

# County issues proclamation for Pro Bono Week in October

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**COLUMBIANA** – The week of Oct. 23-29 is Pro Bono Week in Shelby County and across the state.

The Shelby County Commission issued a proclamation Sept. 12 to encourage all county residents “to recognize the contributions of our legal community helping those most in need.”

The week is sponsored by the Alabama State Bar and its Pro Bono Celebration Task Force and supported by local bar associations statewide.

The week will “educate the public about the extensive work Alabama lawyers are doing donating their time to improve the lives” of those living in poverty,” the proclamation reads. It will also “encourage more individuals in the legal community to get involved in pro bono work and financially support the legal aid system.”

Throughout the week, legal aid clinics will be held to provide legal assistance to those who can’t afford it. The week will also feature service projects throughout the state to help lawyers and law students make volunteer connections with legal aid organizations.

Last year, one in every four of the 940,872 state residents living in poverty experienced legal problems, according to the proclamation. Most were civil issues, including consumer issues, health issues, family law issues, employment issues and housing issues.

According to the proclamation, 6.9 percent of Shelby County residents live in poverty.

“The need for legal aid in Alabama is dire, since unlike in the criminal defense system, funding for low-income Alabamians who need civil legal assistance has not yet been met, with the consequences being a lack of access to justice which is devastating for the poor and which weakens our democratic state as a whole,” the proclamation reads.

According to the proclamation, 10 percent of the county’s legal community donates time for free legal services each year. Statewide, there are less than 55 paid legal aid lawyers to serve more than 422,119 low-income households.