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Resilience

VOLUNTEER SETTLEMENT OFFICERS WITH TEN YEARS’ LITIGATION EXPERIENCE ARE NEEDED FOR LASC’S NEW VIRTUAL MSC PROGRAM

Resilience is “an ability to recover from, or adjust easily to, misfortune or change.” It is both an individual and collective attribute. The past fifteen months have challenged us, but those months have also proven that individually and together, we are resilient. From the new Resolve Law LA Virtual Mandatory Settlement Conference (MSC) program to CAALA’s new Staff Academy to the all-new Las Vegas Convention registration platform, CAALA has proven its resilience.

Resolve Law LA launches Virtual MSC Program

Resolve Law LA, which launched June 21, is a volunteer Settlement Officer-staffed virtual MSC program for the PI Hub of the Los Angeles Superior Court. The program was created by LA Superior Court in partnership with CAALA, Association of Southern California Defense Counsel (ASCDC), LA-ABOTA and the Beverly Hills Bar Foundation.

The Resolve Law LA program is modeled on the prior in-person PI Hub MSC program and provides a three-hour free virtual MSC staffed by volunteer plaintiff and defense settlement officers and is conducted through the Resolve Law LA website. The settlement officers are members of the legal associations and have at least 10 years’ litigation experience. All parties will be ordered to appear with full authority to settle the matter, terms to be determined through the MSC. The Resolve Law LA website has an integrated Zoom platform with pre-programmed breakout rooms for the plaintiff and defense.

The Resolve Law LA Virtual MSC Program is best suited to a two-party case, meaning one plaintiff and one defendant, because less complex cases are the most likely to be settled in the three hours provided by the free program. As with the original program, cases must be selected and ordered into the Resolve Law LA program by an LASC PI Hub judge. So, if a specific case is not ordered into the program by a PI Hub judge, it is not eligible.

Resolve Law LA needs qualified attorneys to register and volunteer to act as

Settlement Officers in this new virtual program. If you have 10 years’ experience in litigation, please sign up and volunteer to act as a settlement officer as many times as you can through August 31, 2021, which is the end of the first round of virtual MSCs. To volunteer, go to www.resolvelawla.com.

And now for some results – as I write this article, it is only 24 hours after the launch of the Resolve Law LA program. In just 24 hours, over 70 attorneys registered with the program and volunteered as Settlement Officers. Additionally, the PI Hub has already ordered the first 25 cases into the program. Remarkably, on its first day, the Resolve Law LA Program has sufficient Settlement Officers to staff the first 25 cases selected for the program. But we can’t stop there – we need *every* eligible case in the PI Hub to be ordered into the program and staffed with volunteer Settlement Officers. CAALA knows that Resolve Law LA’s free MSC service is key to moving cases through LASC and you can rest assured that CAALA will continue to lead this effort.

Legal Staff Support Group’s first Staff Academy

CAALA’s Legal Staff Support Group (LSSG) held its first Staff Academy May 26-June 19. This was a virtual four-week course covering organization and time management, calendaring, document filing, key document procurement, discovery, and motions. Federal and state procedure were discussed for each topic. Sixty legal-staff CAALA members attended each session, and the feedback has been incredibly positive.

The Staff Academy was the brainchild of our phenomenal LSSG Co-Chairs, Lupe Flores and Rose Gutierrez. When Ms. Flores and Ms. Gutierrez told me about their idea for a Staff Academy, I immediately recognized it as genius. Though staff in our law offices may have a paralegal certificate or have graduated from a legal assistant program, or not, those programs usually offer general training. Staff often are not trained in handling plaintiffs’ cases. The Staff Academy is focused on procedure and processes from the plaintiff’s law firm perspective.

CAALA isn’t stopping there with advancing structured training for plaintiff law firm staff. CAALA’s LSSG Co-Chairs have also trial focused training for our Legal Staff Track at the Las Vegas Convention. Going forward, CAALA expects to offer the Staff Academy in a hybrid virtual and in-person format plus trial training at the Vegas Convention on an annual basis. This is just one more example of CAALA’s adaptation to challenge and creation of unique value for our plaintiff’s law firms. Ms. Flores and Ms. Gutierrez deserve our heartfelt thanks for turning the challenge of physical disconnection into an opportunity to train legal staff in a virtual format.

CAALA staff and the Las Vegas Convention

CAALA’s staff including Kwedi Moore, Liz Hagan, Bill Smith, Jordan Smith, Martha Ruiz, Margie Ruiz, and Executive Director Stuart Zanville plan and execute upon thousands of deliverables every year.

And this year, after not having our annual Convention in 2020, CAALA Vegas is, yet again, all new. CAALA staff introduced an entirely new sponsorship and vendor platform for our Convention, and a new attendee registration platform. There is also an all-new website and, of course, a new hotel, the Bellagio Hotel and Casino. Our booths and sponsorships sold out in four days and our block of rooms will be sold out when you read this. We currently have more Convention attendee registrations than in any prior year. We have so many attendees that Allegiant Stadium, the new home of the Raiders and the location of our Friday night party, has advised us to book a second floor for the Friday night party.

CAALA staff is unsurpassed in their creativity and professionalism. It is an absolute pleasure to work with each of them, so when you see the staff in Las Vegas, *please let them know how much you appreciate them*. Oh, and in case you were wondering, Vegas is going to be a blast this year.

Perseverance, adaptation, and growth demonstrated in the face of great challenge is resilience. We have shown resilience as an organization, which is a function of each individual person’s effort. Thanks to all and cheers to your resilience.