommendations to ensure the needs of persons with access and functional needs are met during all phases of disasters.



Cari King

Cari King is the Deputy Director of Pro Bono Unit Partnerships & Collaborations at Georgia Legal Services Program. Cari graduated from the University of Georgia School of Law in 2013. She began her civil legal services career in 2015 at Atlanta Legal Aid as a general practice staff attorney, notably obtaining a student loan bankruptcy discharge that became a published opinion. She became Atlanta Legal Aid's Pro Bono Director in 2020 and came to GLSP in May 2024. In her current role, Cari focuses on developing and maintaining relationships and projects with law firms, corporations, and other groups, including law students. Cari is a central staff person in GLSP's Hurricane Helene work, including through helping to design the Hotline data tracking system, creating training and guidance documents for volunteers about disaster assistance, designing pro bono projects with large groups to answer immediate survivor needs, working directly with clients, and placing cases with volunteer attorneys all over the state.

Christa Figgins

Born and raised in Florida, Christa Figgins received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Florida State University (FSU) and Juris Doctor from the FSU College of Law. A member of the Florida Bar, she began her career as a legal aid lawyer assisting survivors of domestic violence and later served as a law clerk in the 4th judicial circuit of Florida before returning to legal aid. She moved to Oklahoma in 2012, taking a position at Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma (LASO). She became involved in disaster response following the devastating May 20, 2013 EF-5 Moore tornado, serving as the Chair of the Moore Long-Term Recovery Committee and coordinating LASO's involvement in the recovery. Involved in recovery efforts throughout Oklahoma ever since, she has worked with dozens of community-based long-term recovery groups and community partners regarding the provision of free civil legal services to survivors. Very involved in the VOAD movement, she recently began serving her third term as Chair of Oklahoma Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and is currently serving her second term on the National VOAD Board of Directors as a State/Territory Representative. She lives with her husband and two very opinionated Siamese rescue cats in Oklahoma City.

Christine E. Cerniglia

Professor Cerniglia graduated from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law and pursued the civil law curriculum dedicated to the Louisiana Civil Code. She practiced maritime law in New Orleans, Louisiana where most of the firm's cases involved personal injury or wrongful death claims involving Jones Act seamen or longshore harbor workers involved in deep water drilling operations. Her legal career was completely interrupted by Hurricane Katrina when she relocated to the Tampa Bay/St. Petersburg area and became a staff attorney at the Sixth Judicial Circuit. This change in career was during the 2008 mortgage foreclosure crisis at a time when Florida was deeply impacted by an overload in filings. During her time at the Sixth Circuit, she became licensed in Florida and learned many aspects of Florida civil practice. She began her teaching career as a visiting professor at Stetson and then accepted a director position at Atlanta's John Marshall Law School. She returned to New Orleans in 2012 in a newly labeled academic position Director of Skills and Experiential Education at Loyola College of Law to help transform Loyola's skills curriculum where she designed practice tracks which are still part of Loyola's curricular offerings. She joined Stetson College of Law in 2017 in the role of Director of Clinical and Experiential Education to build upon the long history of clinical training at



Florida's first law school. While at Stetson, she created a new course entitled Disaster Law Primer and Externship and Covid-19 and the Impact on the Civil System. Her scholarship is dedicated to disaster law and preparedness, the self-representation crisis and civil Gideon and legal education reform. Professor Cerniglia believes to "bloom where you are planted" and to take each day as an opportunity to connect to people and learn through experience. She holds active licenses in both Florida and Louisiana.

Davida Finger

Davida Finger, Clinic Professor and Law Clinic Director, has taught the Community Justice section of the Law Clinic, Externship course, and the Law & Poverty course. She and her clinic students represent on cases such as: landlord-tenant, post-disaster housing, housing discrimination, and on other civil rights matters. In addition to litigating cases, Professor Finger strives to provide support and collaboration on community advocacy for anti-poverty and justice initiatives. Professor Finger serves as the Rene August and Mary Jane Pastorek Distinguished Clinical Professor of Law. She also serves as Director of the Gillis Long Poverty Law Center. The U.S. State Department has named Professor Finger a Fulbright Specialist, an honor that will allow her to continue to teach at the College of Law while being available as a specialist to Fulbright institutions through 2026.

Professor Finger served as the Co-President, 2018-20, of the Society of American Law Teachers (SALT), a national organization that works to expand the power of law to under-served communities. She has served on the SALT Board of Governors since 2014 and has played a leadership role through SALT on issues related to diversity in legal education. Professor Finger also serves on the Clinical Legal Education Association (CLEA) Board of Directors.

Professor Finger frequently presents on topics related to clinical education and is engaged with the national clinical community through scholarship and service. In 2016, she was awarded the Bellow Scholars fellowship by the Association of American Law Schools Section (AALS) on Clinical Legal Education's Committee on Lawyering in the Public for empirical research designed to improve the quality of justice in communities.

Professor Finger's empirical research on housing justice presented the first comprehensive look at the eviction crisis in New Orleans. In 2020, the Clinical Legal Education Association (CLEA) named Professor Finger co-editor of the Best Practices blog, which grew out of CLEA's best practices committee and serves as an information hub on current reforms in legal education. Professor Finger has been on the planning team for the Southern Clinical Conference for the last decade.

Professor Finger was the founding director of the College of Law's Incubator Program for solo practitioners working for social justice. She also founded the Education Project to represent low-income families on special education matters.

Professor Finger served as the 2011-12 chair of the AALS Poverty Law section. Prior to joining the clinical faculty at Loyola, she practiced law in Seattle.

While in law school, Professor Finger was the founding Editor in Chief of the Seattle Journal for Social Justice and an Associate Editor on the Seattle University Law Review. At graduation, she received the Faculty Scholar Award for excellence in high academic achievement and substantial service to the law school community. In 2007, Seattle University Law School named her an inspiring alum.

Professor Finger's scholarship interests include poverty law, clinical education, community lawyering, access to justice, delivery of legal services, housing, and post-disaster government accountability.



Elizabeth "Brooks" Savage

Elizabeth B. "Brooks" Savage (planner/speaker) is an Assistant General Counsel with the NC Office of State Budget & Management Disaster Recovery in Raleigh. She practices disaster law with an additional focus on public health. Brooks is a member of the Young Lawyers Division, Administrative and Construction Law Sections of the North Carolina Bar Association. A 2019 dual-degree graduate, Brooks earned her J.D. and a Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) from Campbell University School of Law.

Ernie Abbott

Mr. Abbott has more than 20 years of experience with the laws, regulations, policies and procedures relating to eligibility for federal disaster and mitigation assistance, the coordination of federal, state, local, non-profit and private sector responders in catastrophic events, and the elements of the National Flood Insurance Program, including insurance, floodplain mapping and floodplain management. Mr. Abbott assists his clients with issues pertaining to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program, homeland security, the Hazard Mitigation Disaster Grant Program, flood insurance rate maps, public health emergency laws, disallowance and Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits. Mr. Abbott is well versed in the administrative appeals process under FEMA's Public Assistance program, and he regularly represents applicants for public assistance in the arbitration process promulgated by Section 601 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Mr. Abbott is a former general counsel of FEMA. In that role, he managed all FEMA regulatory development and coordinated the legislative program for all FEMA agencies. He led expedited development of regulations to implement the Cerro Grande Fire Assistance Act, which created a new \$500 million FEMA compensation program. Mr. Abbott developed and implemented an integrated litigation and regulatory program to protect the National Flood Insurance Program from punitive damage awards. He also created the FEMA Office of Dispute Resolution in the Office of General Counsel, which received special mention by the Justice Department. He has extensive experience in the regulation of critical infrastructure industries and critical infrastructure projects. Prior to his role at FEMA, Mr. Abbott worked as managing deputy general counsel of a \$3 billion diversified natural gas company, where he led negotiations on a 275 billion cubic-foot international natural gas purchase contract and on the gas processing and liquids transportation aspects of the \$500 million sale of a gas liquids business. He has experience in toxic tort litigation and environmental corporate compliance programs. Mr. Abbott has also worked at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Hannah Dyal

Hannah Dyal is the Guardianship Team Manager and the Mental Health Project Director at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid. Hannah was previously an Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Program Fellow and an Equal Justice Works Disaster Recovery Legal Corps Fellow. Hannah has been responding to disasters since shortly after Hurricane Harvey impacted the Gulf Coast of Texas. Hannah has since worked on several flooding disasters in the Rio Grande Valley as well as the mass shootings in El Paso and Uvalde. Hannah was a Team Member on the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Disaster Legal Services Team from 2019-2020 where she responded to disasters on a national level.

Jason Palmer



Professor Jason Palmer teaches legal research and writing, transactional document drafting, judicial opinion writing, law and sexuality, international litigation and arbitration, and complex litigation. Professor Palmer is the co-author, along with Professor Arturo Carrillo, of the article *Transnational Mass Claims Processes in International Law and Practice*, published in 28 *Berkeley J. Int'l L.* 343 (2010). He is also the author of the book chapter "Remedying Mistakes in Mass Claims without Compounding Errors - Lessons from the Palestinian Late Claims Program" in *Designing Compensation After Upheaval: Insights From the Experience of the United Nations Compensation Commission* (Oxford University Press 2015). He has published self-efficacy in Millennial students with the *Cleveland State Law Review* and on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in *Seton Hall Law Review*. His article, *Emotional Intelligence, and Homophobia* will be published Fall of 2019 by *Wake Forest Law Review*, and his article *A Separation of Powers Analysis of Forum Non-Conveniens' Adequate Available Forum* will be published Summer of 2020 by *St. John's Law Review*. He is currently working on a book on domestic and international mass claims processes to be published by Edward Elgar Publishing and a textbook on International Litigation and Arbitration to be published by Carolina Academic Press.

Jason Susalla

Jason Susalla is the managing attorney of Bay Area Legal Services' Disaster Relief Team, a team focused on community engagement, education, and the delivery of legal services to survivors of natural disasters. Jason joined Bay Area Legal in 2009 as a part-time advocate for the Centralized Telephone Intake Unit while maintaining a full-time job as a dolphin and sea lion trainer. He has been a full-time attorney at the firm since 2013, practicing in numerous areas of law prior to his focus on disaster relief services. Jason began his supervisory role of the Disaster Relief Team in 2018, while it was still a project under the BALS' Volunteer Lawyers Program, and at that time focused on the development of a dynamic panel of volunteer attorneys specializing in assisting disaster survivors. The project achieved formal teamhood in October 2023 and Jason now focuses on numerous initiatives, including legal aid's integration into the regional disaster relief community, innovative partnerships and outreach, long-term recovery efforts, and the operation of the Florida Disaster Legal Aid Helpline, a year-round, statewide hotline for disaster survivors.

Jeanne Ortiz-Ortiz

Jeanne is the Director of the Public Interest Center at St. John's Law, where she oversees a range of programs to support public interest students. She also teaches Disaster Law as an adjunct professor. For several years, she worked at Pro Bono Net, a national nonprofit in New York focused on expanding access to legal aid and pro bono through technology solutions and community partnerships. Jeanne was also behind the creation and growth of Advocates for Disaster Justice, the largest national network of justice advocates and allies working to advance equity, rights, and resilience in communities impacted by disasters. Through this work and her leadership at the American Bar Association's (ABA) National Disaster Legal Services Program, she's led the implementation of disaster legal help programs for over 25 major disasters across the U.S. and reached over 5,000 legal professionals and advocates nationwide through disaster response and recovery trainings. She's been both Chair and Faculty for Practising Law Institute CLE programs. She has presented on pro bono, public interest, and disaster legal services at events hosted by the American Bar Association, the Legal Services Corporation, the Pro Bono



Institute, the Practising Law Institute, and the National Legal Aid & Defender Association. In 2021, she received the notable distinction of being named among the ABA's Top 40 Young Lawyers On the Rise. Jeanne also contributes to various public interest committees and efforts. She is bilingual and holds licenses to practice law in New York, New Jersey, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Jessica Oglesby

Jessica has spent 16 years with the State Bar, including the last 3 years as Director of the Young Lawyers Division (YLD). A graduate of Shorter University with a Bachelor's degree in Human Services, she uses her expertise to support non-profit communities and make a meaningful difference. Jessica is known for her warmth, her love of people, and her ability to never meet a stranger, making her a natural at building strong relationships and leading diverse teams. As part of her role with the YLD, she hosts the Georgia Disaster Hotline and coordinates case placements with YLD members who provide advice to disaster survivors. When she's not serving the YLD, Jessica enjoys life in Atlanta with her husband, Corwin, their three kids, and their smelly but lovable bulldog, Bear. And when her time with the YLD comes to an end, she dreams of opening a karaoke bar with a live band.

John Lawless

John Lawless is a staff attorney with the Disaster Relief Team. Before joining Bay Area Legal Services, he worked in the private sector both as general title counsel and as a practitioner in the fields of real estate, estate planning, probate, business, and nonprofit law. During his time in private practice, John also volunteered with Bay Area Legal Services and Gulfcoast Legal Services. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida, an MBA from Stetson University, and a law degree from Stetson University College of Law.

Jordan Corbitt

Mr. Corbitt has significant experience with the laws, regulations, and procedures relating to eligibility for federal disaster and mitigation assistance. He assists state and local governments and non-profit entities navigate the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance program, including compliance with procurement requirements and filing administrative appeals. Mr. Corbitt has also represented clients in state and federal court in lawsuits involving negligence, breach of contract, DTPA claims, Texas Insurance Code claims, property disputes, fraud and eminent domain.

Kathy Gruenwald

Kathy Gruenwald is the Senior Disaster Coordination Attorney at Legal Services of North Florida, Inc. in Tallahassee, Florida. LSNF provides civil legal aid to the 16 counties in the Florida Panhandle. She is responsible for bridging the knowledge gap between legal and non-legal responders to disasters and directing the statewide Disaster Umbrella Group. Prior to working with LSNF, she was an attorney with Florida Legal Services representing indigent clients in Florida on poverty law issues and directing the statewide training program. She was a co-recipient of the Steven M Goldstein Award for Excellence in 2012 for work challenging the suspension of the Administrative Procedure Act by the governor and in 2016 for work on



Medicaid Waiver HMO's for chronically ill in Florida. She is a graduate of Florida State University College of Law and a member of the Florida and Georgia Bars.

Kelley Millet

Kelley Millet is the Community Outreach Coordinator for Acadiana Legal Service Corporation (ALSC). She leads the Justice Bus Program for outreach, organizing Will Drives (same day estate planning) for seniors and assists staff lawyers with Disaster Legal Presentations to educate the community.

With a diverse background spanning multiple industries, Kelley brings a wealth of experience to her work. She holds a bachelor's degree in general studies - Arts & Humanities with a minor in Architecture from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her career has included roles in quality and safety in the oilfield, where she specialized in internal audits and training for nine years, as well as experience in insurance and asset protection, holding a Life & Health Insurance license in Louisiana, with expertise in Medicare sales.

Additionally, Kelley is an award-winning photographer with 25 years of experience in photography and graphic design, a skill set that enhances her ability to engage communities effectively through visual storytelling and outreach initiatives. Her unique combination of experience in compliance, education, and creative communication makes her a strong advocate for expanding access to legal services in underserved communities.

Kim Bart Mullikin

Kim Bart Mullikin is the Senior Director of the North Carolina Bar Foundation (NCBF), where she oversees Pro Bono Programs, the NCBF Endowment, and Development efforts. The NCBF coordinates pro bono, civic education, and professionalism programming that engaged NC legal professionals in service to their communities across North Carolina. NCBF Pro Bono programs include: Disaster Legal Services, NC Free Legal Answers, Wills for Heroes, the Entrepreneurs Assistance Program, the Patent Pro Bono Program, and the 4ALL-Lawyers on Call annual pro bono call-a-lawyer event. Prior to working with the NCBF, Kim served as the Assistant Dean of Public Interest and Pro Bono and Director of the Externship Program at Duke University School of Law, where she is an alum. Kim worked as an Assistant Professor and Director of the Domestic Violence Law Clinic at the University of Alabama School of Law, and as a teaching fellow in the Federal Legislation Clinic at the Georgetown University Law Center. Kim began her career as an associate with Crowell & Moring LLP in Washington, DC. She received her LLM (in Advocacy) from Georgetown University, her law degree with a graduate certification in Women's Studies from Duke University, her MPA from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship, and her BA in Women's Studies from Syracuse University.

Laura Tuggle

Laura Tuggle is the Executive Director of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS). She has served as the executive director since May 2014 and began her career at SLLS in 1993 as a staff attorney. Previously, Laura managed SLLS' Housing Law Unit, right after Hurricane Katrina from 2005-2010.

Prior to joining SLLS, she served as General Counsel and Director of Client Services as part of a reform administration at the long troubled Housing Authority of New Orleans from August 2010-April 2013. After the agency transitioned back to local control, Laura returned to SLLS.



Over her 25 year career in public interest, she has excelled in many areas, including direct services, systemic work, and policy advocacy. As a result, Laura increased access to housing for special populations, including the homeless, people living with disabilities, and disaster survivors. Additionally, her efforts in impact litigation resulted in significant legal victories for low-income tenants, including millions of dollars in federal relocation assistance and establishing a private right of action for voucher assisted tenants to challenge utility allowances.

Laura is an author of the Federally Subsidized Housing Program portion of the Louisiana Legal Services Desk Manual, as well as a coauthor of the housing portion of the Brookings Institute New Orleans Index at 5.

She has received national, state, and local awards for her work in the interest of housing justice. Laura graduated from LSU in 1984, receiving her Juris Doctorate degree from Tulane Law School in 1987.

She currently serves on the Board of the New Orleans Family Justice Center, Shared Housing, and as Co-Chair of the Legal Services Corporation's National Disaster Task Force Relationship-Building and Integration of Legal Services into the Nation's Emergency Management Infrastructure Committee. Laura is a member of the Louisiana Access to Justice Commission's Building Bridges Committee, currently serves on the Louisiana State Bar Association Access to Justice Committee, and serves on numerous task forces seeking to improve civil legal services and housing opportunities for vulnerable people.

Linda Anderson Stanley

Linda is the Senior Director of Programs at Equal Justice Works, where she leads strategic initiatives and high-impact cohort fellowship programs, including the Disaster Resilience Program. A recognized leader in disaster law, Linda has developed and implemented pioneering legal programs that support communities recovering from crises.

Her experience spans disaster response, legal aid, and policy advocacy, with a strong focus on trauma-informed lawyering. Before joining Equal Justice Works, she served as a Staff Attorney at Bay Area Legal Services, assisting individuals in disaster recovery, housing law, and consumer protection. She has also played a key role in national disaster response efforts as Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness and former Director of the ABA Young Lawyers Division Disaster Legal Services program.

In addition to her leadership in disaster law, Linda teaches the Disaster Law Primer at Stetson University College of Law and has received multiple national awards for her contributions to public service. She holds a J.D. from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law and is licensed to practice in Florida and Illinois.

Matthew Flood

Matthew Flood is a Staff Attorney in the Disaster Team at West Tennessee Legal Services. Matthew and his team work to engage community partners, provide information to community members, and address disaster victim's legal needs. He also serves as the Vice Chair for the West Tennessee Regional VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), and a Team Member for the American Bar Association's (ABA) Disaster Legal Services Program. Matthew graduated with a B.A. in History from Western Kentucky University and received his JD from William H. Bowen School of Law in Little Rock, Arkansas. While attending law school, Matthew



re-founded the Finch Society, an organization which encourages attorneys to enter rural practice and raises awareness of rural issues.

Max Gibbons

Max Gibbons is the Pro Bono Services Program Director at Pisgah Legal Services in Western North Carolina. He is the attorney on the team that manages matters handled by volunteer lawyers through Pisgah Legal Service's Mountain Area Volunteer Lawyer (MAVL) and Emeritus Attorneys Giving Legal Expertise (EAGLE) programs. He was previously a Pisgah Legal volunteer attorney and prior to that was a partner in a plaintiffs-side litigation firm in Chicago. He has a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley and a J.D. from UCLA School of Law.

Melissa Waggoner

Melissa Waggoner is a Staff Attorney in the Disaster Legal Services Unit at Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas (LANWT). She also serves as the practice team leader for the Disaster Response Practice Team at LANWT. She has been with LANWT since January 2023. Waggoner graduated from Texas Tech University School of Law in May 2021 and was admitted to the Texas Bar in October 2021. In law school, Waggoner was member and Articles Editor of the Texas Tech Law Review. Prior to coming to LANWT, Waggoner worked as a landman and as an insurance defense attorney. Waggoner also has a bachelor's of science degree in Animal Science from Lubbock Christian University and a master's of science degree in Agricultural Communications from Texas Tech University. At LANWT, Waggoner's practice focuses on disaster response and preparedness, estate planning, estate and probate issues, consumer debt, and bankruptcy.

Nayda Bobonis-Cabrera

Nayda Bobonis Cabrera (San Juan, P.R., June 19, 1991) is a lawyer and community leader raised in Buena Vista Hato Rey. She holds a Bachelor's in Journalism and a Law degree (Magna Cum Laude) from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras. Her commitment to community service began as a teenager with Líderes Jóvenes en Acción (LIJAC), part of the Grupo de las Ocho Comunidades al Caño Martín Peña (G-8). After an internship with the Caño Martín Peña Linkage Project Corporation, and as a Buena Vista Hato Rey resident, she was elected to her community's board, becoming its president in 2013 at age 23—the youngest G-8 president. During this time, she launched community initiatives, represented her community in national forums, and collaborated with G-8 leadership. Since 2019, she has worked with FURIA Inc., supporting Puerto Rican community leaders in participatory advocacy. FURIA focuses on community well-being and security, addressing issues like post-disaster recovery, fundamental rights, environmental and climate justice, housing rights, and social welfare. Initially FURIA's Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, she became Executive Director in March 2023. She leads the team in community organizing, legal services, and advocacy strategy development, supporting community initiatives and overseeing relevant public policy implementation. She also collaborates with organizations like the Young Lawyers Commission of the Bar Association of Puerto Rico, Mentas Puertorriqueñas en Acción, and is the mentor for the UPR Law School's Pro Bono of Citizen Participation and Democracy, advocating for justice and working directly with communities across the country.

Ranie Thompson



Ranie Thompson serves as the Executive Director of Disability Rights Louisiana.

Ranie is a 1993 graduate of Jackson State University (B.A. Political Science). She holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Iowa College of Law (1996) and a Master of Business Administration from Southeastern Louisiana University (2023). She's a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and serves in various capacities working with community groups and bar associations.

Since 2015, Ranie had served as the Director of Legal Services at CrescentCare Health, a federally qualified health center in New Orleans. In this role, she supervised a team of attorneys who use the law to holistically address the social determinants of health of persons living with HIV throughout the state of Louisiana. In 2021, she was an honoree and nominated as one of City Business of New Orleans' 2021 Women of the Year for her work and service to the community. In 2023, her work at CrescentCare was highlighted by the National Center for Medical Legal Partnerships.

Prior to joining CrescentCare, Ranie returned home in 2006 to work alongside her community recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. She worked as an Equal Justice Works Katrina Legal Fellow at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services until 2015. While there, she championed the rights of Louisianians to recover from disasters with dignity and fight against systemic inequities to protect the assets of Louisianians. This included foreclosure defense, challenging FEMA recoupment claims, and protecting the income of her clients by teaching them about money management, credit repair and consumer debt defense.

Ranie served as a member of the American Bar Association's Special Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness, and has trained attorneys, law students, and advocates for social justice—both locally and around the country—on disaster related issues, foreclosure defense litigation, mortgage and foreclosure rescue fraud and scams, diversity and inclusion in the profession, and various general financial awareness topics. She has also served as a trainer and panelist with various groups, including the LSBA Access to Justice Committee, the Shriver Center National Center of Poverty Law, and the American Bar Association, on various subjects.

Sadie Martinez

Sadie Martinez is the Colorado State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's Access and Functional Needs Program Supervisor. She supports state agencies and local jurisdictions in the development of inclusive, whole community emergency-operations plans that adequately account for people with Access and Functional Needs. She provides emergency-preparedness workshops and serves as the Access and Functional Needs subject matter expert during state-level planning initiatives. Sadie uses the CMIST resource framework, which provides a whole-community inclusion approach to identify the actual resource needs of the community in Communication, Maintaining Health, Independence, Support Services and Safety, and Transportation resources, rather than a specific "special need" or vulnerability. This helps responders and agencies better understand what capabilities to acquire before, during, and after a disaster by approaching Access and Functional Needs from a resource perspective. This helps create a shared language that reaches across language, disability, under-resourced, under-served barriers, and emergency management.

Samuel Hitchcock

Samuel Hitchcock is the Disaster Relief Project Manager at New Mexico Legal Aid in Taos, NM, a position he has held since November 2023. In this role, he manages the day-to-day operations



of a comprehensive Disaster Legal Services Program, overseeing civil legal services, community outreach, and partnerships with local organizations. NMLA's disaster legal services program works with wildfire, and flood impacted communities across the entire state of New Mexico. He brings extensive experience from his previous roles where he managed HUD CDBG-DR programs for housing, agriculture, and economic development across various states, including recovery efforts in Puerto Rico, Florida, and California.

Sarah Anderson

Sarah Anderson is the Pro Bono Unit Deputy Director, Clinics & Compliance with Georgia Legal Services Program. Ms. Anderson is responsible for developing new clinic models and ensuring consistency of implementation across GLSP's multiple, regional offices. She is also responsible for ensuring compliance across the Pro Bono Unit with Lega Services Corporation regulations and other relevant laws and regulations. She is the lead attorney for the GLSP Record Restriction Signature Project. In that role, Ms. Anderson coordinates record restriction clinics around the state, focusing on rural areas with legal deserts. She also works closely with clients who contact the Georgia Disaster Hotline to identify legal matters and prepare their cases for placement with a volunteer. Prior to coming to GLSP, Ms. Anderson was a staff attorney with Maryland Legal Aid. There she was a litigator, focusing on public benefits, housing, and expungement work. Ms. Anderson graduated from the University of Detroit with a degree in criminal justice and earned her law degree from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Auburn Hills, Michigan. She lives in Savannah with her husband, Scott, and their five dogs.

Sherry Peterson

Sherry Peterson, a Harvard Law School graduate, is a retired Administrative Law Judge. She lives on Maui, where she volunteered immediately after the Maui wildfires providing guidance through the FEMA appeal process, helping survivors understand their insurance policies, and providing case management services. Sherry joined United Policyholders as an Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Fellow for the Maui Wildfire Recovery. She is part of the Maui Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) serving on the Construction and Advocacy Committees. She is the chair of the legislative committee in the LTRG. She is a participating member of Hawaii VOAD. Working with United Policyholders, Sherry researched legislation in states prone to wildfire and other disasters. As a result, she authored disaster recovery and preparedness legislative proposals for homeowners and renters for Hawaii's 2025 legislative session. Working with Hawaii Representatives and Senators, will be among the bills considered in 2025. Prior to joining United Policyholders, Sherry helped Maui wildfire survivors as a Disaster Case Manager Program Supervisor for Catholic Charities and provided FEMA process and appeal workshops for Disaster Case Management programs on Maui.

Shirley Peng

Shirley Peng has been at Legal Aid of Nebraska since December 2009. She is the Debt and Finance Unit Director, Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) director and manages the state-wide Disaster Relief Project. She also mentors other Legal Aid organizations' disaster relief projects across the country. Shirley graduated in 2006 from UCLA with a BA in Psychology. In 2009, she obtained her JD from Chapman Law School. She can be reached at speng@legalaidofnebraska.org.



Stephanie Duke

Stephanie Duke is the Supervising attorney of the Disaster Resilience and Outreach team at Disability Rights Texas (DRTx). DRTx is the Protection & Advocacy agency for Texas which operates to ensure Texans' with disabilities rights are upheld by affording equitable opportunities across all societal domains. Ms. Duke focuses on mitigating barriers that disaster survivors with disabilities face in response and recovery programs, services and activities by affording access to justice and remedying discriminatory practices. Ms. Duke works to build resiliency for the disability community by advocating for inclusive planning processes with local and state entities and educates the community about individual preparedness and resources to promote independence and autonomy during any event. Ms. Duke also addresses systemic legal barriers in federal and state disaster and emergency programs to ensure meaningful access to all disaster survivors via legal advocacy and policy reform. Ms. Duke is an Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Fellow alumni; committee member of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Response, Chair of the Board of Directors for Texas Volunteer Organization Active in Disasters; Chair of the State Bar of Texas, Disaster Law Task Force and is an appointed member to the Governor's Task force on Disaster Issues Effecting Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities.

Ted Afield

W. Edward "Ted" Afield serves as the Associate Dean for Experiential Education, Director of Clinical Programs, and the Mark and Evelyn Trammell Clinical Professor at Georgia State University College of Law. In these roles, he oversees the program of experiential learning at the College of Law and specifically directs the Philip C. Cook Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic, one of the College's seven legal clinics and one of the largest and most active low-income taxpayer clinics in the nation. Afield joined the Georgia State faculty after serving as an associate professor of law and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Ave Maria School of Law. Before his academic career, he practiced law in his hometown of Tampa, Florida, with the firms Fowler White Boggs Banker PA (now Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC) and Barnett, Bolt, Kirkwood, Long & McBride (now Gunster). He also clerked for Judge Charles R. Wilson on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit. Afield is a member of the American College of Tax Counsel and served a three-year term on the IRS Advisory Council from 2020-2022. He is also a past-chair of the Teaching Methods Section of the Association of American Law Schools. Afield holds a J.D. from Columbia Law School, where he was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar and an articles editor on the Columbia Business Law Review. He earned an LL.M. in Taxation from the University of Florida Levin College of Law and an A.B. in History, cum laude, from Harvard College.

Tiela Chalmers

Tiela Chalmers is the former Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel of the Alameda County Bar Association and Legal Access Alameda. She has been a leader in the fields of free legal services for low income communities for 20 years. After working for years in a downtown law firm, she moved to the Bar Association of San Francisco's Volunteer Legal Services Program, where she worked for 15 years, ultimately as its Executive Director. In 2011, Tiela left VLSP and became a consultant, working with legal aid programs, law firms, other non-profits, and national organizations focusing on legal services for low-income communities. In 2014, she was named as the Chief Executive Officer of the ACBA and VLSC, where she is working on several projects, including building a Legal Incubator to address the needs of modest means clients.



Tiela has been presenting the Poverty Workshop to law firms, schools, social workers, medical professionals and government offices for 12 years, and is particularly passionate about working with those groups to increase awareness of poverty issues, and facilitate discussions about ways that individuals and organizations can make changes in how they respond to poverty.

Verna Williams

Verna L. Williams (she/her) is the CEO of Equal Justice Works. In her role as CEO, Verna will continue to advance the mission of Equal Justice Works to create opportunities for leaders to transform their passion for equal justice into a lifelong commitment to public service.

Verna brings with her an extensive background of experience teaching and practicing law, as well as researching civil and women's rights. Verna previously served as the dean of the University of Cincinnati College of Law, where she was a professor prior to becoming dean, and taught courses on family law, gender discrimination, and constitutional law. Additionally, she founded and co-directed the Judge Nathaniel Jones Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice at the University of Cincinnati.

Before her work at the University of Cincinnati, Verna was the Vice President and Director of Educational Opportunities at the National Women's Law Center, where she focused on gender equity in education. In this role, she was the lead counsel and successfully argued before the United States Supreme Court *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, which established that educational institutions have a duty to respond to and address complaints of student-to-student sexual harassment.

Verna clerked for the Honorable David S. Nelson, U.S. District Judge for the District of Massachusetts. After the clerkship, she practiced law at Sidley Austin LLP and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Verna also has a background in research, which examines the intersection of race, gender, and class in law and policy. She has authored and co-authored many articles and essays on her area of expertise.

Among her other achievements, Verna has presented papers at the Latina/o Critical Race Theory Conference and meetings of the Association of Law, Culture, and the Humanities. She also served as a consultant for the Ford Foundation, where she chaired the convening of a national conference at UC entitled *Women Coming Together: Claiming the Law for Social Change*.

Verna received the Goldman Prize for Excellence in Teaching in 2004 and 2011. She was recently honored by the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati, the Black Lawyers Association of Cincinnati, and the Cincinnati Bar Association, which presented her with the Themis Award for exemplary service to the law and the community.

Verna is a *cum laude* graduate of Harvard Law School and Georgetown University.

Whitney Bailey

Whitney Bailey is the Disaster Resource Attorney at AppalReD Legal Aid's Prestonsburg office. Whitney provides legal services to residents of eastern Kentucky counties directly impacted by the July 2022 flooding with a focus on direct representation in FEMA, Small Business Administration, and NFIP matters. She also works to connect flood survivors with local Long Term Recovery Groups and other community organizations that are able to assist with unmet needs and ongoing recovery efforts. Prior to joining AppalReD, Whitney managed a solo civil law firm for two years in Lexington, Kentucky and focused her practice on Guardianship, Elder



Law and Estate Planning, Family Law, and Real Estate. Whitney is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and Robert H. McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis, Indiana. Whitney is serving as a Disaster Resource Attorney to meet the urgent and immediate needs of clients who were impacted from the devastating flooding.

About the Symposium Hosts

Equal Justice Works

[Equal Justice Works](#) is the nation's largest facilitator of opportunities in public interest law. We bring together an extensive network of law students, lawyers, legal services organizations, and supporters to promote a lifelong commitment to public service and equal justice. Following their Fellowships, more than 85% of our Fellows remain in public service positions, continuing to pursue equal justice for underserved communities across the country.

In 2020, Equal Justice Works launched its [Disaster Resilience Program](#). This program mobilizes public interest lawyers to serve in disaster-prone areas to ensure vital legal services are accessible, comprehensive, and responsive to the unique legal needs of individuals, families, and communities.

American Bar Association Standing Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness

The [ABA Standing Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness](#) strives to educate lawyers, bar associations, and the justice system to help them prepare for and respond to disasters; provide resources to assist lawyers and the public recover from disasters; and, ensure the rule of law in times of disaster.

Stetson University College of Law

[Stetson University College of Law](#) is an active part of the Tampa Bay metro area, with its main law campus in Gulfport/St. Petersburg and a satellite center in Tampa. The law school is a part of Stetson University, with a College of Arts and Sciences, School of Business Administration, and School of Music in DeLand.

About the Sponsors

[4Girls Foundation, Inc.](#) invests in initiatives that give voice to girls and women by providing individuals with opportunities to enrich their lives and supporting organizations committed to strengthening the lives of girls, women, families, and communities. They envision a world where all girls and women are respected, valued, and given the opportunity to reach their full potential - for themselves, their families, and their communities. This is accomplished through their guiding values which are equality, diversity, respect, and community.

[DLA Piper](#) is a forward-thinking and innovative company with a bold and dynamic culture. They think big and act decisively with beliefs that organizations can find the answers to today's most



difficult questions as great businesses CAN help make a better world. That's why, every day, DLA Piper works to help them succeed.

[Verizon](#) is on a mission to help solve some of the biggest challenges the world faces today by leveraging its technology, innovation and people. They help schools and small businesses access the essential technology they need to compete in today's digital world. They're working to open doors for diverse communities through digital-skills training, grant opportunities and more. To protect our planet for future generations, Verizon is investing in renewable energy and improving the efficiency of its networks.