

Tennessee Attorneys Honored for Providing Exceptional Pro Bono Service Online



Nashville, Tennessee - Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services (TALS) announces state and national recognition of TN Free Legal Answers volunteer attorneys for their exceptional contributions to the pro bono legal advice website throughout 2020. TN Free Legal Answers is the Tennessee-specific site of ABA Free Legal Answers platform, an online limited-scope advice legal clinic for low-income individuals.

TN Free Legal Answers, found online at TN.FreeLegalAnswers.org, is an innovative online question-and-answer legal clinic that enables low-income individuals to access legal advice from pro bono attorneys without the constraints of meeting in person. TN Free Legal Answers is part of a national pro bono program of the American Bar Association. TALS provides administrative support for the Tennessee-

specific site.

“TN.FreeLegalAnswers.org is a powerful tool to make legal help more accessible, especially during the pandemic. It removes barriers to giving and receiving legal help. There is no financial cost, transportation or scheduling requirements for users, and attorneys can log on anytime 24/7 to answer questions,” said Ann Pruitt, Executive Director of Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services.

The [Tennessee Bar Association](#) is honoring Richard Gossett, shareholder in the Chattanooga office of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, as the Harris Gilbert Pro Bono Attorney of the Year for his extraordinary dedication to TN Free Legal Answers.

Mr. Gossett first registered to volunteer with TN Free Legal Answers in 2014 when the site was known as Online TN Justice. To date, he has answered 2,238 questions posted by low-income Tennesseans seeking civil legal advice. Mr. Gossett’s contributions represent over 10% of all questions asked on the site. In 2020, his contribution to TN Free Legal Answers continued to increase, especially as the state moved to primarily remote pro bono work. As of December 11, 2020 he had answered over 50% of the questions answered by all volunteer attorneys in 2020.

“From its origin, which Baker Donelson was proud to be a part of, Free Legal Answers has been a platform focused on bridging the gap between our local legal aid partners and those otherwise unable to receive legal assistance. We are so proud of all the volunteers, the ABA, the TBA and TALS for their continued support in providing this valuable service to our communities,” said Sam Bowman, TALS’ board member and Pro Bono Shareholder at Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz.

In addition to Mr. Gossett's recognition form from the Tennessee Bar Association, he along with seven other attorneys and four law firms have been honored by the American Bar Association for service to the pro bono platform.

Eight Tennessee attorneys received recognition form from the American Bar Association for answering 50 or more questions on TN Free Legal Answers in 2020:

Richard B. Gossett, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC

Jill Z. Grim, Law Office of Jill Grim

Bryan C. Hathorn, Law Office of Bryan Hathorn

Kendra J. Mansur, Tennessee Valley Authority

Mary Jo Middlebrooks, Middlebrooks & Gray

Bruce A. Ralston, Law Office of Bruce A. Ralston

M. Susie Starnes, M. Susie Starnes and Associates

Adrienne G. Thompson, Adrienne G Thompson, Attorney at Law

Four law firms with offices in Tennessee also received recognition for answering 75 or more questions in 2020 across the organization:

Tennessee Valley Authority

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP

Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC

Husch Blackwell LLP

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To learn more about TN Free Legal Answers, ask a civil legal question, or register to volunteer, please visit TN.FreeLegalAnswers.org.

To learn more about TALS, please visit www.TALS.org.

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Last updated on February 09, 2026.

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