



MISSISSIPPI

SETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
A PROJECT OF THE MISSISSIPPI VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT

What is MSAP?

The Mississippi Settlement Assistance Program (MSAP) is a joint collaboration between the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLV) and the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi. The purpose of the program is to provide free legal assistance to low-income *pro se* litigants in civil matters filed in the United States District Court. Specifically, the program will provide assistance for Magistrate Judge-led settlement conferences, only. The program is designed to: assist *pro se* litigants with resolution of cases; provide federal court mediation experience to attorneys who are certified to volunteer with this program; and help clear *pro se* dockets within the federal court system.

What cases are included?

MSAP will offer assistance to non-prisoner and incarcerated individuals who have filed civil rights claims, *pro se*.

How does MSAP work?

The United States District Court will refer a *pro se* litigant to the program. MVLV will screen the individual for eligibility and solicit the participation of pro bono counsel. The pro bono counsel will review the necessary pleadings to draft or respond to a settlement demand letter; draft the required Confidential Settlement Memorandum and submit said memorandum to the court; and participate in a court-mandated settlement conference.

Who qualifies for free assistance?

Individuals typically qualify for services if their combined household income is less than 200% of the federal poverty guidelines and if they meet citizenship requirements. Individuals will be referred from the United States District Court.

HOW IT WORKS



Screen litigants for
eligibility



Place with pro bono
counsel



Participate in
settlement conference



Contact MVLV with
results

What are the attorney's requirements?

To participate in the program, attorneys must:

- (1) be a member in good standing of the Mississippi Bar;
- (2) be in the active practice of law for a minimum of two (2) years;
- (3) complete the Mississippi Settlement Assistance Program Training; and
- (4) agree to bear the expenses of a pro bono appointment under this Rule. MVLP will use grant funds to reimburse pro bono counsel for up to \$100 of their expenses, provided the qualified pro bono counsel provides MVLP with a detailed reporting of said expenses.

Who can I call for more information?

For more information or to sign up for training, contact Gayla Carpenter-Sanders, Executive Director/General Counsel of MVLP at gsanders@mvlp.org or at (601) 948-4476.

What is the cost to me?

The training is free. However, we ask that certified pro bono counsel commit to two (2) cases per year between November 15, 2018-August 31, 2019.

What are the training dates?

Trainings will be held quarterly in November, February, June, and August. Registration is limited to the first 25 attorneys to sign up per training. An attorney will only need to participate in one training.

What does the training include?

The training includes:

- 1) Free interactive training provided by Federal Magistrate Judge;
- 2) Jump drive with materials and settlement conference pleading templates;
- 3) Opportunity to participate in mock settlement conference administered by Federal Magistrate Judge;
- 4) MSAP Certification;
- 5) Lunch;
- 6) Pro Bono Hours; and
- 7) CLE credits.

This project is sponsored by:

