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Legal Paraprofessionals in the News

New Hampshire Legislature Considers Bill to Allow Limited Legal Representation by Paralegals, Revisions to California Paraprofessional Program Working Group Proposal Include Omitting Nonlawyer Ownership in Law Firms

Legislators in New Hampshire are considering House Bill 1343, which would allow paralegals to provide limited legal representation to lower-income individuals in district, circuit, and family court. In April, bill sponsor Rep. Ned Gordon (R-Bristol) told the state Senate Judiciary Committee that 80% to 90% of people who appear in family court in New Hampshire have no legal representation. State Chief Justice Gordon MacDonald testified that allowing paralegals to represent clients in some cases would be "one of the most meaningful steps" the state could take to increase access to justice within the court system. A [news item](#) from the Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy has more details, including possible next steps if this bill passes. Last month, the California Paraprofessional Program Working Group forwarded to the State Bar of California a revised proposal that eliminates from its original proposal the ability for paraprofessionals to own a minority interest in law firms with lawyers. The revised proposal also excludes areas such as estate conservatorship and guardianship matters from paraprofessional practice and specifies that no funding for a paraprofessional program can come from the state's attorney discipline system. What were some of the other revisions, and what was one notable trend among comments received on the original proposal? Find out at [ABA Journal](#).

U.S. District Judge: Nonprofit Can Train Nonlawyers to Offer Free, Limited Legal Advice to Low-Income New York Residents Facing Debt Collection Suits

Last week, a federal judge in Manhattan ruled in favor of a nonprofit called Upsolve Inc. in a First Amendment lawsuit against New York Attorney General Letitia James, clearing the way for it to open up its legal advice program to nonlawyer volunteers. Upsolve plans to train nonlawyers to offer free, limited legal advice to low-income New York state residents facing debt collection lawsuits. In granting Upsolve's motion for a preliminary injunction, U.S. District Judge Paul Crotty said this program doesn't violate the rules against unauthorized practice of law and also would "help alleviate an avalanche of unanswered debt collection cases, while mitigating the risk of consumer or ethical harm." The attorney general had not announced a plan to prosecute Upsolve for UPL but declined at oral argument to disavow this possibility. Learn more at [Reuters](#).

New Website from ABA Center for Innovation Gathers Metrics, Performance Indicators to Assess Innovations in the Justice Sector

A new website from the ABA Center for Innovation called Justice System Metrics catalogs key metrics and performance indicators that can be used to evaluate progress and innovation in the justice sector, and it also provides real-world examples of how these metrics are currently being used. Joseph Gartner, director and counsel for the center, notes

that a lack of data has often been raised as an objection against regulatory reforms such as those in Utah and Arizona. The new website has thus far gathered some 200 keyword-searchable metrics, he says, and the intention is for users to be able to contribute ideas and content to help the website grow. At [LawSites](#), Robert Ambrogi recaps his recent tour of the site and what he learned about how it was developed.

Brennan Center Report: State Supreme Courts Lack Diversity, Have Made Only Slight Progress Since Last Year

State supreme courts fail to adequately reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, according to a report from the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law, though slight progress was made in the past year. Since April 2021, the percentage of justices of color on state supreme courts increased from 17% to 18%, and the percentage of female justices increased from 39% to 41%. In 20 states (down from 22 in 2021), all the high court justices are white, and in nine states, there is only one woman on the state supreme court. [ABA Journal](#) shares additional statistics from this recent report.



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