



**AppalReD**  
Legal Aid

# VOLUNTEER LAWYERS *FOR* APPALACHIAN KENTUCKY

Summer 2021

## Clinics—“Zoom-Zoom!”

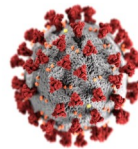
Who could have imagined that, more than a year after the sudden onslaught of Covid lockdowns and restrictions, we would still be navigating the challenges of providing services in such novel, imaginative ways? Out of necessity, we have become fairly adept at conducting our self-help family law clinics virtually (via Zoom).

As of this writing, we have conducted 18 virtual family law clinics since the beginning of the pandemic. Three of those were assisted by law students from the University of Notre Dame and the University of California at Berkeley. Volunteer attorneys, including Beverly Shea, Jennifer Taylor, Colleen Hegge and Beth Wesley, as well as AppalReD Board members Meena Mohanty and Damon Preston provided guidance and legal advice in Zoom breakout rooms to more than 101 very brave and determined clients who completed documents, had them remotely notarized (under special pandemic-related provisions), and filed them in Court to initiate their cases.

We could not possibly have accomplished this without the patience and expertise of Paul Woosley, AppalReD’s Director of Information Technology. Due to the success of these clinics, we will be providing a hybrid of in-person and virtual clinics beginning in 2022. Our first post-pandemic in-person clinics will be in October of 2021, when we will once

again welcome law students from Notre Dame “in person”. We have found that each format has its advantages—in-person clinics are more conducive to providing one-on-one assistance to clients, and virtual clinics make at least some assistance available to those who, due to their remote locations, would be unable to travel to an on-site clinic. We also hope to add clinics in new subject areas next year (such as wills and small claims —and we welcome your suggestions for others!).

Although we are only now starting to emerge from the immediate effects of this pandemic, we want to acknowledge the great cost during this past year to so many of our family and friends locally and afar, to offer our condolences for those who have been lost, and to look for ways to move into the future with healing and hope.



## Team Building Opportunity!

Our pool of volunteer lawyers here in eastern and south-central Kentucky is small but mighty! We would like to offer an opportunity for you to meet each other, exchange ideas, tell us what works and what doesn’t work in our referral and billing systems, and what you would like to see in terms of training and mentoring. Please be thinking about questions or comments that you may have.

We will be scheduling a virtual meeting early this fall (all current volunteer attorneys will receive an email with the date, time, and Zoom link) in an effort to coordinate communication and build a sense of community among our volunteers. Hope to see you there!

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## Welcome To Our New Volunteers

We are fortunate to have had three new volunteer attorneys join us since this newsletter was last published: Keith McLamb, Kenneth Stepp (Kenneth previously volunteered with us and has recently rejoined us) and Colleen Hegge. Colleen comes to us from northern KY where she also volunteers with Legal Aid of the Bluegrass; she will be assisting us with virtual clinics and other “distance” opportunities. These new additions to our team have made it possible for us to serve more people in the furthest reaches of our service area.

(At the risk of seeming greedy), we are in need of even more volunteers . Please spread the word!

### Ongoing Special Initiatives

In addition to VLAK’s usual extended service and clinic work, two special initiatives continue to require intensive effort by a specialized team of volunteers:

- Social Security/Disability (SSD and SSI) cases resulting from the fraud perpetrated by former attorney Eric C. Conn continue in various stages of appeal; 179 of these cases are being expertly handled by the team of volunteer attorneys recruited nation-wide. This initiative began for AppalReD in 2015 and will continue until every client has received the best possible result.
- *Together Lawyers Can.* an initiative established by Kentucky’s four pro bono programs in response to effects of the Covid pandemic, focused in part of unemployment claims resulting from Covid lockdowns and restrictions. Volunteer attorney Robyn Smith has handled a number of these cases for clients in our service area.

### And, of course, just a few stats from our usual extended service caseload.....

Today’s “snapshot” - at this writing, 17 volunteer attorneys are handling 119 cases in 29 counties, as follows:

57 custody cases

57 contested divorces

3 bankruptcies

1 unemployment insurance case

1 loan modification case

8 of the above cases are being done pro bono

111 of these cases are contract cases being done at our reduced-fee rate

AppalReD/VLAK provides free civil legal assistance to eligible clients in the following eastern and south-central Kentucky counties: Adair, Bell, Breathitt, Casey, Clay, Clark, Clinton, Cumberland, Estill, Floyd, Garrard, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher., Lincoln, Madison, Magoffin, Martin, McCreary, Monroe, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Powell, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell Wayne., Wolfe and Whitley.

*We welcome new volunteers who share our vision of equal access to justice for those in Kentucky with limited resources.*

**There are many ways to serve—don’t be left behind!**