

JOINT PRESS RELEASE:



Legal Aid Society
of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland



WEST TENNESSEE
LEGAL SERVICES



Free Legal Hotline Available for Tennessee Storm Victims *Partnership between legal organizations helps residents in affected areas*

NASHVILLE, May 27, 2011 — A toll-free legal assistance hotline is now available for victims of recent storms, tornadoes and flooding in Tennessee counties designated as federal disaster areas. The service, which allows callers to request free advice from a lawyer, is a partnership between the Tennessee Bar Association, Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services, Legal Aid of East Tennessee, Legal Aid of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, Memphis Area Legal Services and West Tennessee Legal Services. The American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are national partners in the effort.

President Barack Obama has approved federal disaster declarations for the following counties:

- Bradley, Green, Hamilton and Washington (May 1)
- Bledsoe, Cocke, Johnson, McMinn, Monroe and Rhea (May 5)
- Dyer, Lake, Obion, Shelby and Stewart (May 9)
- Gibson and Lauderdale (May 26)
- Carroll, Crockett, Hardin, Henry and Madison (May 27)

A federal disaster declaration triggers the provision of individual disaster assistance in the affected areas, including free legal assistance.

Victims facing legal issues may call (888) 395-9297 any time to request assistance. Callers should identify that they are seeking flood-related legal assistance. Victims who qualify for assistance will be matched with Tennessee lawyers who have volunteered to provide free legal help.

The type of legal assistance available through the hotline includes:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other government benefits available to disaster victims
- Assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims
- Help with home repair contracts and contractors
- Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in the disaster
- Assistance in consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems

MORE INFORMATION

- Read the governor's announcement about the request for federal disaster aid at <http://news.tn.gov/node/7096>
- Read the Federal Emergency Management Agency's May 1 announcement of a federal disaster declaration at <http://www.fema.gov/news/event.fema?id=14272>
- Read the Federal Emergency Management Agency's May 5 announcement of new counties designated as federal disaster areas at <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=54768>
- Read the Federal Emergency Management Agency's May 9 announcement of new counties designated as federal disaster areas at <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=54864>
- Read Governor Haslam's notice of new counties with disaster designations as of May 26 <http://news.tn.gov/node/7248>
- Read Governor Haslam's notice of new counties with disaster designations as of May 27 <http://news.tn.gov/node/7256>

For additional information please contact:

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PARTERSHIP MEMBERS

The following groups are active in the provision of free disaster legal assistance to victims of storms, tornadoes and flooding in April:

Tennessee Bar Association (TBA) – The TBA is the largest professional association in Tennessee with over 11,000 members. Founded in 1881, the TBA provides opportunities for continuing legal education, professional development and public service. The TBA's dedication to serving the state's legal community is evidenced by its membership roll, which represents the entire spectrum of legal practice: plaintiff and defense lawyers, corporate counsel, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, government lawyers and legal services attorneys.

Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services (TALS) – TALS is a statewide non-profit organization that seeks to build partnerships to support the delivery of effective civil legal services to low-income and elderly Tennesseans. TALS is committed to increasing equal access to justice across Tennessee. For more information contact (615) 627-0956 or visit the alliance online at <http://www.tals.org>.

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) – The ABA YLD is the home for young lawyers. With more than 150,000 members and 300 affiliated groups, the ABA YLD is the largest young lawyer organization in the world. Learn more about its disaster legal assistance activities. With nearly 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional

membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law. Visit the ABA online at <http://www.abanet.org>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror. Through an agreement with the American Bar Association, FEMA underwrites the cost of operating toll free legal assistance lines for victims in areas designated as federal disaster sites. Visit the agency online at <http://www.fema.gov>

Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET) – The mission of LAET is to ensure equal justice for elderly, abused, and low income persons, providing a wide range of civil legal assistance and advocacy. LAET has been part of the community structure of East Tennessee for over 40 years, serving 26 counties from Chattanooga to Johnson City. With offices in Chattanooga, Cleveland, Knoxville, Johnson City, Maryville, and Morristown, LAET provides civil legal representation to East Tennesseans who otherwise have no one to help them secure their basic legal rights. For more information contact LAET at (865) 637-0484 or visit the agency online at <http://www.laet.org>

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland (LAS) – LAS was founded in 1968 as Legal Services of Nashville by eight members of the Nashville Bar Association. It has since expanded and consolidated with other organizations to help low-income people in 48 counties through eight offices. The organization focuses on individual cases and community education, and serves over 7,000 people each year. Legal Aid Society's mission is to enforce, advance and defend the legal rights of low-income and vulnerable families in order to obtain for them the basic necessities of life. The Legal Aid Society also houses and directs the Nashville Pro Bono Program, many of whose members also will be available to provide legal help to disaster victims. For more information contact LAS at (615) 244-6610 or visit the agency online at <http://www.las.org>.

Memphis Area Legal Services (MALS) – Since 1970, MALS has been committed to equal justice for all people, helping children, families and individuals solve problems that affect their basic needs. MALS serves nearly 8,000 people in distress each year. Its service area includes Fayette, Lauderdale, Shelby and Tipton counties. For more information contact (901) 523-8822 or visit the agency's website at <http://www.malsi.org>.

West Tennessee Legal Services Inc. (WTLS) – WTLS is a non-profit organization that provides assistance in civil cases to individuals, families and communities. It services 17 West Tennessee counties including Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Dyer, Decatur, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henry, Henderson, Lake, McNairy, Madison, Obion and Weakley. For more information call (731) 423-0616 or visit the agency's website at <http://www.wtls.org>.

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