

MISSISSIPPI
Access to Justice
COMMISSION

2016 Year In Review



House Concurrent Resolution #23

On March 1, the Mississippi Legislature presented a resolution congratulating the Commission on 10 years of extraordinary service to Mississippians living in poverty without legal assistance.

By the Numbers:

- Co-sponsored **7** Expungement Workshops and Expungement Legal Clinics in Meridian, Jackson, and Hattiesburg. In total, **95** volunteer attorneys and law students assisted **523** people.
- Co-sponsored **3** “Lawyers in the Library” Legal Advice Clinics in Pascagoula, Cleveland, and Jackson. **40** volunteer attorneys assisted **107** people at the events.

- Hosted “Community Lunch Meetings” about free legal clinics in the area and access to justice in **6** counties, including Itawamba, Lee, Prentiss, Pontotoc, Tishomingo and Union. Over **250** superintendents, local government officials, law enforcement, court staff, school counselors, social workers, DHS staff, nonprofit and religious leaders attended.
- The Commission made **23** presentations to community groups and legal associations in **12** counties in Mississippi, including Adams, DeSoto, Hinds, Itawamba, Lauderdale, Lee, Oktibbeha, Prentiss, Pontotoc, Tishomingo, Union and Warren.

Medical-Legal Partnership Learning Session

On May 4, the Commission joined the State Department of Health’s Office of Health Disparities Elimination and the Mississippi Center for Justice in hosting Mississippi’s first Medical-Legal Partnership Learning Session at UMMC to discuss ways healthcare and legal communities can work together to assist vulnerable populations more holistically. 65 attorneys, judges, social workers, nurses, and physicians attended.



Launch of MS Free Legal Answers

On August 22, in sponsorship with the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, the Commission launched ms.freelegalanswers.org, a civil legal help site designed to assist Mississippi’s low-income citizens with their legal questions.



Access to Justice for All: 10th Anniversary Summit

On August 25, the Commission hosted the Access to Justice for All: 10th Anniversary Summit to reflect on past work and share its current programs and initiatives. Over 100 people attended the event, which featured keynote speaker, Lisa Foster, Director of the US Department of Justice’s Office for Access to Justice.

Launch of Expungement Screening Tool

In September, along with 2 web developers, the Commission launched an expungement tool that enables attorneys to electronically screen individuals who attend expungement workshops and export data they collect at the events. Prior to the tool’s launch, attorneys collected all expungement eligibility information by hand, frustrating the often large number of individuals at the workshops. Over 100 individuals have been screened with the tool and we expect the number to increase in coming years.

