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For Immediate Release

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**Free Legal Assistance Available for Residents
of Jefferson and Shelby Counties**

A toll-free legal aid hotline is now available for people harmed and effected by flooding and severe weather that occurred on October 6th-7th, 2021 for residents of Jefferson County, Alabama and Shelby County, Alabama. This service is a partnership between the Alabama State Bar Association, the Young Lawyers Section of the Alabama State Bar, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Low-income individuals facing legal issues as a result of the severe weather and flooding may call 334-517-2250 or 1-800-354-6154 and ask for the Disaster Legal Assistance Line or ext 2250 between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Callers should identify that they are seeking storm or flood related legal assistance, identify the county in which they are located and be prepared to provide a phone number where they can be reached by an Alabama attorney. Examples of legal assistance available include:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other benefits available to disaster survivors
- 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 severe weather and flooding
- Assisting in consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems

Individuals who qualify for assistance will be matched with Alabama lawyers who have volunteered to provide free, limited legal help.

On December 21, 2021, FEMA announced a major disaster declaration for Jefferson and Shelby counties making federal funding available to individuals and households who sustained disaster-caused damages and disaster-related losses as a result of the severe weather and flooding between October 6th-7th, 2021.

Individuals and households who sustained property damage as a result of the severe storms or flooding are urged to apply for assistance with FEMA, if they have not already done so, as they may be eligible for federal and state disaster financial assistance. Jefferson and Shelby county residents can apply online at DisasterAssistance.gov or via smartphone or Web-enabled device at m.fema.gov. Applicants may also call 800-621-3362 - 6 a.m. to midnight Central Time 7 days a week. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. If you use 711 or relay service, such as Video Relay Service (VRS), captioned telephone or other service, give FEMA the number for that service.

Partner Organizations

The following organizations have joined forces to establish a toll-free phone line for Alabama severe weather and flood survivors to request free legal assistance and to provide volunteer attorneys to handle cases arising from recent flood damage in Jefferson and Shelby counties.

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division

The ABA YLD, the largest national organization of young lawyers, provides leadership in serving the public and the profession and promotes excellence and fulfillment in the practice of law. Its parent organization, the ABA, is the national voice of the legal profession and the largest voluntary professional membership group in the world.

Alabama State Bar Young Lawyers Section

The Young Lawyers Section of the Alabama State Bar is a professional service organization comprised of members of the Alabama State Bar in good standing under 36 years of age, or those admitted to the Alabama State Bar as their first bar within the past 5 years. The YLS coordinates various programs across the state that are designed to serve the public and advance the legal profession.

The Alabama Volunteer Lawyers Program

The Alabama State Bar Volunteer (VLP) was created in 1990 by the Alabama State Board of Bar Commissioners to provide an organized vehicle through which attorneys can volunteer their services on a pro bono basis in civil matters to indigent citizens in their community. The VLP began its operation in 1991 and has delivered free legal services to low-income residents of Alabama for more than 25 years. The VLP helps low-income citizens whom other programs often cannot serve.

The VLP receives generous support from the Alabama State Bar, Alabama Law Foundation and Legal Services Alabama, as well as private contributions.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters and emergencies whether natural, man-made, or technological including acts of terror. Through an agreement with the American Bar Association, FEMA underwrites the costs of operating toll-free legal assistance lines for survivors in areas designated as federal disaster sites.