

Access to Justice & Equity for Ohio Families

Presented by

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Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct

- A. “As an officer of the court, a lawyer not only represents clients but has a special responsibility for the quality of justice.” Preamble, Paragraph 1.
- B. “A lawyer should seek improvement of the law, ensure access to the legal system, advance the administration of justice, and exemplify the quality of service rendered by the legal profession. As a member of a learned profession, a lawyer should cultivate knowledge of the law beyond its use for clients, employ that knowledge in reform of the law, and work to strengthen legal education. In addition, a lawyer should further the public’s understanding of and confidence in the rule of law and the justice system because legal institutions in a constitutional democracy depend on popular participation and support to maintain their authority. A lawyer should be mindful of deficiencies in the administration of justice and of the fact that the poor, and sometimes persons who are not poor, cannot afford adequate legal assistance. Therefore, all lawyers should devote professional time and resources and use civic influence to ensure equal access to our system of justice for all those who because of economic or social barriers cannot afford or secure adequate legal counsel. A lawyer should aid the legal profession in pursuing these objectives and should help the bar regulate itself in the public interest.” Preamble, Paragraph 6.

Access to Justice Issues

- A. Report and Recommendations of the Supreme Court of Ohio Task Force on Access to Justice:
<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/Publications/accessJustice/finalReport.pdf>
- B. “The “access to justice gap” is widely recognized to refer to estimates that 80 percent of the civil legal needs of low-income Americans go unaddressed. At the same time, recent law school graduates struggle to find legal employment and experienced practitioners search for practice models and tools that will enable those attorneys to offer competitive prices to those who can afford to pay and still earn adequate income for themselves.” Ohio State Bar Association, Futures Commission Report 2017.
<https://www.ohiobar.org/member-tools-benefits/practice-resources/practice-library-search/practice-library/futures-commission/>

Limited Scope Representation

A. Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct:

RULE 6.5: NONPROFIT AND COURT-ANNEXED LIMITED LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

(a) A lawyer who, under the auspices of a program sponsored by a nonprofit organization or court, provides short-term limited legal services to a client without expectation by either the lawyer or the client that the lawyer will provide continuing representation in the matter is subject to both of the following:

(1) Rules 1.7 and 1.9(a) only if the lawyer *knows* that the representation of the client involves a conflict of interest;

(2) Rule 1.10 only if the lawyer *knows* that another lawyer associated with the lawyer in a *law firm* is disqualified by Rule 1.7 or 1.9(a) with respect to the matter.

(b) Except as provided in division (a)(2) of this rule, Rule 1.10 is inapplicable to a representation governed by this rule.

B. Use of Technology

a. COVID-19 Lessons Learned

i. COVID Resource Directory: <https://www.ohiobar.org/member-tools-benefits/practice-resources/practice-library-search/practice-library/covid-19-resources/>

ii. Webinars

C. Ohio State Bar Association Family Law Online Community

D. Rural Practice Initiative

E. What is available for consumers of legal services in Ohio

a. Ohio Access to Justice Foundation: <https://www.ohiojusticefoundation.org>

b. Ohio Legal Help: <https://www.ohiolegalthelp.org>

c. Legal Shield: <https://www.ohiobar.org/osba-catalog/introducing-legalshield-a-new-partnership-to-help-you-grow-your-business4/>

F. How do we make a difference?