

# Access to Justice: The Corporate Counsel Role

Presenters:

Angela Reier (HNI Corporation)

Travis Sheets (BH Companies)

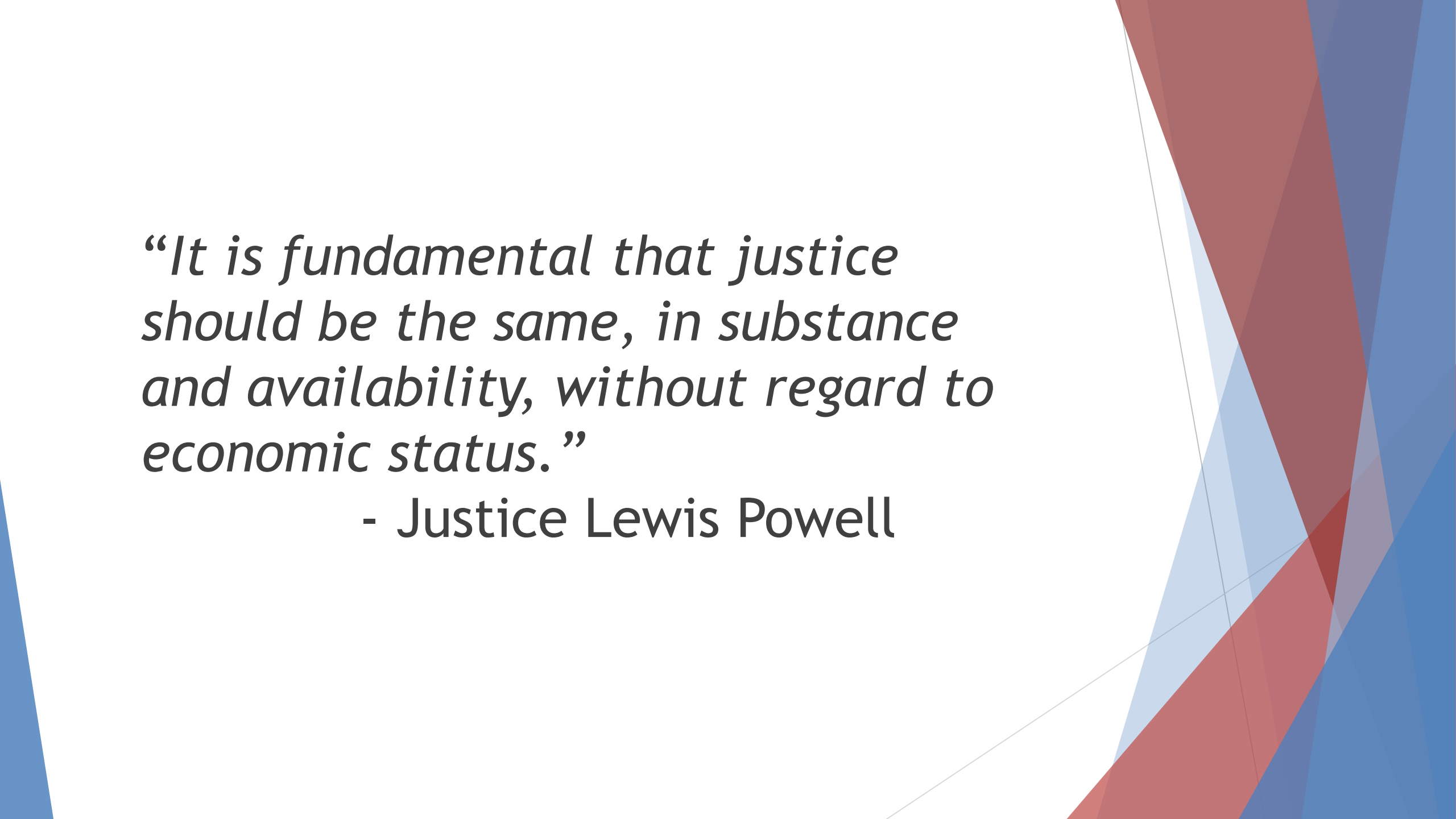
# Agenda

1. Access to Justice Commission
2. About the Corporate Involvement Work Group
3. Why Iowa Companies Should Care
4. Access to Justice-Who We Help
5. Overcoming Barriers
6. How to Get Started
7. Next Event
8. Q&A

# Access to Justice Commission

Goal: Remove barriers to civil justice for low income and disadvantaged people in a coordinated and collaborated way

- ▶ Formed by the Iowa Supreme Court in 2016
- ▶ Work Groups
  - Corporate Involvement
  - Public Outreach
  - Pro Bono
  - Veterans
  - Rural Access
  - Language Access
  - Case Processing



*“It is fundamental that justice should be the same, in substance and availability, without regard to economic status.”*

- Justice Lewis Powell

# Corporate Involvement Work Group

## ► Who We Are

Steven Bradford (HNI Corp)	Angela Reier (HNI Corp)	Travis Sheets (BH Companies)
Brett Toresdahl (Iowa Gov)	Carol Phillips (PCBA)	Gerard Nugent (Knapp Properties)
Sarah Smerage (ARAG Legal)	Jim Hansen (Musco)	Mark Zaiger (Shuttleworth & Ingersoll)
Mark Rosenbury	Steve Simmons (Nationwide)	

## ► Our Goals

- Engage
- Support
- Educate

# Why Iowa Companies Should Care About Access to Justice

- ▶ 500,000 Iowans live below the poverty line
- ▶ More than 1,000,000 Iowans have trouble affording legal services
- ▶ All civil, no right to counsel

*“The lack of access to justice is a workforce issue that negatively impacts economic development and the attraction of new businesses to the region.”*

- Jay Byers, CEO, Greater Des Moines Partnership

# Why Iowa Companies Should Care About Access to Justice

- ▶ **68 percent of employees** surveyed spent time at work dealing with their legal issues — **an average of 18 hours per issue**. And half of employees had to take an average of **four days off work** to resolve their legal issues.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ **American businesses lose more than \$300 billion every year because of employees' stress-related issues**, such as productivity, absenteeism, turnover and worrying about out-of-pocket medical, insurance and legal costs.<sup>2</sup> In one study, nearly half (47 percent) of employees surveyed said these problems cause performance issues at work.<sup>3</sup>

*“As in-house attorneys, we see how employees suffer with personal legal issues they’re experiencing - but often we are unsure how to help them. We have the desire to help, but may need guidance on how best to get involved.”*

*- Steven Bradford, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, HNI Corporation*

<sup>1</sup> “How Legal and Financial Stress Impacts Employee Wellness.” Russell Research for ARAG. February 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Workplace Stress.”American Institute of Stress. 2017. [stress.org/workplace-stress/](http://stress.org/workplace-stress/)

<sup>3</sup> Bensinger, DuPont & Associates. “Stressed at Work: What We Can Learn from EAP Utilization.” 2013. [bensingerdupont.com/stressed-at-work](http://bensingerdupont.com/stressed-at-work)

# Why Iowa Companies Should Care About Access to Justice

Dealing with legal issues is similar to dealing with health issues (and the financial stresses accompanying them) – both lead to employee absenteeism, low productivity and high turnover.

One ARAG legal insurance study found three out of four working Americans experience one or more legal situations a year. When they do experience a legal issue, they feel very or somewhat stressed about the following.<sup>4</sup>

The study also found there is a lot of financial uncertainty surrounding legal issues. When asked about their ability to pay for legal expenses, 76 percent of those surveyed had no defined way to handle such an expense. They also underestimated the average cost of an attorney by nearly \$150 an hour. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “How Legal and Financial Stress Impacts Employee Wellness.” Russell Research for ARAG. February 2017.



# Who we help

Since 2014, Iowa Legal Aid has closed 81,260 cases,  
impacting the lives of 189,976 people, including:



**628**

Disaster Victims



**4,562**

Veterans



**19,466**

Seniors



**20,984**

Victims of  
Domestic Violence



**25,644**

People with  
Disabilities



**80,395**

Children

Who we help-  
125% of federal poverty

<b><u>Household Size</u></b>	<b><u>Annual Income</u></b>
1	\$15,613
2	\$21,138
3	\$26,663
4	\$32,188

# Overcoming Barriers

- ▶ Malpractice Insurance
- ▶ Trust Account
- ▶ Area of Law
- ▶ Where to Meet
- ▶ “In house” Licensure
- ▶ Limited Scope

# Overcoming Barriers--Resources

- ▶ Download the 2018 Access to Justice Commission Report:
- ▶ <https://www.iowacourts.gov/announcements/iowa-access-to-justice-commission-releases-2018-report/>
  - ▶ Appendix E, “Corporate Playbook”
  - ▶ Answers to frequently asked questions and form policies
  - ▶ Contact information for Work Group members

# How To Get Started

- ▶ American Equity
- ▶ HNI
- ▶ ARAG Legal

# You're Invited!

## How to Start a Corporate Pro Bono Program

Presented by The Access to Justice Corporate Involvement Work Group

- ▶ Sponsored by Association of Corporate Counsel - Iowa Chapter

**Friday, July 12, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**HNI Corporate Office, 600 East Second Street, Muscatine, IA**

- ▶ Benefits of attending
  - 2 hours of free CLE, Ethics
  - Cocktails and appetizers provided
  - Network with your peers
  - Get the information you need to setup a pro bono program

*Questions?*

# *Thank You*

Angela Reier, HNI (ReierA@hnicorp.com)

Travis Sheets, BH Companies (tsheets@bhmanagement.com)