

Document: Founding Document of SRLN (SRLN 2005)



Self Represented Litigation Network - Memorandum of Understanding (November 2005)

I. Establishment and Name of Network

The signatories of this MOU agree to establish an informal network to be known as the Self Represented Litigation Network. The signatories represent organizations engaged in access to justice activities, with an interest in strengthening the coordination of these activities.

II. General Purposes of Network

1. The purposes of the Network will be as follows:

To provide a communication network on innovations in serving self represented litigants;

To provide a clearinghouse of information and ideas for serving self-represented litigants ;

To cooperatively promote the national agenda on self represented litigation, as outlined in the Conference of Chief Justices/Conference of State Court Administrators Joint Resolution and elaborated in the Report of the Summit on Self Represented Litigation;

To seek and advance opportunities with and for individual members and formal (“Working Groups” --see VI below) and informal groups of members for projects in support of the Agenda; and,

Where appropriate, provide a voice on issues concerning self-represented litigants.

III. Participants in Network

1. The Network as a whole will be inclusive and its activities will be broadly open to organizations that are engaged in access to justice and innovations in serving self-represented litigants. The goal of the Network is to maximize participation by groups and interested individuals who share these goals.

2. Decision making will be as described below.

IV. The Workings of the Network

1. The Network will not be a new organization, but is a cooperative that will work closely with and through existing organizations, and be “hosted” by an existing organization, as described below.

2. The Network will provide an opportunity for collaboration and coordination vis a vis activities of individual members or groups of members, who may form project and interest area groupings, as described below. Members and groups are under no obligation to consult prior to initiating activities within their own organization, or in cooperation with other members outside the structure of the

Network.

V. Management Group

1. The Network will be managed by a Management Group whose initial members will be those members of the current Working Group that are making significant financial, staffing or other contributions to the operation of the network and its activities, and may include liaisons to other organizations as appropriate. This initial Management Group will be augmented as appropriate by invitation of those making future such contributions or playing such roles. The Management Group will consult as appropriate with the all participants in the Network, and beyond, particularly on matters of general direction.
2. The Management Group will control the coordination budget, subject to the proviso that the use of each member's contributions are subject to the general approval of that member.
3. The Management Group may take public positions on issues on behalf of the Network, making clear, where needed, that these are not necessarily the views of the individual members or of the hosting organization.
4. The Management Group will manage the relationship with the hosting organization and be responsible for coordination with the hosting organization.
5. Meetings of the Management Group will occur by phone on a regular basis, and in person as needed, usually in association with meetings of other organizations. Decisions may be made by e-mail.

VI. Working Groups

1. Ad hoc Working Groups of representatives of Network member organizations will be assembled to pursue issues and topics from time to time.
2. Working Groups may invite people from other organizations to join those Working Groups. Working Groups need not obtain specific formal approval for their activities as long as they fall within general guidelines.
3. Working Groups may speak on behalf of their own Working Group, without the authorization of the Management Group. With the permission of the

Management Group, Working Groups may speak on behalf of the Network as a whole. In both situations, Working Groups must make clear, where needed, that positions are not necessarily the views of the individual members or of the hosting organization

4. With the general agreement of the Management Group, Working Groups may raise resources for their activities, and those resources may be managed through the hosting services described below.

5. Initial Working Groups will include activities of the Website, Unbundling, Self Help Office, Ethics and Regulations, and Triage and Intake groups, whose members are currently based on the prior informal Pro Se Collaborative. Membership of these Working Groups will be expanded. Additional Working Groups may be formed to advance the items on the Action Agenda.

VII. Budget and Contributions

1. The initial coordination budget and support resources will be contributed by Management Group members.

2. This budget will initially support communication, networking and advocacy within the court community.

3. The Management Group may decide to raise resources from members and/or non-members for: general communication, networking and advocacy, for particular projects and/or for a general projects pool. Such fundraising activities will be conducted with sensitivity to the fundraising needs of the individual members and the host organization. Access to the Network shall not be limited by reasons of the inability of any member to contribute funds.

VIII. Role of Host Organization

1. The National Center for State Courts will be the host organization.

2. The host organization will hold and act as fiscal agent for member contributions to support the core communication, networking and advocacy and will not charge for this fiscal agent/holding role, unless required by law.

3. The host organization will be available to hold and act as fiscal agent resources contributed to support other Network activities, subgroup activities, and joint member activities in support of the Network Agenda, and will not charge for this fiscal agent/holding role, unless required by law.
4. Where appropriate, and subject to agreement with the Management Group, the host organization will provide organizational support including maintenance of membership list including current contact information, maintenance of minutes of meetings, making logistics arrangements for meetings, and providing a staff member or consultant to support coordination of Network activities.
5. With the agreement of the Management Group, the host organization may solicit funds from other members or from outside sources to support coordination and other Network and subgroup activities

Participant Organizations under 2005 Originating MOU

American Association of Law Libraries

American Judges Association

American Judicature Society

California Administrative Office of the Courts

Conference of State Court Administrators

Conference of Chief Justices

Harvard Law School Bellow-Sacks Project on the Future of Access to Civil Legal Services

Law School Consortium Project

Legal Services Corporation

Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts

National Center for State Courts

National Association for Court Management

National Association of IOLTA Programs

National Association of Women Judges

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Pro Bono Net

State Justice Institute (resigned when they became a direct funder)

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