

SRLN Brief: Advocacy Strategies & Relationship Building to Improve SRL Services (SRLN 2021)



The [Justice for All Initiative](#) envisions a future in which civil justice is administered through a continuum of services, from self-help materials to alternative dispute resolution to limited-scope or full legal representation. In this continuum, individual litigants receive precisely the help they need—no more and no less, and lawyers work “at the top of their licenses,” able to trim overhead to increase profit. This continuum is part of a framework that brings together traditional and non-traditional stakeholders to increase access to justice, and includes government, non-profit, and for-profit providers. The framework also offers a component architecture to assess interventions, set targets, and measure progress.

Advocacy to improve services all along the continuum is essential to building support and making change. This Brief offers *non-litigation strategies* for lawyers pursuing systemic reform.

Legislative Advocacy

According to communications research, the civil justice crisis and the range of options available is poorly understood by both the public and decision makers. Therefore any legislative efforts must include an educational component that develops understanding and awareness, as well as assuring legislatures that their investments will not be for naught. In conjunction with an education campaign, those interested in legislative advocacy can build a strategic approach to legislative changes (law reform) and strengthening existing and opening new funding streams.

Education

- For example: LSC Forums on the Hill, such as the February 2021 [COVID Forum](#)

Law Reform

- For example: Collateral Consequences Resource Center's [Annual Report on legislative reforms](#)

Funding Streams

- For example: [The Justice in Government Project](#)

Court Engagement

Court engagement can take on many forms, including joining committees, undertaking joint projects, and developing relationships.

- Examples and strategies are explored in the November 2020 webinar *Engaging Courts to Improve Outcomes for Self-Represented Litigants and Clients* presented by SRLN and Justice in Aging. You can [download the slides here](#), [read the Tip Sheet here](#), and [view the recording here](#). This suite of resources also discusses case specific advocacy, simplification, motion practice, and **concrete steps for relationship building** that can create systemic change.

Media Engagement

Getting the story out about civil access to justice needs and solutions is one of the most pressing tasks facing our sector. The media is an essential partner in our fight for justice. They can tell the stories of the people impacted by the broken and unfair system, and they can showcase the thoughtful and effective strategies in place in communities throughout our country. The webinar mentioned in the court engagement section [Engaging Courts to Improve Outcomes for Self-Represented Litigants and Clients](#) includes a section with ideas for engaging the media, especially for those who are media shy.

- Resources for communications and media engagement: [Voices for Civil Justice](#)

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