

HARVESTING HOPE TASK FORCE

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Alabama has a critical need for access to justice. Many of our circuits, counties, and towns have too few lawyers to meet the demands of our citizens. This results in many of our citizens not being able to access justice where they work and live. This results in denial of legal rights. It cumulates in a lack of economic justice.

The dearth of lawyers is felt most acutely in many of our rural counties. However, just because we find many lawyers in our urban counties, there are pockets of those urban counties that have too few or no lawyers. We have “legal deserts” in both our rural and urban areas.

The program envisions a support network for lawyers beginning or relocating their practice, whether in urban areas or rural counties. The first components of this program are a mentorship program and incubator to help those hanging their shingle. Another component is a recruitment program

The program leadership believes that the counties identified as “legal deserts” may be bettered considered a “legal opportunity zone” for both the lawyers and the county being served. With the further development of a program and the recruitment of lawyers and law students they believe that lawyers can flourish in these communities. As for the communities, this is a matter of access to justice for the citizens. However, it is more! It is as importantly opportunity for economic development. To bring economic justice to struggling communities. Lifting up communities one lawyer at a time. Bringing professionals and their families (whether Lawyers, Accountants, Doctors, Dentists, Bankers, Pharmacists, etc.) will undoubtedly revitalize and spur economic growth. Bridging the wealth gap with professional resources

This task force will undertake to do the following:

- Identify revenue streams in the legal opportunity zones;
- Create a budget for opening and operating an office in a legal opportunity zone;
- Provide a structure of mentorship to support a lawyer in a legal opportunity zone;
- Develop a plan to create a legal incubator program in Alabama;
- Create a recruitment plan to identify lawyers and law students with interest in legal opportunity zones, with an initial concentration on rural counties;
- Form partnerships with legal entities, businesses, government agencies, and foundations to create and support the program;
- Identify potential sources of funding (grants, etc.) for the development, enhancement, and continuation of *Harvesting Hope*.

The task force may divide itself into such working groups as may be necessary to effectively carry out its functions. The chairperson shall appoint a chair for any working group. The task force shall elect from its membership a secretary who shall be responsible for a written record of its actions. The task force shall submit a written report of its progress to the Alabama

State Bar President and Executive Director on or before January 15, 2025. The task force shall have a goal of assisting with the launch of *Harvesting Hope* by June 1, 2025.

The Alabama State Bar, through its designated staff liaisons, will assist the task force in carrying out its purpose.

Done this 2nd day of October, 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Taylor T. Perry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Taylor T. Perry, President
Alabama State Bar