

NEBRASKA STATE BAR FOUNDATION

PEOPLE Committee Report



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Retired Federal Court Judge Lyle Strom serves as the Chair of the PEOPLE Committee, which has progressively expanded its educational programs for students, adults, and members of the media.

The PEOPLE Committee currently educates members of the media, teachers and students about the legal system. The Committee oversees the following:

- Providing guidelines for media coverage of Nebraska courts
- Organizing and coordinating webinars and in-person seminars for Nebraska journalists to learn about the trial courts
- Offering an online, informational Juror Orientation video that is available on the Bar Foundation website to all trial courts for jury members
- Offering professional development for Nebraska teachers to support civics education

The Bar Foundation educates the media to reach the general public and also educates teachers to reach students.

Overview

The Nebraska State Bar Foundation established the PEOPLE Committee 16 years ago. The goal of the PEOPLE (Public Education Outreach Promoting the Law & Equity) Committee is to proactively inform and educate the public about the legal system.

The PEOPLE Committee encapsulates two sub-committees: Bench Media and Civics Education.

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PEOPLE (Public Education Outreach Promoting the Law & Equity)

Bench Media Committee

The Bench Media Committee, which falls under the umbrella of the PEOPLE Committee, is committed to ensuring a professional and positive working relationship among Nebraska lawyers, courts, and the media.

The Bench Media Committee is chaired by Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Heavican, who has prioritized the Court's engagement with media as a means of encouraging transparency and civic education of the public.

The three working groups under the umbrella of the Bench Media Committee are the Uniform Court Rules and Practices Working Group, the Media Education Working Group, and the Judge & Court Staff Education Working Group. Each working group is co-chaired by judges and journalists.

Civics Education Committee

The second arm of the PEOPLE Committee is the Civics Education Committee, which is chaired by United States District Court Judge John Gerrard.

The objective of this Committee is to promote civics education among students and adults statewide. The Civics Education Committee also seeks to help young people become engaged citizens who contribute positively to their communities.

These goals are accomplished through programs such as job shadowing for fifth graders, high school mock trial, and high school and college outreach. Adult civic education is furthered through the production of the Juror Orientation video and educational seminars for media members interested in how to best write news stories about court proceedings.



Nebraska Broadcasting Association's 2018 Annual Meeting panel discussion with members of judiciary. L-R: Jacque Harms, Rose Ann Shannon, Bill Kelly, Hon. Retelsdorf, Hon. Parsley and Hon. Hutton.

Civics Education Outreach focuses primarily on teachers as the conduit to tomorrow's adults.

The Bench Media Committee works with members of Nebraska's professional media to provide accurate and current information to adults.

Bench Media

The Bench Media Committee's focus is to increase public awareness of Nebraska's legal system. To meet this goal, the Bench Media Committee has created the following activities to promote legal education of the public.

- **Student News Reporter Contest** - Designed for high school students interested in journalism. This experiential activity teaches students how to report on trial court proceedings.
- **2020 Revision of the 50-year-old Nebraska Court Coverage Guidelines for Judges, Attorneys, and Journalists** - This guide functions as a tool to assist with understanding court procedures ranging from the pre-trial process to post sentencing.
- **Amended Presiding Judges Rule** - To allow judges experienced in dealing with the media to act as go-to resource for news reporters as designated by the presiding judge.
- **Reporters Guide to Nebraska Trial Courts Procedures** - Published a guidebook for journalists interested in covering court proceedings.
- Pop-up college courses in conjunction with the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications covering Nebraska trial courts.
- Ongoing recommendations from the Committee to the Supreme Court for consideration of a rule revision or clarification.

The Bench Media Committee works hand-in-hand with the judges of the Expanded News Media Rule Committee to increase transparency in court coverage statewide which enhances the reporting on courts.

BENCH MEDIA

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"This committee has been created to develop educational programs designed to bring greater understanding of the court system to the public. As most peoples' only exposure and certainly their perceptions of the courts are influenced from what they see, read, and hear on television, radio and newspapers, we felt it important to offer educational programs which would aid media outlets in disseminating information about the courts. Thus, the greater understanding a reporter has regarding the business of the courts, the greater understanding the public will have as well.

...opening remarks by Judge Todd Hutton during 2022 education session for news reporters



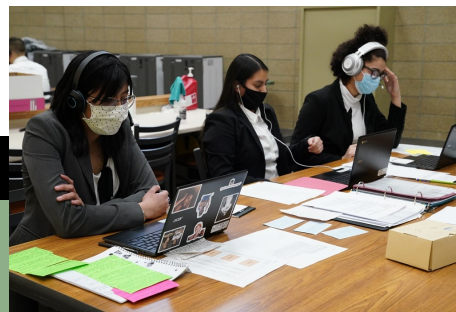
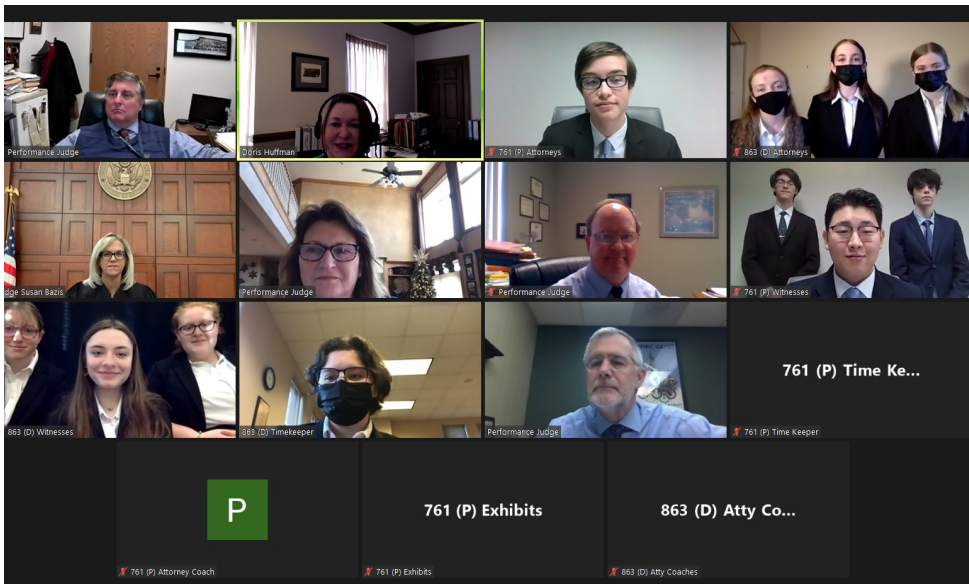
Committee meeting via Zoom.

CIVICS EDUCATION

PEOPLE (Public Education Outreach Promoting the Law & Equity)

The Judge Lyle Strom High School Mock Trial Program

This educational program is considered the ‘flagship’ of the Civics Education Committee due to the universal appeal and popularity of the program. Mock Trial originated in the Supreme Court in the mid-80’s and eventually moved to the Foundation where it has grown to a recognized program among educators statewide. The Bar Foundation has organized and coordinated this program for nearly 25 years.



Mock Trial serves as an opportunity for high school students statewide to receive a first-person perspective of trial courts as they argue cases that alternate between criminal and civil suits.

More than 1,000 Nebraska high school students and teachers participate in the Judge Lyle Strom High School Mock Trial Program.

Powered by over 400 volunteers, members of the legal profession give of their time and expertise to serve as coaches and volunteer judges for this educational program.

CIVICS EDUCATION

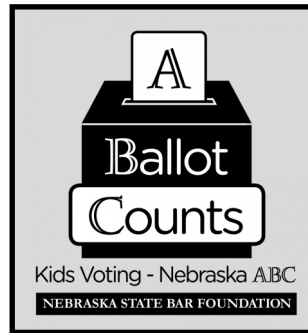
PEOPLE (Public Education Outreach Promoting the Law & Equity)



Law Day Job Shadowing for Fifth Graders

Groups of fifth graders spend an hour or more with lawyers, judges, court clerks, court reporters and

other legal professionals as part of an opportunity to experience the day-to-day activities of those in the legal profession.



Kids Voting - Nebraska ABC

This program is aimed at encouraging future voter turnout among children through the implementation of nonpartisan lessons, resources, and educational tools and activities. Kids Voting is geared for K-12 graders and available online for public, private, homeschool students as well as service organizations such as Girl Scouts.

High School and College Outreach for Oral Arguments

The Bar Foundation partners with the Nebraska Supreme Court and Nebraska Court of Appeals to raise awareness of court processes while traveling to Nebraska colleges and high schools. Constitution Day and Law Day are celebrated in conjunction with traveling oral arguments.



The Nebraska Supreme Court holds Oral Arguments.

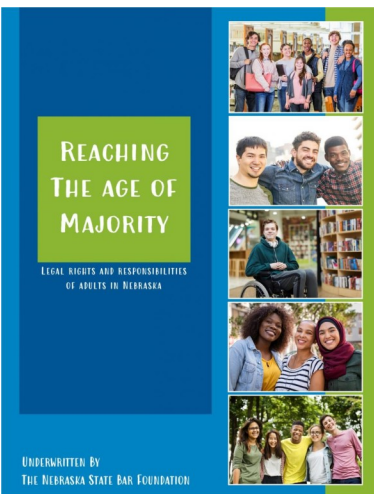
CIVICS EDUCATION

PEOPLE (Public Education Outreach Promoting the Law & Equity)



We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution

Curriculum and teacher development is geared at promoting civic competence and responsibility among elementary and secondary students.



Sample Chapters

- Alcohol
- Cell Phones
- Credit Cards
- Insurance
- Search & Seizure
- Voting
- Wills

Reaching the Age of Majority Booklet

A Booklet designed to educate youth about the rights and responsibilities of adulthood, which is 19 in the State of Nebraska.



19th Amendment Activities

The Nebraska State Bar Foundation offers 19th Amendment educational activities for students in kindergarten through high school.

Nebraska State Bar Foundation
February 3 at 1:08 PM · 🌐

Law Day Job Shadowing is an annual educational, cooperative program of the Nebraska State Bar Foundation and the Nebraska Supreme Court. Piloted in Lincoln Public Schools in 2001, the program went statewide in 2002. Since then, many communities and thousands of school children have participated.
<https://www.nebarfnd.org/law.../law-day-job-shadowing>

NEBARFND.ORG
Law Day Job Shadowing for 5th Graders | Nebraska State Bar Foundation
Law Day Job Shadowing is an annual cooperative program of the Nebraska State Bar Foundation and the Nebraska Supreme Court conducted on...

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Nebraska State Bar Foundation
November 16, 2021 · 🌐

The next Constitution Day Celebration will be taking place at Midland University in Fremont, NE in September of 2022. [Midland University](#)

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Nebraska State Bar Foundation
December 16, 2021 · 🌐

Congratulations to Lincoln East High for winning "We the People!" They will move onto the "We the People" National Finals, April 22-26, 2022. Kudos to their teacher, Mr. Kevin Rippe! [Lincoln East High School](#)
<https://www.civiced.org/national-finals-2022>

CIVICED.ORG
National Finals 2022
The We the People National Finals will be held online on April 23rd through 26th, 2021. The staff of the Center for Civic Education appreciates yo...

Center for Civic Education

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CIVICS EDUCATION

PEOPLE (Public Education Outreach Promoting the Law & Equity)



Learning about civics through additional resources:

Juror Orientation Video

Created to assist judges to inform jury members on courtroom procedures and responsibilities when sitting on a jury. The video was originally released in 1997 and then completely revised and re-released in 2021.

The video is available at <https://www.nebarfnd.org/civics-education/juror-orientation-video>.



Teen Parents and the Law (TPAL)

Curriculum was developed by Street Law, Inc. The Bar Foundation began offering this educational program to Nebraska teachers and youth service organizations in 2004.

The TPAL Curriculum is built to strengthen families, lower the incidence of child abuse, break the cycle of violence, make better citizens and parents, and decrease the percentage of teen parents among the next generation.

More than 90 Nebraska teachers, counselors, social workers and corrections educators have become TPAL trainers.

