

## **Free legal clinics to be held in Pontotoc, Booneville and Tupelo**

September 15, 2016

Free family law clinics are scheduled for Sept. 26 at the Pontotoc County Chancery Court in Pontotoc, and Sept. 27 at the Prentiss County Courthouse in Booneville. Both clinics will be held 4 to 7 p.m.

Another free civil legal clinic is scheduled for 4 to 7 p.m. Nov. 15 on the third floor of the Lee County Justice Center in Tupelo.

Low income people may receive free legal assistance with adoptions, child support modification, custody, conservatorships, guardianships, irreconcilable differences divorces, emancipations and name changes. The legal clinics are intended to help low income people who are seeking to represent themselves in court because they cannot afford to hire a lawyer.

Chancellor Jacqueline Mask said, "These free legal clinics are important to ensure that in the First Chancery District, every person has access to justice and has access to the courthouse." At least one clinic is held annually in each of the eight counties of the First Chancery District.

During the clinics, local attorneys volunteer their time to meet with clinic participants. The attorneys will explain the proceedings, provide legal information, answer questions and assist applicants in preparing documents. The attorneys are not obligated to file documents and accompany clinic participants to the courtroom. The expectation is that individuals will be given adequate information to be able to represent themselves in court.

The free legal clinics are intended to help low income people. Eligibility to attend a clinic is limited to people whose income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. For example, that would be an annual income of \$23,760 or less for an individual, or an annual income of \$48,600 or less for a family of four.

People seeking free legal services must be screened in advance to determine eligibility. Contact the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project at 601-882-5001, or submit an online clinic intake form from this link: <http://www.mvlp.net/%20pro-se-legal-clinic-intake-form%20/>.

Upcoming free legal clinics are posted on the website of the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project at this link: <http://www.mvlp.net/pro-se-legal-clinic-schedule/>.

Another source of free legal assistance is the website [ms.freelegalanswers.org](http://ms.freelegalanswers.org), provided by the Access to Justice Commission and MVLP.

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