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Dear Florida Lawyer:

Re: Legal Volunteers Needed for Disaster Victims

As all of you are aware, hurricane season is upon us. In order to be prepared to help Florida's citizens should the need arise, we need the help of as many volunteer lawyers as possible. The Young Lawyers Division ("YLD") 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 the plan should it become necessary. 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 is not limited to floods, tornados, wildfires, and potentially disasters related to the oil spill.

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 calls placed to the YLD's 1-800 hotline or at FEMA centers. The most pressing need is for volunteers to return calls.

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, there is a manual which can be accessed at [www.flayld.org](http://www.flayld.org) to help you answer victim's questions. The types of legal questions most frequently asked as related to hurricane disasters involve landlord/tenant and other housing problems, consumer protection matters, and home repair contracts.

Thank you for your help and please continue to help us find other volunteer lawyers to help the citizens of Florida who are affected by disasters.

Sincerely,

Sean T. Desmond  
Young Lawyers Division President