

JUSTICE FOR ALL

NEW MEXICO ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

CHAMPIONS OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE



Senator Antoinette Sedillo López

Senator Antoinette Sedillo López has served in the New Mexico Senate since 2019. A native New Mexican who grew up in the Los Chavez, New Mexico area, Senator Sedillo López has been actively involved in New Mexico's Access to Justice efforts for many years. Whether as a Professor of Law at the University of New Mexico and director of the law school's clinical program, working with Enlace Comunitario, or serving as a Senator, she has striven to ensure that no individual is excluded from receiving meaningful access and protection under New Mexico law.

While at UNM Law a key project for Senator Sedillo López was the UNM Access to Justice Practitioner Network providing for the legal needs of under-served clients. This program highlighted the importance of pro bono work and encouraged involvement by students and the legal community. Senator Sedillo López, in addition to leading by example, has been published on numerous matters including the need for law schools to educate students on the complex needs of clients and highlighting the broad inequities present in the legal system.

continued to page 2

SPOTLIGHT

southwest women's law center

The Southwest Women's Law Center (SWLC) is dedicated to addressing critical issues affecting women and girls, including reproductive rights, economic security, gender discrimination, and domestic violence. By leveraging the power of the law, research, and innovative collaborations, the Southwest Women's Law Center strives to reshape the existing landscape and rectify injustices, to foster enhanced opportunities for women and girls in New Mexico. Through a concerted effort to address policy and legal challenges, the Southwest Women's Law Center takes a steadfast stance in the pursuit of equity and the eradication of systemic and cultural biases, while fostering an environment conducive to growth and success.

Embedded within the core principles of the Southwest Women's Law Center is a commitment to ensuring access to justice for women, girls, and families. This includes advocating for legislative changes that encompass women's rights, employment equality, and various safeguards designed to uplift women from poverty and provide enhanced stability for their families. The National Institute of Justice reports that 84.3% of Native American women experience violence in their lifetime. The Institute also states that legal services were one of the most needed services, yet more than a third of the Native American women seeking legal services were unable to receive them.

continued to page 2

As a senator, she has sponsored and co-sponsored numerous bills aimed at protecting vulnerable populations including special immigrant juvenile classification (SIJC), domestic violence protections, reproductive health, and legislation aimed at recognizing the importance of public support programs, legislation supporting equity, and funding for civil legal service providers. She also helped spearhead legislation aimed at providing New Mexicans with access to justice.

In the 2023 session, Senator Sedillo López sponsored SB 468, Dolores Huerta Day, which was signed into law with New Mexico designating April 10th as “Dolores Huerta Day”. Senator Sedillo López, with her own work, encourages each of us to recognize, as Ms. Huerta has, that “[t]he most important resource that all of us have is our time”[1]. The Access to Justice Commission recognizes Senator Sedillo López as a champion and looks forward to her continued work. 🌱

[1] Robert, Amanda (2023), Labor activist Dolores Huerta urges attorneys to ‘get involved in civic life’ ABA Journal, October 2023

NEWS FROM THE JUDICIARY

Statewide ADR Program

Access to justice can be supported by a variety of efforts including mediation programs that facilitate communication and understanding.

While not an answer to every legal need, the ability to bring litigants together in a neutral space can lead to the development of a mutually agreeable resolution. The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is a program that facilitates and supports mediation across the state. Mediation encourages communication between parties, highlights mutual respect, and gives the participants the time and space they need to explore their concerns, develop options, and seek solutions.

The New Mexico State Courts provide a variety of avenues to utilize ADR, specifically mediation, both at the AOC and through local district court programs.

continued to page 3

To address this critical gap, the SWLC, for the 19 Pueblos in New Mexico, offers limited free representation and legal advocacy to assist Native American women experiencing domestic violence and/or intimate partner violence. Our services include facilitating the process of obtaining child custody and support, protection orders, and other vital services, thus working toward a more just and secure future for women in these situations.

SWLC encourages resource providers, including victims’ advocates, to obtain a referral form so that they may refer qualifying clients directly to SWLC for services. <https://swwomenslaw.org/> 🌱

COMMUNITY WEBINARS

November 15th Webinar on Student Loan Rights presented by Student Borrower Protection Center

Watch all Community Webinars on the NM Courts YouTube Channel
[@NewMexicoCourts](#)

ATJ Commission Meetings

December 8, 2023 (Hybrid)

Please
Pre-register for in-person attendance.



Questions, submissions, and requests for accommodations can be sent to Tesha and Twila at atj@nmcourts.gov

The NM Commission on Access to Justice (ATJ) is an independent, statewide body dedicated to expanding and improving civil legal assistance in the state.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Free Bankruptcy Workshop hosted by SBNM

December 13, 2023

Visit <https://www.sbnm.org> for more information

Name Change Legal Clinic

UNM Clinical Law Program

November 2, 2023

email: steadman@law.unm.edu

Divorce Options Workshop hosted by SBNM

November 1, 2023

December 6, 2023

Visit <https://www.sbnm.org> for more information

Statewide Legal Teleclinics hosted by VAP of

NMLA

November 16, 2023

Visit <https://accesstojustice.nmcourts.gov> for more information

First Judicial District Court

Free Legal Teleclinics

November 15, 2023

Visit <https://firstdistrictcourt.nmcourts.gov> for more information

NMLA Volunteer Attorney Program

Free Legal Clinics

Dates and Locations:

November 4, 2023, 3rd JD Law-La-Palooza in Las Cruces

November 4, 2023, 12th JD Legal Fair in Alamogordo

November 8, 2023, 9th JD Legal Fair in Portales

Contact Nedia Isebella (Bella) Zayani

email: nediaz@nmlegalaid.org

NMILC Wednesday Workshop

November 15, 2023, 1pm-4pm

Each month, on the 3rd Wednesday, the NM Immigrant Law Center hosts a walk-in workshop focused on DACA and Green Cards.

visit: <https://www.nmilc.org/daca>

ADR

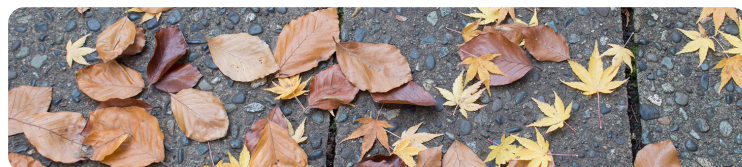
continued from page 2

Through the AOC's ADR Division, managed by Josh Pando and Gino Unzueta San Miguel, an emphasis is placed on providing districts with resources to build, enlarge, and support their programs and to address challenges. Early in the pandemic, for example, the ADR Division quickly identified critical infrastructure needs and deployed necessary technology that allowed the program to function and grow. The ADR Division worked statewide to implement new technology, deployed coaching sessions to assist with the transition to virtual proceedings, and coordinated with mediators and the courts, statewide, to meet ongoing needs.

Throughout the pandemic, the ADR Division continued to hone and expand the ADR program. The ADR Division expanded the Magistrate Court Mediation Program (MCMP) by growing the mediator pool, increasing training opportunities and available mediation slots, and incorporating all magistrate courts into the program. Targeted marketing campaigns were rolled out and statewide visitations by the team raised awareness of the program and targeted district-specific needs. MCMP utilizes trainers, mentors, and experienced mediators who provide in-depth instruction for skill development, as well as increasing best practices and providing mentorship to mediators. Further, integration of AOC's interpretation services into the courts' statewide mediation programs, through the Language Access Program (LAS), ensured mediation services are provided to a greater cross-section of the community. For information contact aocjrp@nmcourts.gov.

"The courts of this country should not be the places where resolution of disputes begins. They should be the places where the disputes end after alternative methods of resolving disputes have been considered and tried."

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor



Want to highlight your civil legal service program? A pro bono event? ATJ efforts in your district? Tell us about it! atj@nmcourts.gov