

Access to Justice Commission to meet on March 1 in Jackson

February 26, 2016

The Access to Justice Commission will meet at noon March 1 at the Gartin Justice Building, 450 High Street in Jackson. AJC members will gather for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Members of the media are welcome to attend.

Access to Justice Commission Director Tiffany Graves will present a report about Commission activities and initiatives. Forms are being developed to assist self-represented litigants who cannot afford to hire an attorney, but don't qualify for Legal Services assistance. Forms have been developed for irreconcilable differences divorces, removal of disability of minority/emancipation, and name change. The forms are expected to soon be provided on the websites of the Mississippi Center for Legal Services and North Mississippi Rural Legal Services.

An online legal help site is being developed and is expected to begin operation this spring. The Commission is working with the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project to recruit attorneys to respond to questions via the online legal help site.

Also, an expungement web application is expected to begin operation this summer. The feature will help people who have criminal convictions determine whether those charges are eligible to be expunged.

Other meeting agenda items include:

- at 12:10 p.m., service providers are expected to present reports of their recent activities. Reports are expected from ACLU of MS, Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence/Northcutt Legal Clinic, Mission First Legal Aid Office, Mississippi Center for Justice, Mississippi Center for Legal Services, Mississippi College School of Law, Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights, Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, North Mississippi Rural Legal Services, Southern Poverty Law Center, and the University of Mississippi School of Law Clinic Programs.
- at 12:45 p.m., reports will be presented by Access to Justice committees. Attorneys Beau Cole and Beth Orlansky will talk about delivery of legal services for the poor. Michael Jones will talk about medical-legal partnerships. Rev. Hosea Hines, pastor of Christ Tabernacle Church in Jackson, will talk about faith-based initiatives. Chancery Judge Jacqueline Mask of Tupelo and Jamie Bardwell, deputy director of the Women's Foundation of Mississippi, will talk about improving public awareness. Supreme Court Presiding Justice Jess Dickinson and Dean Wendy Scott of the Mississippi College School of Law are expected to discuss resource development for access to justice initiatives.

After the meeting concludes at 1:45 p.m., members will go to the Capitol. Commission member Rep. David Baria will present House Concurrent Resolution 23, which commends a decade of work by the Commission to improve access to the civil courts for the poor.

The Access to Justice Commission later this year will celebrate its 10th anniversary. The Commission was created by the Mississippi Supreme Court in June 2006 to develop a unified strategy to improve poor people's access to the civil courts. The Commission is tasked to investigate the need for civil legal services to the poor in Mississippi, and to evaluate, develop and recommend policies, programs and initiatives which will assist the judiciary in meeting the civil legal services needs of the poor.

For more information, contact Executive Director Tiffany Graves at 601-960-9581 or visit the Access to Justice Commission website at <http://www.msatjc.org/>.

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