

POLK ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS

YLD 2020 INCLUSION & EQUALITY GRANT APPLICATION



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FLORIDA RURAL LEGAL SERVICES, INC. (FRLS)

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Polk Association for Women Lawyers

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Affiliate

The Polk Association for Women Lawyers (PAWL) is Polk County's local chapter of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers, which has a stated mission "[t]o actively promote gender equality and the leadership roles of FAWL's members in the legal profession, judiciary, and community at large." PAWL currently has over 70 members and is still growing. PAWL's members include men and women from a variety of legal backgrounds including judges, private practitioners from both large and small firms, and government attorneys.

Summary

In April 2021, PAWL will be hosting an Inclusion and Equality Event in partnership with Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc. (FRLS). In following CDC guideline recommendations regarding social distancing and Covid-19, this event may be held in-person or via a Zoom virtual platform. Either way, it will serve to highlight the Florida Bar's diverse membership within the Tenth Judicial Circuit and to showcase attorneys of varying backgrounds and experiences who contribute to the betterment of our local community daily. In addition, this event will serve to provide the participants with information about the diverse populations served within our community, the specific needs of those populations, and opportunities for service to those communities through pro bono opportunities.

Project Objectives and Description

As part of PAWL's mission, we serve to educate and inform our membership and greater community about diversity within the legal field. Through our Inclusion and Equality event, we will seek to further the mission of the Young Lawyers Division by highlighting those within our local legal community from various backgrounds, ethnicities, orientations, physical appearances/abilities, and experiences. We hope to do this by hosting an event with a panel of speakers and presenters who will showcase and educate our attendees on the diversity of those in our community as well as of their legal needs. We hope to learn about the struggles these individuals may face and how to best serve them and ensure their inclusion within our community and minds.

The event we envision will be a lunch-and-learn style of event. It will be casual in nature and will be hosted in the Main Courtroom of the Polk County Courthouse in Bartow, Florida. Attendance is open to anyone who preregisters, and boxed lunches and CLE will be available to those in attendance upon approval by the Florida Bar. As there is no cost associated with the rental of this facility and it is central within the circuit's main courthouse, it is a financially prudent and convenient choice of venue that provides both ease in attendance and time efficiency.

Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc. (FRLS) has been invited and has accepted our invitation to present at this event and facilitate a panel discussion with attorneys of various backgrounds and experiences to discuss their legal practices and the needs that they have seen and seek to serve within our community. We have been in contact with Sheena Robinson, Pro-Bono Coordinator for FRLS, and she has confirmed two presenters from same: Jaffe Pickett, Esq., Executive Director/CEO of FRLS, and Carolyn Fabrizio, Esq., Director of Private Attorney Involvement for FRLS. Closer to the date of event, we will also solicit additional panel members from a variety of backgrounds who may be able to offer insight as to their path into the legal field and the needs of those they serve. This will be an excellent opportunity for practitioners within the Tenth Judicial Circuit to spend time with others in practice as well as judges and court staff who may attend this event. Our hope is that those in attendance will make or further connections with which to better serve our community.

The legal community of the entire Tenth Circuit is served by this event as PAWL will extend the invitation throughout the circuit to legal practitioners or anyone who may work in a related field who has interest and would like to attend. In addition, PAWL will be extending the invitation to those local students who volunteer with Polk County Teen Court and have shown interest in the legal field as a profession. We hope to continue to garner their interest in a legal career and service to others.

Aside from gaining knowledge of the diversity of our community, we would like to take this opportunity and event to educate our local practitioners on the legal needs of our underserved in the community as well as provide chances for them to assist via pro bono opportunities. To help facilitate service through pro bono hours, and because many of our local practitioners are parents, PAWL will partner with a local childcare company to offer free childcare vouchers for

any attorney wanting to provide advice and counsel through pro bono hours. Any attorneys wanting to assist individuals will be able to easily acquire childcare to make pro bono service as convenient and low stress as possible.

PAWL is actively working to obtain sponsors for this event. Event sponsors will be offered opportunities to receive recognition at the event in exchange for contributions. While other resources are being sought from these private sponsors, YLD funds would be an important source of funding. The YLD funds will be used to provide lunch for the judges, local attorneys, and any other parties in attendance. The YLD's support for this project would be recognized on social media posts, event flyers, and verbal recognition at various stages of the event.

Project Evaluation and Timeline

The anticipated date for our Inclusion and Equality Event will be in April of 2021. Should CDC Guidelines allow an in-person event, we will seek to reserve the Main Courtroom of the Polk County Courthouse in Bartow, Florida. We will begin advertising this event approximately two months prior via e-mail blasts, social media event announcements, and flyers placed in various courthouse locations. PAWL will confirm the availability of Terrie Lobb Catering to provide box lunches and beverages in approximately January of 2021.

In the event that we are unable to host an in-person event, then we would seek to provide boxed-lunch vouchers to all of those registered to attend prior to the day of event so we would still be able to provide our participants with a lunch option for a virtual lunch-and-learn style of event. We would host the event midday via the Zoom platform and facilitated by the PAWL board membership.

The effectiveness of this event will be determined by local involvement and attendance and the desire of the court and those involved to host the event again in the future. We will also attempt to measure those who exercise pro bono hours and serve the local community based upon this event. Another potential measure of effectiveness would be any new members who join PAWL at or after this event. PAWL will keep track of the number of judges, attorneys, and local students who were able to attend and will welcome feedback from all the people who were able to attend.

Project Organization

PAWL has invited Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc., to partner in hosting our Inclusion and Equality Event and they have accepted. PAWL will be responsible for arranging and coordinating the event by either reserving an event space or using the Zoom Platform, advertising this event, setting up day-of, and providing boxed lunches as well as CLE credits as approved by the Florida Bar to attendees. Any and all other logistical considerations such as parking, etc. will be addressed by the PAWL committee in planning this event.

Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc., will also assist PAWL in this program by providing panelists to present and speak on the topics of diversity and underserved populations within our community. They will educate those in attendance to the unique needs of the underserved populations in our

community and offer opportunities for our local bar membership to serve these individuals through pro bono hours.

Budget

To facilitate the ability of PAWL to host this event, we are actively seeking sources of funding as described above. We will look to our membership for additional sponsorship of this event as needed.

Estimated Expenses:

Boxed Lunches w/ beverage (50 people at \$9/pp)	\$ 450.00
Child Care Vouchers (\$12/hr. for 10 hours)	\$ 120.00
Thank- you gifts (Gift cards)	\$ 50.00
Signage	\$ 50.00

Estimated Total:	\$ 670.00
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