Free Disaster Legal Services Available to Missourians Impacted by the May 19-27 severe storms

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Cape Girardeau, MO – Unexpected legal issues often arise after a disaster that can leave individuals and families devastated. If you are facing legal issues resulting from the late May severe storms, straight-line winds, tornadoes and flooding, you may be able to get free legal advice on disaster-related issues.

Disaster Legal Services (DLS) now are available to low-income, elderly and other vulnerable residents who were affected by the May 19-27 severe storms in 10 Missouri counties and are unable to afford a lawyer.

The 10 Missouri counties designated in the federal disaster declaration are: **Barry, Butler, Carter, Howell, New Madrid, Ripley, Scott, Shannon, Stoddard and Texas.**

Funded by FEMA, Disaster Legal Services provides a helpline that survivors can call to be put in touch with free attorneys from the Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association. Callers are asked to leave a message, contact phone number, county of residence and a brief summary of their disaster-related issue(s). An attorney will call you back within five business days during regular business hours.

The helpline number is (800) 829-4128. Messages can be left around the clock. The service is available until further notice.

Callers can receive help with legal issues including the following:

- FEMA, U.S. Small Business Administration and other public assistance financial benefits including disaster unemployment insurance claims
- Price-gouging, scams, or identity theft
- Home repair contracts and property insurance claims

FEMA

- Mortgage-foreclosure and home-ownership issues
- Landlord/tenant problems
- Replacement of wills and other vital documents destroyed in the storms
- Disability-related access to federal, state and local disaster programs.

For more information about available legal services and resources in Missouri, go online to: www.Missourilawyershelp.org