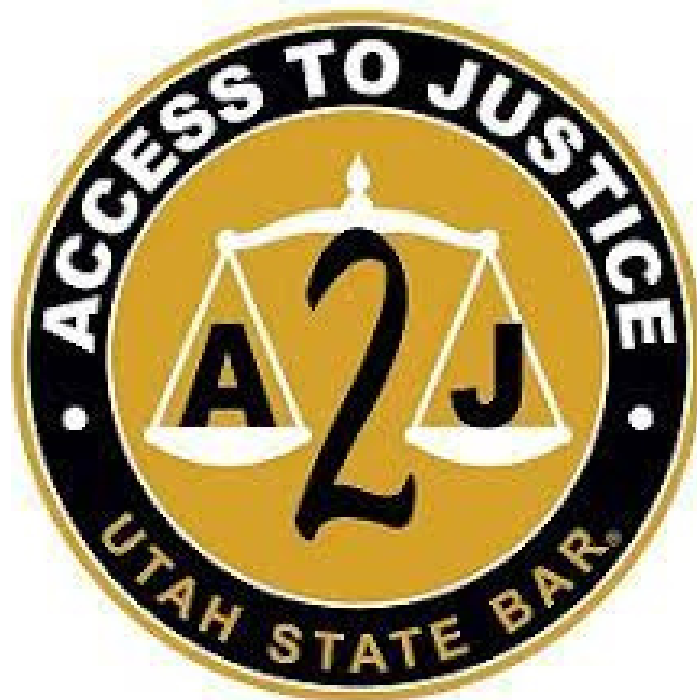




ANNUAL REPORT 2023



PREPARED BY
PAMELA BEATSE

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We are actively building community, raising awareness, and increasing access to equal justice throughout Utah.



1



Hosting the Fifth Utah Access to Justice Summit: Creating stronger connections between legal and social service providers statewide



2



Sharing at National Conferences: Data-driven research, technology, e-court services, and reaching rural communities




3



Debt Collection Data Pilot Program: Following debt trends to answer important questions about Utah debt and consumer protection



4



Refocusing Priorities: Shifting from representation to clinic assistance model on the immediate occupancy consolidated calendar



The ATJ Commission focused on raising awareness about access to justice issues, tools for overcoming barriers, and partnering with others to suggest solutions. They hosted the fifth annual Access to Justice Summit on October 7, 2023. This event encourages and supports civil legal and social service providers in Utah by providing a free conference. Guests are able to learn, workshop, and build connections with others in the community.

By the numbers

- **102** Total Guests
- **61** Different organizations
- **34** People received CLE credits
- **09** Travel stipends
- **13** One-minute blitz presentations

CONFERENCES

STATEWIDE &
NATIONAL
LEADERSHIP

Equal Justice Conference

- Dallas, Texas
- May 2-6, 2023.
- ATJ Director Pamela Beatse

Tracking program statistics and outcomes for data-driven research and analysis to develop strategic solutions and recommendations.

Court Technology Conference

- Phoenix, Arizona
- September 12, 2023
- ATJ Commission Co-Chair Amy Sorenson with AZ and MN

Leveraging pandemic response measures to increase access to justice through further expansion of e-court services. This includes using technology and policies of the governing judicial branches to bring transformative change.

Nat'l Meeting of State ATJ Commission Chairs

- 2023 ABA Forum on Building Access to Justice for All
- Columbus, Ohio
- November 1-4, 2023
- ATJ Director Pamela Beatse with 4-Corners leaders

An interactive, fast-paced session reporting on the front lines of bridging digital divides, and greening legal deserts, to help narrow the justice gap.

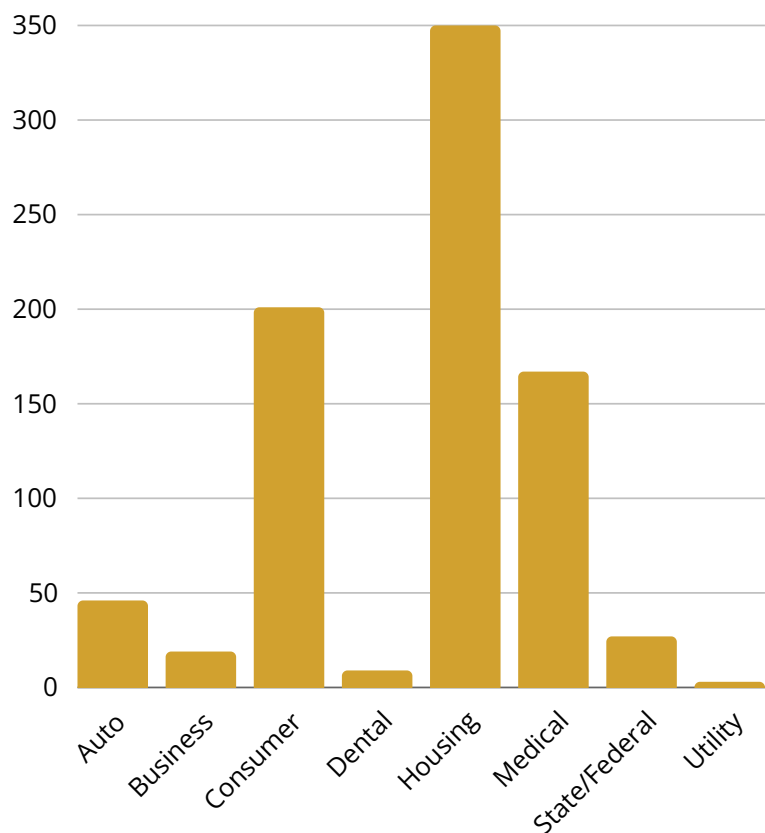
DEBT DATA PROJECT

Using data-driven research to provide answers to specific questions regarding Utah debt as seen on the pro se consolidated debt collection calendar.

The goal is to improve the system for the Utah State Court, parties in litigation, and other community stakeholders. Detailed notes are kept on outcomes and settlements including the status of the case, whether it is dismissed, and if settlements are breached or still in effect. Another important data point is the principal amount at issue in the litigation.

Over the past year, this included data from **834 hearings** with the top three action types being **housing, consumer and medical debt**. Unrepresented defendants received brief legal advice through the Pro Se Community Clinic and limited scope representation at their hearing. Researching the calendar allows the Access to Justice Commission to better explore the benefits of expanding the Pro Se Calendar Volunteer Program, gives an overall picture of the help limited scope representation can give, and allows for better assignments, training, and mentorship for volunteers.

The project follows debt trends in Utah on the pro se consolidated calendar held on Wednesday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. before Judge Paul Parker in the Third District Court. The calendar is hybrid for litigants but volunteer attorneys who give limited scope representation appear virtually via Webex. The project collects data on auto, business, consumer, dental, housing, medical, state/federal agencies, and utilities debt.



Refocusing Priorities:

Shifting from representation to clinic assistance for immediate occupancy hearings

The ATJ Commission voted to pause limited scope representation in favor of developing a brief advice and trial preparation clinic called the **Pro Se Community Clinic**. 2022 data showed the breach rate climbing to 34% even when a pro se defendant had limited scope representation from an attorney.

The Pro Se Community Clinic offers services in a more holistic and helpful way for people needing help, sometimes even diverting them from an eviction. The goal is to assess all the needs a participant has and get them the help they need right then without giving a separate referral. In other words, we are bringing key resources and providers like Utah Community Action, Disability Law Center, Utah Legal Services, and the Self-Help Center to the person during the clinic along with direct legal services. This includes working with them to create a stabilization plan to move forward in a responsible way.

The other important piece of this clinic is that they are sitting down with a team of people working on their behalf the week before their hearing instead of waiting until the day of the hearing to talk with a lawyer who likely will not be able to keep them in their rental. With support from the ATJ Commission, the Utah State Court and People's Legal Aid were awarded a major grant from the National Center for State Courts to develop this program further and build it statewide.

Continuing Partnerships:

Participating with 4-Corners ATJ Group by sharing information, resources, and connections to bring equal justice



The working relationship between the access to justice commissions in Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico continues to be a fruitful way to explore ideas, share research, and combine forces on common issues to find solutions. This year, the group worked on barriers to justice including remote hearings, “greening” legal deserts, using AI technology to improve digital access, looking at new approaches to homelessness, and more.

Our Mission

The mission of the Utah Access to Justice Commission is to advance equity in the legal system and expand access to justice at all levels for people with lower incomes or who are disadvantaged. The members do this by facilitating access to justice, building community, providing opportunities to serve, and studying items of interest to lawyers, the public, and the courts.

2023 Commission Members

- **Hon. Christine Durham**, Co-Chair, Of Counsel Wilson Sonsini
- **Sandra Carpio**, 211 Managing Director
- **Darnell Crandall**, Attorney, Salt Lake Legal Defenders
- **Annika Jones**, Associate, Snell & Wilmer
- **Laura Kyte**, Associate, Ray Quinney & Nebeker
- **Hon. Clem Landau**, Judge, SLC Justice Court
- **Amy F. Sorenson**, Co-Chair, Partner, Snell & Wilmer
- **David McNeill**, Researcher
- **Rhiana Medina**, Executive Director, Moab Valley Multicultural Center
- **Hon. Richard Mrazik**, Judge, 3rd District Court
- **Mark Olson**, Attorney, President, Olson Shaner
- **Kim Paulding**, Executive Director, Utah Bar Foundation
- **Nubia Peña**, Director, Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs
- **Nathanael Player**, Director, Utah State Court Self Help Center
- **Hon. Charles Stormont**, Judge, 3rd District Court
- **Heather Thuet**, CEO Key Legal Group, Past President, Utah State Bar