

Beat: Politics

WHITE HOUSE LEGAL AID INTERAGENCY ROUNDTABLE HOSTED BY LORETTA LYNCH

ESTABLISHED BY PRESIDENT OBAMA

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USPA NEWS - Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch & White House Director of Domestic Policy Council Cecilia Muñoz host the Inaugural White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable. In May 2015, the WH-LAIR was profiled as a "national best practice on the rule of law" before the United Nations.

In 2012, the White House Domestic Policy Council and the U.S. Department of Justice launched the Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable to raise federal agencies' awareness of how civil legal aid can help advance a wide range of federal objectives including improved access to health and housing, education and employment, family stability and community well-being. The Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable's message included that providing legal assistance to people who cannot afford it can also have substantial economic benefits by preventing outcomes that are harmful to them and expensive for the communities.

In recognition of the work of the Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable, on the eve of the historic United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development, on September 24, 2015, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum establishing the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable (WH-LAIR) to continue and further this work.

The WH-LAIR brings together 21 participating federal agencies to inspire new collaborations to serve the Nation's poor and middle class and to better engage civil legal aid providers as federal grantees, sub-grantees, and partners. Since 2012, participating agencies have worked with civil legal aid partners, including non-profit organizations and the private bar, through outreach calls, webinars and other strategies to identify areas in which legal services can advance various federal program objectives. They also have developed legal services-specific language for appropriate new grants and projects, and worked closely with federal grantees to educate them about the value of collaborating with civil legal aid partners.-----Additionally, several agencies have contributed to the civil legal aid evidence base by funding or performing related research, including evaluations of these partnerships-----

The WH-LAIR is staffed by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Access to Justice, an office launched in 2010 to help spearhead national efforts to expand access to civil legal aid and criminal indigent defense. The WH-LAIR's Executive Director is Karen Lash, Deputy Director of the Office for Access to Justice. "US Department of Justice

WH-LAIR Chosen as the United States' National Best Practice on the Rule of Law. In May 2015, the WH-LAIR was profiled as a "national best practice on the rule of law" before the United Nations. The UN's Rule of Law website [external link] now features the WH-LAIR as an exemplary "National Best Practice" on the issue of Access to Justice, Human Rights, and Non-Discrimination.

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