

Mahoning Bar launches Access to Justice Committee

The Mahoning County Bar Association is tackling access to justice issues head-on.

The Bar Association recently announced the formation of the Access to Justice Committee, whose mission is to improve the stability and employability of the community by providing greater access to legal services, education and advocacy.

“Our residents here in Mahoning County can be battered by issues that prevent them from getting jobs or that just hold them back in life,” explained Elsa Reale Gottfried, an attorney with Community Legal Aid and chair of the newly formed committee. “When these issues are legal in nature, it can be intimidating and completely overwhelming for them to find a solution. And a lot of times, they can’t afford to hire an attorney to help them navigate the system. So what do they do?”

The committee plans to host a series of legal clinics designed to address common issues such as sealing a criminal record, reinstating drivers’ licenses, and educating the public on their legal rights when applying for a job..

“One of our primary goals is to help our residents eliminate barriers to employment,” said Gottfried. “By opening this door, these individuals will be able to take positive steps toward stability for themselves and their families. And that benefits the community as a whole, right? When one of us does better, we all do better.”

In addition to helping Mahoning residents, the committee will launch a series of free continuing legal education (CLE) courses to educate local attorneys on the skills needed to help impoverished clients overcome common legal barriers. The first round of these courses is slated to kick off next month.

“Our hope is that attorneys will come and learn more about the goals of the committee, what they can do to help, and leave wanting to give back by volunteering at some of our clinics,” said Gottfried. “But even if they aren’t sure they want to make that level of commitment, we hope they still come and get some free CLE credits!”

Gottfried added that attorneys who have an interest in learning more should reach out to the Bar Association or simply come to a meeting. The committee meets monthly on the first Wednesday at noon at the Mahoning County Bar Association.

To learn more about the committee or any of the upcoming events, contact Elsa Reale Goffried at 330-983-2568.

Sidebar:

Upcoming events for residents:

2019 Sealing and Expungement Clinic

& Community Resource Fair

Event hosted jointly by Judge Carla Baldwin, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and Community Legal Aid

Saturday, October 19th, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Eastern Gateway College

(101 E. Federal Street in Youngstown)

Driver's License Suspension Clinic

Hosted by Judge Renee DiSalvo

Saturday, October 26th, 12:00-2:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

(201 Wick Avenue in Youngstown.)

Sidebar:

Upcoming events for attorneys:

Access to Justice Committee Meeting

Wednesday, October 2nd, noon

Mahoning County Bar Association

(114 E. Front Street in Youngstown)

Pancakes for Pro Bono

3rd Annual Pro Bono Celebration Breakfast

Join us for a fun networking event, free breakfast, and an opportunity to chat with local judges

Wednesday, Oct. 16th, 8-10 a.m.

Mahoning County Bar Association

(114 E. Front Street in Youngstown)

CLE: Record Sealing & Professionalism

Come for pancakes, but stay for the FREE CLE

Wednesday, Oct. 16th, 9:55 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Mahoning County Bar Association

(114 E. Front Street in Youngstown)

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