

Purpose and Structure of the Equal Justice Wyoming Advisory Committee

Section 1. EJW Mission and Statutory Direction.

The mission of Equal Justice Wyoming (“EJW”) is to promote and improve access to justice throughout Wyoming in accordance with the directives and intent of the Wyoming Civil Legal Services Act of 2010. Wyo. Stat. Ann. §§ 2-2-401, 5-2-121 through -122, 5-2-202, 5-2-205 through -206, 5-6-108, 5-6-204, 5-6-303, 5-9-135, 5-9-144, 6-10-102 through -103 (the “Act”). The purpose of the Act is to create and maintain comprehensive civil legal services for low- and moderate-income people in Wyoming. Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 5-2-122(a).

In 2011, the Supreme Court created EJW as a court entity. That same year, the Court established the Equal Justice Wyoming’s Board of Commissioners (“EJW Board”) and promulgated the “Rules and Regulations for Equal Justice Wyoming.” Since 2011, the Court has appointed members of the EJW Board from across the state to ensure that the entire state is represented, and the Board has served as the governing body of EJW. Following the direction of the Wyoming Judicial Council (“WJC”), the structure of EJW and the EJW Board are changing. EJW and its staff will become part of the Administrative Office of the Courts (“AOC”) and the EJW Board will become an Advisory Committee to the WJC. The WJC is revising EJW’s Rules and Regulations.

Section 2. EJW Advisory Committee Membership & Meetings.

1. Membership. The Advisory Committee will include no more than twelve volunteer members to include members from diverse judicial districts around the State of Wyoming who represent low- and moderate-income clients or who have other experience with legal services issues in Wyoming. The State Court Administrator will designate an individual from the Administrative Office of the Courts to staff the Advisory Committee.
 - a. Advisory Committee members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Wyoming Judicial Council (“WJC”).
 - b. The State Court Administrator shall be a permanent non-voting member of the Advisory Committee.
 - c. It is recommended that the Advisory Committee include at least one, but not more than two District Court Judges and at least one, but not more than two Circuit Court Judges, with one of the judges from each conference

representing a more-populous district and the other representing a rural district.

- d. Membership terms will be two years. Initial terms will be staggered for each of the stakeholder groups represented to ensure continuity.
 - e. Members may serve consecutive terms.
 - f. At the initial meeting, the Advisory Committee shall elect a chairperson. The Advisory Committee shall also elect a chairperson when there is turnover in that position.
2. Meetings. The Advisory Committee will meet at least quarterly or more frequently as needed upon the request of a member or upon suggestion of staff. No action of the Committee may be taken without a quorum of members. A quorum constitutes a majority of the members.
 3. Voting. Voting shall take place in a meeting of the Committee or via email if necessary.

Section 3. Roles & Responsibilities.

1. The Advisory Committee will respond to requests from the WJC. Examples of the requests and topics may include:
 - a. EJW Grants. The Advisory Committee shall provide recommendations for awarding biennial grants to civil legal service providers from Wyoming's Civil Legal Services Fund ("Fund"). *See, e.g.,* Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 5-2-122(a)(viii).
 - b. Grantee Performance. The WJC may ask the Advisory Committee to assess the performance of entities receiving grants under the Fund.
 - c. EJW Project Development. AOC staff may consult with the Advisory Committee on project development issues such as, but not limited to, EJW's attorney volunteer programs and the adequacy of services in rural areas.
 - d. EJW Collaboration with Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation. Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation ("EJWF") is a 501(c)(3)-qualified Wyoming nonprofit corporation. EJWF advances access to justice and civil legal services through fundraising and other supportive activities. EJWF is separate from EJW. The Advisory Committee may assist AOC staff communication and collaboration with EJWF. AOC staff will continue to work on EJWF projects, under the EJW/EJWF agreement first entered in 2016.
 - e. Confidentiality. The WJC may ask the EJW Advisory Committee to make recommendations concerning the storage and accessibility of confidential client information collected by EJW.

- f. Advisory Committee members shall be responsible for:
- i. Reviewing information provided in preparation for Advisory Committee meetings;
 - ii. Communicating Advisory Committee decisions to their respective stakeholder groups;
 - iii. Collecting information and concerns from their stakeholder groups to help establish educational priorities; and
 - iv. Presenting Advisory Committee recommendations to the Wyoming Judicial Council, when necessary.
2. The AOC staff to the Advisory Committee will be responsible for:
- a. Facilitating Advisory Committee meetings;
 - b. Developing and distributing meeting agendas no later than one week prior to scheduled Advisory Committee meetings, absent extenuating circumstances;
 - c. Implementing decisions of the Advisory Committee and the Wyoming Judicial Council related to the Advisory Committee's purpose;
 - d. Compiling and distributing meeting minutes; and
 - e. Monitoring activities related to the Advisory Committee's purpose and reporting back to the Advisory Committee.

Dated this 29th day of July, 2024.

BY THE WYOMING JUDICIAL COUNCIL:

Kate M. Fox
Kate M. Fox, Chief Justice
Chair, Wyoming Judicial Council