

More access to justice in Barton County, Kansas courts



Kansas Legal Services (KLS) is proud to announce the commencement of the Barton County Legal Aid Outreach Program at the Barton County Courthouse in Great Bend. Made possible by the generous grant from the Dorothy Morrison Foundation, KLS will have an attorney present on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, beginning on Wednesday, April 23.

The attorneys will be in Room 102 of the courthouse.

KLS attorneys are prepared to expand their presence at the courthouse as needed.

Individuals needing assistance are encouraged to apply by completing an application with the Clerk of the Barton County District Court. Once the application is submitted to the Clerk, the application is forwarded to KLS for further review, to ensure KLS has the appropriate resources and there are no conflicts with existing clients.

This new endeavor marks a significant step forward in ensuring that all Kansans, regardless of income, have access to high-quality legal support.

The Barton County Legal Aid Outreach Program will provide services in areas such as housing, domestic violence, public benefits, and consumer protection, and will offer critical legal help to individuals and families facing hardship. Staffed by experienced attorneys and advocates, the Project will serve as a vital resource for community members who might otherwise go without legal representation

“The lawyers in Great Bend support our mission financially. We are a 501(c)3. Greg Bauer and his partners at Bauer, Pike, Bauer, Wary, Cary and Gunn help us and so do the attorneys at Watkins Calcara. Alan Glendenning at Watkins and I were law school classmates and they all know the value of giving back,” KLS Executive Director Matt Keenan (pictured) said. “Plus the community leaders are to be applauded for their help with initiative, in giving us space in the courthouse which makes this more convenient for everyone.”

“This is a big development for Barton County and great news for many of the families we serve here at the Family Crisis Center,” said Executive Director of the Family Crisis Center, Kylee Graves. “Right now far too many victims of domestic violence have no representation. The funding of this project by the Dorothy Morrison Foundation grant will be a gamechanger for many families and we are thrilled Kansas Legal Services is stepping into this void.”

The judges of Barton County have also offered their support. “I believe that the citizens of Barton County will greatly benefit from the services offered as part of this legal aid outreach initiative” Hon. Carey Hipp, Chief Judge of the 20th Judicial District said. “All members of the public should have access to justice in the State of Kansas and this initiative is a big step towards making that goal a reality. I am confident that these outreach services will make an immediate impact in our area,” said added.

Katherine Opie, the Executive Director of the Dorothy Morrison Foundation added this: “The Dorothy Morrison Foundation recognizes that many citizens face numerous barriers to full participation in and enjoyment of life in the community,” Opie said. “By providing free legal services to vulnerable individuals and families, KLS can be instrumental in removing some of these barriers. Legal aid in critical situations can lead to growth in family stability, increased economic opportunity, and a boost in overall health and well-being. We are delighted to partner with KLS in extending legal assistance and hope to those most in need in Great Bend and Barton County.”

For more information or to request legal assistance, visit www.kansaslegalservices.org or call 316-267-3975.

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