

New Website Provides Free Legal Help For Low-Income Kansans

Kansas is now part of a national network to provide free legal assistance to income-eligible individuals. In conjunction with a new program that is hosted by the American Bar Association, the Kansas Bar Association has launched <https://Kansas.freelegalanswers.org>. The service is geared to expand legal services for those who cannot afford an attorney. Users will have to meet eligibility guidelines applicable to each state.

Civil legal questions (up to three per year) are submitted online and users will receive an answer via email. The site is accessible from any internet connection and open to receive questions at any time or day of the week. All questions asked on ABA Free Legal Answers are protected by attorney-client privilege.

The free virtual legal advice clinic model was first launched in Tennessee and eventually adopted by the American Bar Association to take nationwide. The program is supported by a long list of organizations and is a project of the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. Next week is the ABA's national week long celebration of Pro Bono.

In addition to providing legal advice, the program provides attorneys with an opportunity to give back through pro bono. As former attorney General Eric Holder states, "**We are bound by a responsibility to use our unique skills and training - not just to advance cases, but to serve a cause; and to help our nation fulfill its founding promise of equal justice under law...The obligation of pro bono service must become a part of the DNA of both the legal profession and of every lawyer.**"

Marilyn Harp, member of the KBA Access to Justice Committee and Executive Director of Kansas Legal Services, said

"Many Kansans do not have access to information about how laws apply to their own lives. We appreciate the work of the Kansas Bar Association and volunteer attorneys who are working to expand this valuable new approach in Kansas. The resource is a good companion to the forms and education currently available on the Kansas Legal Services website (www.kansaslegalservices.org). Making free legal answers available virtually nationwide will be helpful to a great many people."