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**Free Civil Legal Help Available for Low-Income Residents Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic**

LOUISIANA – A toll-free civil legal help hotline is now available to low-income residents of southeast Louisiana impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. With schools closed and businesses shuttering doors, many low-income people, already struggling to make ends meet, have lost their jobs or are unable to work. Workers and other vulnerable people in our communities, already stressed by concerns of how to keep their families healthy and safe, now have to also worry about whether they can keep a roof over their heads, whether their family will have enough food to eat, and whether they can access the civil justice system to protect them when they most need it. Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, the largest nonprofit civil legal aid firm in southeast Louisiana, is launching this resource to help residents overcome legal barriers to maintaining safety, stability, and life’s necessities.

**Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) COVID-19 Hotline**

**1-844-244-7871**

Monday through Friday from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Central Standard Time

Online applications are also available at [www.slls.org](http://www.slls.org).

**Free Civil Legal Help Available from the COVID-19 Legal Helpline**

Callers must meet financial and other requirements to receive free civil legal assistance. People who qualify will be matched with an attorney who will provide free legal help with civil legal issues, including:

* Unemployment Benefits Denials
* Inability to Apply for Unemployment
* Wage Claim, Paid Sick Time, Family Medical Leave Act, or other Job-Related Issues
* Tenant’s Rights Issues like Evictions or Lockouts
* Problems with Housing Authorities or Section 8 Voucher
* Landlord-Tenant Disputes
* Mortgage or Foreclosure Issues
* Veterans Legal Issues
* Wills/Living Wills or Successions
* Social Security Disability and SSI
* Food Stamps Denials
* Inability to Apply for Food Stamps
* TANF/Welfare Issues
* Medicaid Benefits Denials
* Inability to Apply for Medicaid Benefits
* Protective Orders for Domestic Violence Victims
* Custody/Visitation Issues related to COVID-19

Callers should be aware that there are limitations on the legal services the SLLS COVID-19 Hotline will provide. For example, assistance is not available for criminal cases, personal injury cases, or worker’s compensation claims. Due to the large volume of calls, it may take up to 48 hours to return calls.

Low-income people needing help for other civil legal problems not directly related to COVID-19 can apply for free legal help online at www.slls.org or by calling one of SLLS’ six local offices listed at [www.slls.org](http://www.slls.org). To find more information about your legal rights, and to read important updates about the law and COVID-19 related legal issues, visit www.LouisianaLawhelp.org.

**Background Information**

Civil legal aid is a vital component of the response to and recovery from the current public health crisis. From lost wages to evictions, to domestic violence problems made worse by quarantine, the impacts from the Coronavirus pandemic has led to a crisis in our courts and civil justice system. Just as we have during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the BP Oil Spill, the 2016 Louisiana Floods, and other crises, SLLS remains committed to meeting the challenges of COVID-19 by addressing these civil legal problems and fighting for the rights and protection of low-income people in our communities.

**About Southeast Louisiana Legal Services**

Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) fights for fairness in the justice system. It is a nonprofit organization that provides free civil legal representation, advocacy, and community education to help low-income and other vulnerable people overcome civil legal barriers. We serve 22 parishes across southeast Louisiana. Our six offices are located in Baton Rouge, Covington, Hammond, Harvey, Houma, and New Orleans. Our mission is to achieve justice for low-income people in Louisiana by enforcing and defending their legal rights through free legal representation, advocacy, and community education. Every day, SLLS protects domestic violence survivors, empowers abused and neglected children by giving them a voice in court, preserves housing for hard-working families, works to end homelessness for veterans and people living with disabilities, stands up for elderly consumers, removes barriers to accessing medical care, improves vulnerable people’s access to employment and education, and much more.

For more information about SLLS, visit www.slls.org and follow us on Facebook (@SLLShelps).