

Date: December 14, 2022
To: AILA DC Leaders & Members
From: Miriam B. Riedmiller, Liaison, DC Bar for AILA-DC (2022-23)
RE: Consolidated Report, 2022 DC Bar Leadership Meetings, September, October, November 2022
(Service, Learning & Growth)

Happy holidays, see you at the AILA DC Party on December 15th in Arlington. Last Thanksgiving, our gratitude list certainly includes AILA-DC for 2022 events, especially the celebratory Fall conference that pulled us together again in person after the COVID-19 shutdown. We are also grateful to the DC Bar, for its partnership with AILA DC at the DC Voluntary Bar Leadership Group. Yours truly is grateful to serve as your Liaison in the leadership meetings, thanks to the appointment by the leadership headed by Kellie Lego (Chair) and Ofelia Calderon (Chair-Elect).



October 19, 2022, DC Voluntary Bar Leadership Meeting -
L-R Rachna Hari Krishnan (DC Bar Liaison), DC Bar President Ellen Jakovic (Kirkland and Ellis LLP),
Miriam B. Riedmiller, AILA-DC Liaison for DC Bar (Riedmiller Law Firm) and Jason Z. Qu,
Managing Attorney, Nonprofit & Small Business Legal Assistance

CONSOLIDATED SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER & NOVEMBER REPORTS

This year-end consolidated report covers meetings held last September, October (in-person) and November (via Zoom). There will be no December meeting. The group will re-convene in January 2023, in time for your new ideas and suggestions!

LESSONS IN 2022, VOLUNTEER SERVICE AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2023

As we look to 2023, we have the twin celebrations to reflect upon for inspiration: the 75th anniversary of AILA National, and the 50th milestone of the DC Bar. At the mentioned 2022 Voluntary Bar Leadership (VBLG) meetings, I reported on common interests of both DC Bar, AILA DC (and AILA) in the areas of diversity, volunteerism, leadership training, etc.

OVERVIEW OF DC BAR'S PARTNERSHIP WITH AILA-DC AND VOLUNTARY BARS

As a follow-up to my September Report of the Kick-off, this consolidated report highlights the potentials of AILA DC's relationships with other bars.

By way of background, AILA-DC's partnership with the DC Bar presents opportunities for: 1.) service to the legal community beyond our practice areas, 2.) learning and education in other fields 3.) personal and career growth as evident from the topics discussed below.

The DC Bar is the largest unified bar in the United States. It opens many doors for our members within the Bar, and with D.C. Bar partners such as local organizations, the [D.C. Courts](#), [D.C. Bar Foundation](#), legal services providers, voluntary bars, and law schools.

The Voluntary Bar Leadership Group ("VBLG") consists of the leaders of those groups.

The VBLG provides a forum for the D.C. Bar, local voluntary bars, and law school student liaisons, to network and share information. The Bar encourages the formation and activities of volunteer bar associations. (<https://www.dcbar.org/for-lawyers/external-resources/voluntary-bars>).

At the kick-off, I mentioned AILA-DC's CLE conferences, fund-raisers and other endeavors. I hope that we at AILA DC will be able to draw support from others and also take on suitable projects in collaboration with the Voluntary Bars and with DC Bar.

What to expect from membership in the Voluntary Bar Association or DC Bar community?

DC Bar President Ellen Jakovic said: "These organizations offer opportunities for substantive legal training, leadership development and professional advancement. They support access to justice initiatives, and pro bono work. They encourage conversations around timely, critical topics. They enrich our legal community by giving voice to the amazing diversity within our DC Bar membership. And bring different generations to mentor and be mentored. They allow us to volunteer and make a difference in our community."

She reiterated that the DC Bar has some 114,000 members, most of whom consider DC as a secondary Bar. The members are represented by some 80 countries. These numbers how not only diversity, but also DC's global reach which is very compatible and sympathetic to the nature of AILA/AILA-DC. Accordingly, AILA-DC's participation at the Voluntary Bars is very relevant if not necessary

SEPTEMBER KICK-OFF HIGHLIGHT: DC JUDICIAL FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY (Wednesday, September 21, 2022)

The September VBLG kick-off highlight is the mission of diversity, articulated by guest speakers, Chief Judge Anna Blackburn-Rigsby and Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring who extended invitations to apply for judicial appointments. They said that the DC Courts have the highest diversity of judges in the country, and they encourage other jurisdictions to follow suit. Contact information for



Judicial applications were provided in the September Report. (Chief Judge Anna Blackburn-Rigsby and Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring welcome attendees at the Kick-off. photo by Rachna Harikrishnan)

HIGHLIGHTS OF OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2022 MEETINGS –RESOURCES FOR LAWYERS AND CLIENTS RELEVANT TO IMMIGRATION AND NEW FIELDS OF INTEREST

The VBLG October and November meetings discussed resources for lawyers and clients through the Pro Bono Center. The Center provides opportunities for lawyers to do volunteer work that will lead to learning experiences outside of the immigration field and complimentary to immigration practice. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

OCTOBER 19, 2022, MEETING –RESOURCES FOR NONPROFIT/SMALL BUSINESSES

The [D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center](https://www.dcbbar.org/pro-bono) staff discussed ways for voluntary bars to collaborate, partner, and volunteer with the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center. According to their website (<https://www.dcbbar.org/pro-bono>):

1. The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center provides free legal assistance to individuals, nonprofit organizations and small businesses through volunteer lawyers.
2. Since its inception in 1978, the Center has become the largest provider of pro bono legal help in the District of Columbia.
3. To help with the legal needs of people experiencing poverty, the **Advocacy & Justice Clinic** coordinates pro bono representation for eligible clients with civil legal problems. By recruiting, training, and supporting pro bono lawyers, we provide much-needed legal representation in housing, family law, public benefits, and consumer disputes. How it works: The **Advocacy & Justice Clinic** matches pro bono clients with volunteer attorneys for full representation”.

D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center / Advocacy & Justice Clinic Contacts

Do let us know if you are interested in the [Advocacy & Justice Clinic’s](#) volunteer applications. You may also contact the following directly:

- Kelli Neptune, Executive Director (kneptune@dcb.org)
- Jason Z. Qu, Managing Attorney, Nonprofit & Small Business Legal Assistance Program (JQu@dcb.org)
- Adrian Gottshall, Managing Attorney, Public Benefits (agottshall@dcb.org)

D.C. Bar Foundation (DCBF)

The October meeting featured presentation by **D.C. Bar Foundation** (DCBF) Chief Executive Officer [Kirra L. Jarratt](#), and **D.C. Access to Justice Commission** Executive Director [Nancy Drane](#). According to their website (<https://www.dcbfoundation.org/>):

“The DC Bar Foundation is committed to the vision that residents of the district have equal access to justice, regardless of income. Our mission is to fund, support, and improve legal representation of people who are financially disenfranchised or who are otherwise under served in the District of Columbia.

UND DC LEGAL AID PROVIDERS

[DCBF awards grants to DC’s civil legal aid community, allowing them to help residents with legal problems affecting their most basic needs](#)



SUPPORT PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERS’ WORK

[DCBF helps public interest lawyers pay off their educational debt through loan repayment assistance program](#)



SPONSOR TRAININGS AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

[From litigation skills training to peer reviews, DCBF invests in DC’s legal aid providers and their attorneys](#)



ADMINISTER THE DISTRICT'S INTEREST ON LAWYERS TRUST ACCOUNT (IOLTA) PROGRAM

DCBF approves and monitors the interest rates for participating financial institutions, ensuring that the revenue from thousands of pooled bank accounts is available for grants to DC's civil legal aid community

COMMENT FROM DC BAR LIASION:

I shared with the VBLG my observations that the DC Pro Bono Center is a valuable source of help for immigration clients who are qualified and seeking to establish their businesses; Immigrant entrepreneurs will be able to help themselves and avoid becoming a public charge. When assisted to become entrepreneurs, qualified immigration clients may have a chance to create income and fulfill financial requirements for Affidavits of supports (I-864) for their family /beneficiaries. Immigrant entrepreneurs may become eligible to sponsor employees.

NOVEMBER 16, 2022 ZOOM MEETING REPORT

The November meeting was convened via Zoom. It was dedicated in honor of Veterans Day. The three major topics focused on:

- 1.) Veterans.
- 2.) the elderly and
- 3.) innovative programs to create careers in the legal industry for returning citizens from imprisonment.

1. **The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program:**

The mission of this organization is to provide assistance to unrepresented veterans or their family members who have filed appeals at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and to recruit and train attorneys in veterans' law. **Samantha Higgs (Deputy Director, Case Evaluation & Litigation)**, shared information about several volunteer opportunities that may be of interest to your members.

COMMENT FROM THE UNDERSIGNED LIAISON: The consortium is a good resource for immigration military clients and their families. It is a good training ground for volunteer lawyers to learn a practice area that is complimentary to immigration

2. **Legal Counsel for the Elderly:** This organization champions the dignity and rights of elders residing in D.C., by providing free legal and social work services to those in need. **Bordia Bastin (Staff Attorney)** discussed lobbying efforts aimed to improve health coverage and benefits specifically for veterans, and for which the organization seeks support from the voluntary bars.

COMMENT FROM THE UNDERSIGNED LIAISON:

Although this topic is D.C-specific, it nevertheless provides resources and ideas helpful to the defense of immigration cases, especially when there is a need to show

special factors for waiver cases. It can also present a learning curve for other practice areas.

3. **The MORCA-Georgetown Paralegal Program:** is part of **Georgetown University's Prisons and Justice Initiative (PJI)**.

PJI's programs offer transformative education and training to open doors for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals in the D.C. area.

The MORCA Georgetown Paralegal Program prepares returning citizens for successful careers in the field of law. The program is a partnership between Georgetown University, the Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (MORCA), and the D.C. Department of Employment Services (DOES).

PJI welcomes the opportunity to partner with the voluntary bars. Evelyn Rupert (Director of Communications, PJI), Caitlin Chamberlain (Deputy Director, PJI), and Brianna Stutson (**Program Alum**), can provide details.

COMMENT FROM THE UNDERSIGNED LIAISON:

AILA DC members and their Firms maybe interested in hiring paralegals from the MORCA-Georgetown Paralegal program. Additionally, AILA DC maybe interested in providing immigration paralegal training to the students. This program gives second chances, similar to immigration practice.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND KEY DATES

For more information, contact paralegal@georgetown.edu part in welcoming a 2022-2023 MORCA- Georgetown Paralegal Fellow to their team. Key Dates:

- May 2022: Applications open
- July 2022: Program begins
- December 2022: Interviews
- January 2023: Employment May-July 2023, etc.

ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE DC BAR: ABA DIVISION OF BAR SERVICES (DBS)

Robert Spagnoletti invited all to join a Zoom call on December 8th. He is the chief executive officer of the District of Columbia Bar and executive vice president of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center. He was president of the D.C. Bar (<https://www.dcb.org/pro-bono/about-the-center/pro-bono-center-staff/robert-j-spagnoletti>).

TRAINING GROUND FOR BAR LEADERS

DBS provides premier training program for new bar leaders – the Bar Leadership Institute (BLI). This multi-day program helps new bar leaders develop the skills for a successful bar year, informs them on current issues in bar association leadership, and builds relationship among bar leaders.



(Photo by Rachna Harikrishnan, DC Bar Liaison: L-R Miriam B. Riedmiller, AILA-DC Liaison, another Voluntary Bar liaison, and Darrin Sobin (chief programs officer for the DC Bar) . Not in photo is Robert Spagnoletti (CEO of DC Bar).

DBS is a source of information and programming towards building and maintaining excellence in our associations. **DBS RESOURCES:**

- Gathering and distributing bar association benchmarking data and best practices.
- collecting latest bar association news.
- consulting services for strategic planning and data analytics.
- and developing programming on timely topics for bar leadership.

DBS OBJECTIVES:

- (1) serve as the primary communications link between the ABA and other bar associations.
- (2) provide education, training, and management support services for bar leaders.
- (3) provide staff support and/or liaison for key bar-related organizations; and
- (4) serve as coordinating agency for ABA services to bar associations.
- (5) Serve as the ABA's coordinating entity for communication with bar associations.

CONCLUSION AND SPECIAL THANKS

In conclusion of this Report, the VBLG is a positive agent of change and growth for lawyers, especially after the Covid-19 shutdown, and in the light of the hardships and delays we are experiencing in immigration practice. Hopefully, we can choose projects that can both provide service to the VBLG members and their communities. On the other hand, we hope to bring fresh insights, learning and new opportunities for AILA DC members through collaborative projects.

AILA-DC Participation in DC BAR CLE PROGRAM – CONTACTS FOR PROGRGAM PROPOSALS.

Speaking of learning through volunteer service and CLE, I'd like to thank the DC Bar CLE Program Director, Denis Cuevas, who attended the October Meeting. He encourages participation as faculty in the DC CLE. Please log on to <https://www.dcb.org/for-lawyers/communities/diversity,-equity,-inclusion,-and-accessibility-re> for more information. For submitting cle program proposals, you may send an email to Dcuevas@dcb.org.

I'm pleased to acknowledge AILA DC members who have served as faculty at Immigration Seminars at the DC Bar . According to the DC Bar CLE Director, these faculty members include Sarah Pitney, Elizabeth Kohler Maya, Jason Dzubow, M. Himedes Chicas. To send proposals to develop CLE Programs, please email dcuevas@dcbar.org.

AILA-DC AND DC VOLUNTARY BAR LEADERS

Special thanks to the AILA DC Leadership, headed by Kellie Lego (Chair), Ofelia Calderon (Chari-Elect). Vice-Chair Brian Patrick Casson, Secretary Eileen Blessinger, Treasurer Julia Manglano Toro, and to all Liaison and members.

I also thank the DC Voluntary Bar, headed by DC President, Ellen Jakovic, Bob Spagnoletti (DC Bar CEO and Charles Lowery, and all Voluntary Bar Leaders. I especially thank the Bar Liaison, Rachna Harikrishnan for all their hard work.

Thank you for reading this Report. If you have any questions or suggestions, I will be glad to communicate with you, I look forward to seeing you at the Holiday Party on December 15th! Best wishes for 2023.

RE-EMERGENCE FROM COVID-19 SHUT DOWN—DC VOLUNTARY BAR LEADERSHIP KICK-OFF SEPTEMBER 2022

