



MISSISSIPPI
VOLUNTEER
LAWYERS
PROJECT

Advancing Justice, Restoring Hope



2017 IMPACT REPORT



MISSISSIPPI VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT: An Organizational Overview

Dear Friends of MVLP,

We are pleased to release to you the 2017 Impact Report for the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project. The past year was certainly a remarkable year as we marked 35 years of service in the state of Mississippi. Whether you donated to our mission financially or through your expertise, your role was valuable and made a significant impact on families. This report is simply our way of displaying the fruits of your labor.

You have heard us in the past talk about how MVLP has made a positive impact on the state's economy. Well, MVLP spent several months in 2017 submitting data to the Resource for Great Programs in an effort to quantify this positive impact. The Resource for Great Programs is a national corporation consisting of project teams from a network of seasoned professional consultants who research and analyze program data from community-based organizations and publish their findings in a multi-page report. The study revealed \$73.4 million in economic impacts by MVLP and our parent legal service providers – North Mississippi Rural Legal Services and Mississippi Center for Legal Services. We were so pleased with the results of this 6-month study that we thought we would share a snippet in this Impact Report. So, when we tell you your service is “valuable”, please take us at our word.

As you read this Impact Report, we are making strides and leaving our mark in 2018. Through a statewide initiative from the Mississippi Supreme Court, MVLP is elated to be a co-sponsor in 10 of the 20 chancery districts spreading more *pro se* legal clinics across the state to make sure no family is left without necessary legal services. We will tell you more about it next year. Just know that your resources have been and are continuing to be at work. Thank you for your impact!

Sincerely,

Gayla Carpenter-Sanders
Executive Director/General Counsel

Tammra Cascio
Board Chair

The Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, or "MVLP," is a 501(c) (3) non-profit legal aid organization. Formed in 1982, MVLP is the nation's first formal association of a state bar association, the Mississippi Bar Association, and the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). MVLP's long-standing relationship with the Mississippi Bar and the LSC has resulted in a professional and productive partnership, with attorneys unselfishly offering their time and talents to serve Mississippi's poor and less fortunate.

Even before completing its first year of operation, the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project was cited by the American Bar Association and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association as the country's single most outstanding program among state bar associations.

Since 1982, MVLP has helped thousands of clients with a wide array of legal matters. More recently, the organization has narrowed its services to assisting clients with domestic matters exclusively. MVLP is grateful to its volunteers for the sacrifices they make to change the lives of those in need. Without the contributions and support of volunteers and partners, MVLP could not have reached out to so many Mississippians in the broader effort to ensure equal access to justice for all.

In addition to offering direct legal assistance to clients through our volunteer attorneys, MVLP hosts legal clinics throughout the year. The clinics, which include training seminars for the volunteer attorneys who assist, are designed to help the public meet directly with attorneys to discuss their legal matters.

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*LEGAL INTAKE
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Robyn Kennebrew, MBA
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2017 MVLP SNAPSHOTS

5,478

Total number of individuals & their families impacted by MVLP's assistance in 2017

21

Total number of clinics hosted by MVLP in 2017

221

Total number of individuals assisted at 2017 legal clinics

24

Total number of CLE trainings offered by MVLP

231

Total number of judges, attorneys, & law students who attended 2017 CLEs

2017 Pro Bono Dinner Award Honorees

The Pro Bono Awards

The 2017 Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLP) *Pro Bono* Awards recognized individual lawyers, law firms, law students, law schools and other institutions in the legal profession throughout Mississippi that were involved in significant *pro bono* efforts from June 1, 2016 through June 1, 2017.

Katina Seymour Demoran, Esq.
Seymour Law Firm, PLLC
Biloxi, MS

Seth Shannon, Esq.
MDCPS
Jackson, MS

**Washington County
Bar Association**
Greenville, MS

**Magnolia
Bar Association**
Jackson, MS

The Beacon of Justice Award

The Beacon of Justice Award recognizes an individual who has exhibited outstanding leadership in promoting and supporting equal access to justice, particularly as it relates to *pro bono* services in Mississippi.

Honorable William L. Waller, Jr.
Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice
Jackson, MS

Curtis E. Coker Access to Justice Award

The Curtis E. Coker Access to Justice Award is presented to an individual, law firm or other organization that has provided or helped to provide outstanding *pro bono* legal services during the previous year. The main purpose of this Award is to foster awareness of the need for involvement of the private bar in delivering legal services to the poor, particularly through MVLP. The Award was originally established as the *Pro Bono* Project's President Award. However, in 2002 after the death of former Mississippi Bar President Curtis E. Coker, the name was changed in his honor. Mr. Coker was a leading advocate in the cause of making legal services available to all without regard to need. MVLP was established during Mr. Coker's term as Bar President.

Kenya Rachal, Esq.
Baker Donelson
Jackson, MS

Rodger Wilder, Esq.
Balch & Bingham LLP
Gulfport, MS

Chairman of the Board's Torchbearer Award

Honors firms and individuals who have financially contributed to MVLP's mission throughout the years.

**Mississippi Center for Legal Services
North Mississippi Rural Legal Services
The Mississippi Bar**

MAKING an IMPACT on MISSISSIPPI

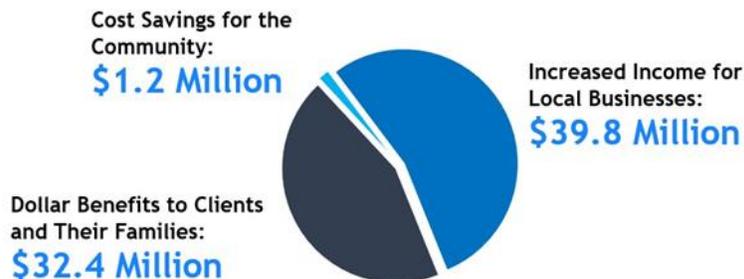
“Study shows legal aid efforts have positive economic impact in state.”

\$73.4 Million in Economic Impacts Sparked by Three (3) Mississippi Civil Legal Services Programs in 2016

Clients, businesses, and communities benefit from legal help provided by Mississippi Center for Legal Services (MCLS), Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLP), and North Mississippi Rural Legal Services (NMRLS), according to a recent economic impact study performed by Resource for Great Programs.

\$73.4 Million in Impacts: 12-to-1 Return on Investment in Mississippi

From Cases Closed in 2016 by MCLS, MVLP, and NMRLS



Program Funding Versus Economic Impacts

From Cases Closed in 2016 by MCLS, MVLP, and NMRLS



Resource for Great Programs. (2017). *Mississippi Economic Impact Study*. Retrieved March 26, 2018 from <https://courts.ms.gov/newsite2/news/2017/MS%20Econ%20Impact.pdf>

“Study shows legal aid efforts have positive economic impact in state.” *State of Judiciary Administrative Office of the Courts*, 20 Dec. 2017, www.courts.ms.gov/newsite2/news/news_2017.

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RULE 6.1 VOLUNTARY *PRO BONO* PUBLIC SERVICE

- (a) Professional Responsibility. Each member of the Mississippi Bar in good standing and not exempt hereunder, as part of the member's professional responsibility, should
- (1) render *pro bono* legal services to the poor and
 - (2) participate, to the extent 102 possible, in other *pro bono* service activities that directly relate to the legal needs of the poor.
- (b) Discharge of the Professional Responsibility to Provide *Pro Bono* Legal Services to the Poor. The professional responsibility to provide *pro bono* legal services to the poor may be discharged by:
- (1) annually providing at least 20 hours of *pro bono* legal services to the poor, or
 - (2) annually providing at least 20 hours of *pro bono* legal services to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental or educational organizations for the purpose of providing legal counsel and representation to the poor, or
 - (3) making an annual contribution of at least \$200 to the Mississippi Bar, which will be used by the Bar to provide legal services to the poor through legal aid organizations.

Thank You to Our Externs & Law Student Volunteers



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 Lara Boston
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- Black Law Student Association (BLSA)
- Bradley Arant
- Capital Area Bar Association (CABA)
- Entergy Mississippi
- Harrison County Bar Association
- Haven House
- Hinds Community College
- Federal Bar Association: *MS Chapter*
- Forman Watkins
- Jackson Hinds Library Systems
- Jackson Young Lawyers (JYL)
- Lafayette County Bar Association
- Lawyers in the Parish Hall
- Life Core
- Lynn Meadows Discovery Center
- Madison County Bar Association
- Magnolia Bar Association
- Millsaps College
- Mississippi Access to Justice Commission
- Mississippi Center for Legal Services (MCLS)
- Mississippi Center for Nonprofits
- Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence (MCADV)
- Mississippi College School of Law
- Mississippi Women Lawyers Association (MWLA)
- North Mississippi Rural Legal Services (NMRLS)
- Old Capitol Inn
- Outside the Box
- Panola County Bar Association
- Rankin County Bar Association
- Southwest County Bar Association
- Sunflower County Bar Association
- The Mississippi Bar Association
- Union Station – Meridian, MS
- University of Mississippi School of Law: *Pro Bono Initiative (PBI)*
- Washington County Chancery Court
- Washington County Bar Association

MVLP encourages attorneys to partner with us to bring pro se legal clinics to their communities. Individuals who participate in these clinics can have documents drafted in the following areas: ID divorces, emancipations, expungements, guardianships, powers of attorney, simple wills, visitation, and other domestic matters. MVLP will help recruit local attorneys, ensure CLE credit to the attorneys who attend, provide malpractice liability coverage for the attorneys, and provide form pleadings to the volunteer attorneys.

Thank You to Our Donors!

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Services Provided by MVLP in 2017

Irreconcilable Differences Divorce: Both parties must want to be divorced and agree to all terms of the divorce. The waiting period before the divorce can be final is sixty (60) days.

Desertion Divorce: To obtain this type of divorce, a spouse must have left the marital home, been gone for one continuous year and not tried to return to the marriage. A witness is required to support claims of desertion.

Sentenced to Penitentiary Divorce: To obtain this type of divorce, a spouse must be or have been incarcerated in a state or federal prison.

Visitation: A noncustodial parent may seek visitation with a minor child if he/ she is paying child support or has a desire to do so.

Child Support Modification: Child support awards may be modified, either upwards or downwards, if there has been a substantial and material change in circumstances after a child support order has been entered that affects one's ability to pay.

Child Support Contempt: When a person obligated to pay child support is not doing so, he/ she may be sued for child support contempt. He/ she may then be ordered to pay back child support, along with the regular child support obligation.

Guardianship: A guardian other than the parents may be appointed over a minor child where either of the child's parents is deceased and/ or the minor's parents or a surviving parent is unable to fulfill the obligations of a parent.

Conservatorship: Conservatorships are granted when a person, by reason of advanced age, physical incapacity or mental weakness, is no longer able to properly care for his or herself.

Adoption: A person may be adopted regardless of age. If the natural parents of the person to be adopted are still living, then the parents must either consent to the adoption or their parental rights must be terminated.

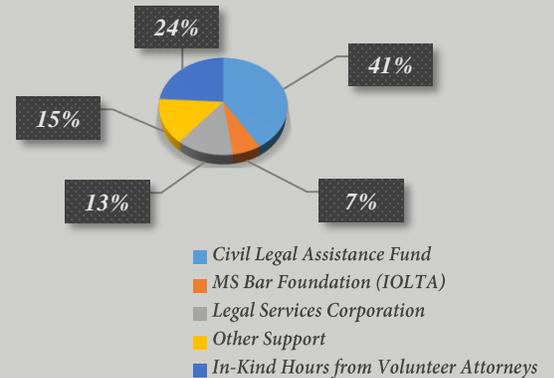
Emancipation: The age of majority in Mississippi is twenty-one (21). To become emancipated before twenty-one (21), a minor must file a petition in writing and join a "next friend" - typically a biological parent or next of kin.

Birth Certificate Correction/Name Change: For the procurement of benefits, identification documents or other needs, Mississippi allows changes/alterations to birth certificates at the discretion of courts and the state's vital records agency.

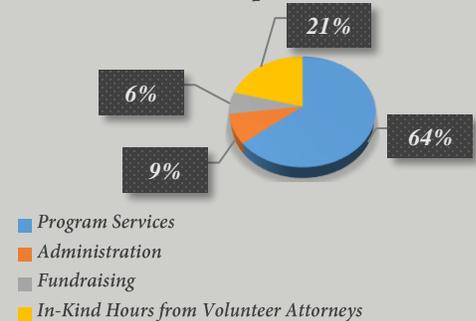
Wills: A will is a legal document that states one's desires concerning what will happen to assets after death. A will also contains other specific directions concerning who is to follow the instructions of the will and who will care for minor children that may be left behind.

2017 SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Revenue & Other Support



Expenses



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