

Tennessee Faith and Justice Alliance

TFJA



THE TENNESSEE
FAITH & JUSTICE
ALLIANCE

NOVEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

“We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give,” --Winston Churchill



Dear Tennessee Faith & Justice Alliance members,

As October closes Pro Bono Month and Clergy Appreciation Month where we give thanks for our volunteer attorneys and clergy through #PBFDDays, November marks a season where we say thank you to another type of hero who works to safeguard liberty and justice for all. In November, through Veterans Day, we pause to celebrate and say thank you to our military, for whom we are very grateful.

Lawyers and clergy have a unique opportunities to use their skills in order to give back to Veterans in many ways. Through the Tennessee Faith and Justice Alliance and legal non-profits in TN, there are many opportunities to serve a Veteran. This newsletter will spotlight some of those ways.

"It's about how we treat our veterans every single day of the year. It's about making sure they have the care they need and the benefits that they've earned when they come home. It's about serving all of you as well as you've served the United States of America."

-- Barack Obama, To Veterans on Veterans Day 2010

Opportunities for Attorneys

Military Mondays: Bringing Legal Expertise to Veterans in Starbucks

Just like the Tennessee Faith & Justice Alliance works to meet people where they are, the premise of Military Mondays is simple. More people live near a Starbucks than a Veterans Administration facility. Why not meet people over coffee in a place they already love to address legal issues? Kathryn Tucker of West Tennessee Legal Services brought this idea to Tennessee, and is in the process of implementing this program in the Jackson, TN, area. The first Military Monday through that program will be held following Veterans Day. If you are interested in learning more about the program, volunteering with Military Mondays through West Tennessee Legal Services, or bringing the program to a Starbucks near you, please contact Kathryn Tucker at kathrynt@wtls.org

“We're hoping to increase awareness in our civilian population about what our military members and their families sacrifice to protect our country.” --Starbucks Military Mondays

The Veterans Project: Attorney for the Day Wednesdays

The Veterans Project organizes lawyers and community partners to identify veterans legal issues, with an emphasis on veterans who are homeless or facing homelessness and provide representation to address these legal issues.

Between October 11, 2017 and November 1, 2017, 20 veterans have been provided assistance, addressing 27 different legal problems including, landlord tenant, access to public housing, expungement, driver's license revocation, waiver of fines and costs, divorce, custody child support.

Volunteer attorneys through this program may be asked to staff "Attorney for the Day" Wednesdays from 11am-1pm at Operation Stand Down TN (OSDTN) to provide legal advice/counsel and resource referrals, assist with extended representation placement, and staff special events. Training on common issues relevant to Veterans is available.

The Veterans Project is a partnership of the NBA, Veterans Court, Office of the Mayor, Metro Homelessness

Commission, OSDTN, and Legal Aid Society/Volunteer Lawyers Program (Legal Aid Society). To volunteer with the Veterans Project or learn more about this program, please contact Lucinda Smith at lsmith@las.org

Veterans Legal Clinics: See E.G. Knox County, Shelby County, Hamilton County, and Henry County

One of the simplest ways for an attorney to help a Veteran is by attending a Veterans Legal Clinic. There are many Veterans Clinics that occur throughout the state.

For example, in **East Tennessee**, there is a recurring Veterans Clinic in Knox County that occurs on the Second Wednesday of the Month. Contact Katherine Ellis at kellis@laet.org for more info. As an example in **West Tennessee**, there is recurring Veterans Clinic in Shelby County that occurs on the Fourth Tuesday of the Month. Contact Danielle Salton at dsalton@malsi.org for more info.

There are also **Special Veterans Day Clinics** which will happen in November 2017. For example, there is a Veterans Legal Clinic, in **Henry County** on Monday November 13th held at Paris First United Methodist Church. Contact Rebecca Griffey at Rebecca.griffey@tn.gov for more info. There is also a Veterans Resource Day in **Hamilton County** on Saturday, November 11th held at the National Guard Armory. Contact Paige Evatt at pevatt@laet.org for more info.

“I was so inspired by her determination to restore dignity, hope and self-sufficiency **not only to herself but also to her fellow female veterans in need.** When she hugged me at the end of her session, I felt the difference, be it small, I may have made in her life, by just patiently listening and filling out some legal papers for rebuilding her life... [T]hrough this pro bono work, I feel very fortunate to be a lawyer and among the few who can make the legal system work **for people who give us all they have – gratitude.** On the way home, I remembered why I went to law school, but this time with assurance.”

–Attorney Recounting Her Experience at a Veterans Legal Clinic

Resources for Faith Leaders

Faith leaders may encounter Veterans or family members of Veterans who do not know where to turn for help, and it is important that those Faith Leaders be equipped with the tools to guide people in the right direction. If you are working with a Veteran, or any person, who is unable to identify what of legal issues they have or does not know where to turn for help, a Legal Wellness Checkup may help.

The American Bar Association has developed a Legal Checkup that is specifically designed for Veterans. That resource can be accessed here: <https://veteranslegalcheckup.com/>

TALS has also developed a Legal Wellness Checkup that is specifically tailored to link a person directly to resources in Tennessee that have been personalized to their specific legal needs and location. That resource can be accessed here: <https://www.help4tn.org/node/432/take-your-legal-wellness-checkup>

As always, if you encounter a Veteran or anyone else who needs legal help and does not know where to turn, please remember to direct them to the www.help4tn.org website which compiles free and other legal resources in the state. In addition, anyone may call the 1-844-Help4TN phone line to receive basic civil legal advice and referrals. Finally, you may encourage community members who qualify for free legal help to ask their questions on the American Bar Associations’ free legal portal: www.freelegalanswers.org



Photos taken at Military Spouse Rule Celebration and Recognition Event, June 1, 2017, Supreme Court Building, Nashville