



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Amy Carman
Communications Director
Kentucky Bar Association
(502) 564-3795, ext. 294
acarman@kybar.org

Scott Laufenberg
Chair, KBA Young Lawyers
Section Disaster Legal Relief
Committee
(270) 782-8160
slaufenberg@kscvlaw.com

Free Legal Assistance Available for Victims of Severe Storms, Flooding, Mudslides and Tornadoes

Partnership between Kentucky legal organizations, ABA and FEMA helps residents

FRANKFORT, KY – (June 9, 2010) — A toll-free legal aid line is now available for recent victims of severe storms, flooding, mudslides and tornadoes that occurred on May 1, 2010, in Kentucky.

Counties included are: Adair, Allen, Anderson, Barren, Bath, Bourbon, Boyd, Boyle, Butler, Carter, Casey, Christian, Clark, Clinton, Crittenden, Cumberland, Edmonson, Elliott, Estill, Fleming, Franklin, Garrard, Green, Greenup, Hardin, Hart, Henry, Hopkins, Jackson, Jessamine, Larue, Lee, Leslie, Lewis, Lincoln, Livingston, Logan, Madison, Magoffin, Marion, Menifee, Mercer, Metcalfe, Monroe, Montgomery, Nelson, Nicholas, Ohio, Owen, Powell, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Rowan, Russell, Simpson, Taylor, Warren, Wayne, Washington, Woodford, and Wolfe.

The service, which allows callers to request the assistance of a lawyer, is a partnership between the Kentucky Bar Association, the Kentucky Bar Association Young Lawyers Section, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, Kentucky Legal Aid, Legal Aid of the Bluegrass, the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund of Kentucky, Inc., the Legal Aid Society, Kentucky's Volunteer Lawyer Program, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Victims facing legal issues who are unable to afford a lawyer may call (877-445-8763) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (EDT), Monday through Friday to request assistance. Messages can be left at any time. Callers should identify that they are seeking disaster-related legal assistance. Victims who qualify for assistance will be matched with Kentucky lawyers who have volunteered to provide free legal help. Information can also be found at www.kydisasterlegalrelief.com.

The type of legal assistance available includes:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other government benefits available to disaster victims
- Assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims

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- Help with home repair contracts and contractors
- Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in the disaster
- Assisting in consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems

Background

When the U.S. President declares a major disaster, FEMA, in cooperation with the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, establishes a toll-free number for disaster victims to request legal assistance. Funding for the toll-free line comes from FEMA under the authority of Section 415 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law No. 100-707). The American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division in turn partners with state bar associations and other legal organizations to recruit volunteer lawyers in affected areas to handle victims' cases.

Victims should be aware that there are some limitations on disaster legal services. For example, assistance is not available for cases that will produce a fee (i.e., those cases where attorneys are paid part of the settlement by the court). Such cases are referred to a local lawyer referral service.

Partnership Members

The following organizations have joined forces to establish a toll-free phone line for Kentucky storm victims to request free legal assistance, and to provide volunteer attorneys to handle cases arising from recent storm damage.

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) – The American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division 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.

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.

Kentucky Bar Association (KBA) – Operating as an agency of the Supreme Court of Kentucky, the Kentucky Bar Association is a mandatory bar with more than 16,000 members. To practice law in Kentucky, lawyers must be a member of the KBA. Founded in 1871, the KBA assists the Court in the regulation of lawyer discipline and continuing legal education.

Kentucky Bar Association Young Lawyers Section (KBA Young Lawyers Section) – The largest voluntary section of the KBA, the KBA Young Lawyers Section Disaster Legal Relief Committee leads the statewide response to any request for disaster legal services by recruiting volunteer attorneys and partnering with the Commonwealth's legal aid organizations to meet the needs of victims of disasters.

The Kentucky Volunteer Lawyer Program (KVLP) – KVLP is the statewide coordinating entity for the four civil legal aid pro bono programs across Kentucky: Kentucky Legal Aid; the Legal Aid Society; Legal Aid of the Bluegrass; and the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund. As a part of KVLP's mission, the recruitment of Kentucky lawyers to give of their time for pro bono projects is of highest priority.

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Legal Aid Society (LAS) – The mission of the Legal Aid Society is to pursue justice for people in poverty. Legal Aid provides free legal services to low-income families and individuals facing serious threats to their physical and economic well-being. For more information, visit Legal Aid’s website at www.laslou.org.

Appalachian Research and Defense Fund of Kentucky, Inc. (AppalReD) – AppalReD provides free legal help for people and groups who cannot afford a private attorney in the eastern part of the Commonwealth.

Legal Aid of the Bluegrass – Legal Aid of the Bluegrass provides civil legal assistance designed to alleviate the most brutal problems of the low income people living in 33 northern and central Kentucky counties.

Kentucky Legal Aid – The mission of Kentucky Legal Aid is to assist and enable low income families, elderly, disabled and other vulnerable individuals in South Central and Western Kentucky to resolve legal problems that are barriers to self sufficiency, and to provide these individuals an opportunity for an improved quality of life.