



JUSTICE *for* ALL

## **Access to Justice Commission to meet on March 7 in Jackson**

February 24, 2017

Mississippi was ranked 50th on the 2016 Justice Index. The Mississippi Access to Justice Commission wants to know why, and how to improve.

David Udell, executive director of the National Center for Access to Justice, will speak to the Access to Justice Commission at noon March 7 at the Mississippi Bar Center, 643 North State Street in Jackson. Commission members will gather for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

The National Center for Access to Justice created the Justice Index, a website that uses data, findings, indicators and indexing to rank the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., on their adoption of selected best policies for assuring access to justice.

Mississippi Access to Justice Commission Executive Director Tiffany Graves said, “Rather than wallow in our low-ranking sorrows, we are using this opportunity to learn and be proactive about improving our status going forward. We have invited Mr. Udell and his colleague, Jamie Gamble, to talk with us about how the Justice Index is formulated and to offer suggestions to us about how we can improve our future rankings. The information Mr. Udell will share should be useful to our overall work but also to the provider community as they consider new programs and initiatives to assist and empower Mississippi’s vulnerable communities.”

The Commission also will discuss the slow public response to the website [MS.freelegalanswers.org](http://MS.freelegalanswers.org), and efforts to increase public awareness of this free resource.

The website [MS.freelegalanswers.org](http://MS.freelegalanswers.org) was launched in August 2016 to answer civil legal questions for qualifying low-income residents. Volunteer Mississippi attorneys answer questions posted through the website. The website is at this link: <https://ms.freelegalanswers.org/>.

[Freelegalanswers.org](http://Freelegalanswers.org) is intended to answer questions about family law matters such as divorce, custody, child support, visitation, guardianship, emancipation, adoption, name change and birth certificate correction as well as domestic violence, bankruptcy, consumer issues, education, employment, housing, workers compensation, wills and estate planning. [Freelegalanswers.org](http://Freelegalanswers.org) does not deal with criminal law.

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/>.

The Access to Justice 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.

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