

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

MISSISSIPPI Access to Justice COMMISSION

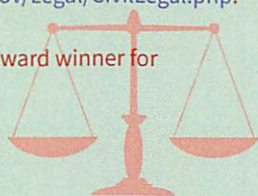
JUSTICE *for* ALL

STATEWIDE LEGAL CLINICS

The Mississippi Supreme Court challenged every Chancery Court District in Mississippi to begin hosting pro se legal clinics in June 2018 and requested that the Commission help organize the clinics. The clinics were very successful across the state. Through the Initiative, 851 people were given free legal assistance in 2018. The Supreme Court and the Commission again helped organize the clinics in 2019. The clinics were even more successful in 2019, assisting over 1,077 Mississippians in need. The clinics assisted with the following types of cases: **name change, divorce, child custody and support, expungements, emancipations, estate matters, domestic violence protection orders, child visitation, guardianships and adoptions.**

The list of free legal clinics can be found at: <https://courts.ms.gov/Legal/CivilLegal.php>.

The Mississippi Bar was named the 2019 ABA Harrison Tweed Award winner for its involvement with the Statewide Legal Clinic Initiative.



Harrison Tweed award presentation at ABA meeting – The Mississippi Bar President, Pat Bennett, (pictured center) receiving the Harrison Tweed Award on behalf of The Mississippi Bar at the August Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association. The co-sponsors of the award are Radhika M. Singh, Chief, Civil Legal Services, National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) and Theodore Howard, Chair, ABA Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants (SCLAID).



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

- 18** free legal clinics where **489 Mississippians** received assistance where sponsored by the Commission
- 16** presentations to legal associations, other associations and community groups
- 3** Bench Cards created for judicial education (*In Forma Pauperis*, Plain English and Limited Representation)
- 2** resources created for clerks and courts (Can and Cannots for Clerks and Court Staff and for Court Patrons)
- 3** issues of *What's New(s) in Access to Justice* newsletters
- 1** list of Volunteer Language Interpreters



UPDATED ONLINE INTERACTIVE FORMS

The Commission updated its online interactive forms in 2019. The interactive forms are online collectively at www.msatjc.org/legal-forms or individually:

Irreconcilable Differences Divorce: <https://lawhelpinteractive.org/Interview/GenerateInterview/3490/engine>

Adult Name Change: <https://lawhelpinteractive.org/Interview/Generateinterview/5247/engine>

Emancipation: <https://lawhelpinteractive.org/Interview/Generateinterview/4906/engine>

**COMING
SOON**

The Commission is working to produce a series of self-help videos to assist individuals represented by counsel and self-represented litigants prepare for court and navigate the legal system. The videos will be available at: <https://www.msatjc.org/preparing-for-court>



MISSISSIPPI Access to Justice COMMISSION

JUSTICE *for* ALL

The Mississippi Supreme Court created the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission on June 28, 2006 to develop a unified strategy to improve access to the civil courts for the poor. The

Commission is tasked with investigating the need for civil legal services to the poor in Mississippi and evaluating, developing and recommending policies, programs and initiatives that will assist the judiciary in meeting needs for civil legal services to the poor.



GOALS OF THE COMMISSION

- Identify the current and future needs of the legal services community in providing access to justice.
- Develop and establish a strategic statewide plan for delivery of legal services to the poor in Mississippi.
- Develop strategies and ideas to increase resources and funding for access to justice in civil legal matters, and to make recommendations to appropriate entities to ensure that the resources and funding are applied to the areas and organizations of the greatest need.
- Work to maximize the wise and efficient use of available resources, including development of local, regional and/or statewide systems that encourage the coordination of resources and funding.
- Develop and implement initiatives designed to expand civil access to justice.
- Work to reduce barriers to the justice system by addressing existing and proposed court rules, procedures, and policies.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the statewide system and service providers, and periodically evaluate the progress made in fulfilling their respective responsibilities.
- Consider relevant topics, including available funds and budgets, expansion of resources, increased public awareness through communications and message development, pro bono matters and other related matters, and to make recommendations as it deems appropriate.

COMMITTEES



- **Delivery System:** oversees the development of an expanded and improved system for providing civil legal services to low-income people.
- **Public Awareness:** works to raise awareness about the scope of the need for legal services.
- **Resource Development:** develops a long-term plan to increase funding to civil legal services programs.

GET CONNECTED WITH THE COMMISSION

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2020 PROJECTS

- Statewide Legal Clinics
- Self-Help Video Series
- Know Your Rights Pamphlets
- Continuing Legal Education Events

ONLINE RESOURCES

Mississippi Access to Justice Commission: www.msatjc.org
MSATJC's Expungement Website: www.ExpungeMississippi.com
Mississippi Free Legal Answers: <https://ms.freelegalanswers.org/>
The Mississippi Bar: www.msbar.org

