

MISSISSIPPI
Access to Justice
COMMISSION

JUSTICE for ALL

Action Plan
2023-2024

The Mississippi Access to Justice Commission adopts this 2023-24 Action Plan in accordance with the proposed projects and priorities of the Commission in an effort to provide greater access to justice for every Mississippian. The Commission strives to complete these projects or work toward these goals in 2023-24 and thereafter.

Delivery System:

1. Expand online interactive forms database to include an online interview for Irreconcilable Differences Divorce with Children.
2. Expand resources on website for Youth Court issues, primarily to assist parents who represent themselves in Youth Court.
3. Continue to provide training seminars and distribute educational materials for guiding judges and court clerks in assisting self-represented litigants. Create recorded zoom training options and continue to offer in person training sessions.
4. Work toward developing self-help centers and/or resource tables at courthouses and libraries for self-represented litigants.
5. Create resources for courts and clerks about guardianships and add information to the website.
6. Develop flow charts and expand instruction sheets for cases for self-represented litigants. Review resources in Mississippi Judicial College's Bench Books for judges for content.

Public Awareness:

1. Promote Speakers Bureau and opportunities for Commission awareness. Continue to assist with presentation outlines and PowerPoint Materials.
2. Continue to keep brochure of legal service providers and resources updated and identify public areas for distribution/re-distribution. Contact newly elected public officials to inform about resources.
3. Continue outreach to local bar associations and other groups (Librarians, Educators, Community Groups) to promote the Commission and provide support for local access to justice initiatives.

4. Sponsor, promote and encourage free legal clinics across the state. Encourage expansion of clinics to include other issues, including expungements, debtor/creditor issues, housing.
5. Send MSATJC Pro Bono Toolkit to new judges during Pro Bono Week.

Resource Development:

1. Explore grant or other funding sources to sponsor law students participating in the MS Bar ATJ Committee's Rural Summer Clerkship Program.
 2. Assist legal aid providers in grant applications as requested and determined eligible/available. Explore grant opportunities.
 3. Determine whether CLEs or other income generating events might be used to supplement budget income to allow for additional projects and resources.
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Ongoing Commission Priorities

1. Ongoing review and evaluation of delivery systems – examining where there are gaps in services and how the Commission can help fill them.
2. Review MEC systems for capturing data on self-represented litigants – volume and case types.
3. Examine other statutory and procedural barriers to the justice system for self-represented litigants and make recommendations for change.
4. Explore the role of the Commission in meeting the legal needs of people above the legal services eligibility level who are nevertheless unable to afford counsel. (MVLP and Mission First assist individuals at 200% of poverty.) Consider partnering with the Mississippi Bar on a Modest Means Directory.
5. Work with the Mississippi Judicial College to continue to develop judicial education tools with training on how to ensure that self-represented litigants are fairly heard and prepare bench cards on varying topics for judges.
6. Explore additional ways to encourage and promote the legal profession and to increase the number of attorneys staying in Mississippi as a whole and especially in rural areas in Mississippi.