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Re: Legal Help Needed for Disaster Victims

Dear FL Lawyer:

As all of you are aware, hurricane season is upon us. In order to be help these Floridians and be prepared to further help Florida' citizens should the need arise, we need the help of as many volunteer lawyers as possible. The Young Lawyers Division of the Florida Bar has in place a Statewide Emergency Legal Services Response Plan (the "Florida Plan") and we are looking for Florida lawyers to help implement that plan should it become necessary.

The Florida Bar YLD, working in conjunction with the ABA Young Lawyers Section, is soliciting volunteers to help with ongoing and future disaster relief efforts pursuant to the Florida Plan. Under the Florida Plan, volunteers provide basic legal services for low-income individuals in non-fee generating cases. The volunteers assist by returning telephone calls placed to the YLD's 1-800 hotline or at FEMA centers. The most pressing need is for volunteers to return phone calls. Certainly the most active time of year for the Florida Plan is hurricane season; however, the hotline is activated during any declaration of emergency in the state. This would include, but not limited to, floods, tornados, and wildfires.

To be a volunteer under the Florida Plan, you simply have to indicate a willingness to serve, and have a basic understanding of common problems experienced by disaster victims. The Florida Good Samaritan Act and the Federal Volunteer Protection Act provide protection for the volunteers who offer assistance. The legal assistance provided will be to people who cannot otherwise afford representation and counts as pro bono hours for reporting purposes. In addition, the FL Bar YLD has created a manual which can be accessed at either [www.flabar.org](http://www.flabar.org) or [www.flayld.org](http://www.flayld.org) to help you answer the victim's questions. The types of legal questions most asked are related to: landlord/tenant and other housing problems, consumer protection matters, and home repair contracts.

Thank you for your help and please continue to keeps the citizens of Florida affected by disasters in your thoughts and prayers.

R.J. Haughey, President-Elect