



## BUILDING YOUR PRACTICE THROUGH LRIS

I know firsthand the challenges of being a smaller-town lawyer, working hard to build a successful practice outside of one of Texas' sprawling metropolitan areas.

One amazing—and perhaps underutilized—tool to assist your practice is the bar's Lawyer Referral & Information Service, or LRIS. The LRIS program serves 246 Texas counties that exist outside of major metropolitan areas.

The program's staff members take pride in their responsibility to provide participating attorneys with new revenue-generating business leads and thus help them build or enhance successful practices.

LRIS Director Lisa Zvonek said statistics for FY 2017-2018 show attorneys participating in the certified program made more than \$2 million in fees from LRIS referrals.

In 2017-2018, staff fielded 67,236 calls from the public and made 73,635 referrals. A third—33 percent—of those referrals were to attorneys participating in the program. About 40 percent, due to location, were sent to other referral programs at major metropolitan bar associations (please visit [texasbar.com/LRISprograms](http://texasbar.com/LRISprograms) for the complete list of certified Texas referral programs). The remaining callers were referred to legal aid and other agencies if they needed free or reduced-fee services.

Zvonek said one misconception about the program is that attorneys who participate provide free or reduced-fee services. They do not. Participating attorneys agree to meet with potential referral clients for a 30-minute consultation for no more than \$20. But beyond that, they make their own fee arrangement with the new client. Participating attorneys also agree that if a referred case generates \$500 or more in fees, they will return 10 percent to help offset the cost of operating the program.

Attorneys who participate in the program pay \$125 per year in exchange for screened referrals that can increase client base and earnings, additional referrals through an automated online referral system, and 20 percent off TexasBarCLE products and services. To learn more about LRIS, go to [texasbar.com/LRISattorney](http://texasbar.com/LRISattorney) or call (512) 427-1720.

### Honoring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

It is with much sadness that we learned former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor has made the decision to step away from public life due to developments with her health.

O'Connor, the first woman associate justice appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, spent part of her youth and early educational years in El Paso. But beyond all of her professional achievements, O'Connor has forever impacted the education of our citizens by spearheading the national online civic education and engagement movement.

Her vision and understanding of the importance of technology in education and her understanding of the role that students will one day play in our democratic republic led to the creation of one of the best online resources available to the public—iCivics.org.

O'Connor said, "The practice of democracy is not passed down through the gene pool. It must be taught and learned anew by each generation of citizens."

Justice O'Connor's vision will carry on through iCivics and many other programs created in the same vein. The State Bar of Texas and its Law-Related Education Department express our deep reverence for Justice O'Connor.



PHOTO BY MARK MATTSOON PHOTOGRAPHY

Justice O'Connor with Cindy Tisdale, past chair of the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors, and Trey Apffel.

### By the Numbers

It is my pleasure to direct you to page 855, where you will find the State Bar's performance measures for the 2017-2018 bar year.

Sincerely,

### TREY APFFEL

Executive Director, State Bar of Texas

Editor-in-Chief, *Texas Bar Journal*

(512) 427-1500

@ApffelT on Twitter

*Have a question for Trey? Email it to [trey.apffel@texasbar.com](mailto:trey.apffel@texasbar.com) and he may answer it in a future column.*