

Technology Grant Makes Legal Help More Accessible to Disadvantaged Tennesseans

JACKSON – Many Tennesseans face legal problems relating to their basic human needs- safe housing, protection from abuse, access to benefits needed to sustain a family in crisis- and can't afford to hire an attorney to help them. Left unaddressed, these issues can drive people further into poverty. Thanks to a \$229,000 Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) from Legal Services Corporation to West Tennessee Legal Services (WTLS), Tennesseans' ability to connect to the legal resources they need online will be greatly improved.

WTLS' grant will fund the enhancement of the www.HELP4TN.org portal to create interactive legal forms for self-represented litigants, add a "chat bot" feature making the search for help conversational and more user friendly and provide for digital marketing to increase awareness of the service. The chatbot will interact with online users to guide them through the process of finding legal resources and deliver legal forms based on user-provided information.

"LSC's Technology Initiative Grants expand access to justice for millions of Americans who cannot afford a lawyer," explained LSC President Jim Sandman. "The grants make legal information, court forms, video instruction, and practical tips available to people who otherwise would have to navigate the legal system without any help."

"This grant allows us to continue to improve our ability to get civil legal help to people statewide who may otherwise have no way to get reliable legal information about their problem and get connected to resources in their county, says Cathy Clayton, Executive Director of West Tennessee Legal Services.

HELP4TN.org is a mobile responsive web portal that serves as a one-stop venue for accessing legal help via email (links to onlineTNFreeLegalAnswers.org), phone (1 844- HELP4TN) watching videos about what to expect in court, finding court approved legal forms and more.

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