

**“Access to Justice”** refers to improving and expanding opportunities for low and moderate income people to seek assistance in Montana’s courts with legal processes that enforce, restore or protect private and personal rights to ensure that our justice system is truly available to all.

**More than 150,000 Montanans (more than 15%) live at or below the poverty level.** Tens of thousands more are perched on the edge. Many of these citizens have acute legal needs. Often, the security and services of our legal system are lost to most living in poverty only because they cannot obtain services to protect their legal interests. The problem is compounded when unmet legal needs contribute to the cycle of poverty.

**Access to Justice is not just a legal problem, it is a community problem.** Last year, Montana attorneys volunteered over 150,000 hours of service to low-income or those with other barriers to access. The statewide Court Help Program has also assisted thousands of Montanans in obtaining forms and legal information in order to handle their own matters in court. Even with these tools and services, there simply aren’t enough attorneys to address the legal need or the myriad of issues surrounding an unmet legal need. The forum brings together community programs and access to justice leaders to continue the discussion of the legal, social and ethical issues that bear upon accessing our legal system – and specifically how they impact the communities in which we live. Unmet legal needs of Montanans can affect many areas of their lives and so too the programs and service they utilize. Indeed, a community problem requires a community solution.

**For more information, Contact:**

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## **ACCESS TO JUSTICE FORUM SERIES**

*A series of regional public discussions  
about securing equal access to the civil  
legal system for all Montanans*

**"The first duty of society is justice."**

- Alexander Hamilton



**Presented By:**

**Montana Supreme Court Access to  
Justice Commission**

With special thanks to our Listening Panel,  
Witnesses and Flathead Valley Community  
College

**Kalispell Access to Justice Forum  
Wednesday, October 21, 4-6pm  
Arts & Technology Building, Room 139  
Flathead Valley Community College**

**Moderator: Matthew Dale, Montana Department of Justice**

Forum Witnesses

*Jim Taflan, Program Administrator, Court Help Program  
Alison Paul, Executive Director, Montana Legal Services Association  
Hilary Shaw, Executive Director, Abbie Shelter  
Kay Lynn Lee, Chair, NW Bar Association Pro Bono Committee  
Chris Krager, Executive Director, The Samaritan House  
Grant Snell, Attorney, Crowley Fleck Law Firm  
Jamie Campbell, Executive Director, CASA  
Caitlin Overland, Board Member, Montana Justice Foundation  
Susan Kunda, Ombudsman and Director, Area Agency on Aging  
Lance Issak, Director, Flathead Attention Home  
Leigh Anne Miller, Supervisor, Family Court Services  
Pam Haglund, Exec. Director, Literacy Volunteers and Advocates  
Larry Noonan, AWARE  
Cathy Brenneman, Executive Director, The Nurturing Center  
Holly Jordt, RN, Flathead City-County Health Department  
Brian Muldoon, Attorney Mediator*

**Public Comment**

Call for public comment  
Please fill out a public comment card

**Concluding Remarks:** Supreme Court Justice James Jeremiah Shea  
Listening Panel Members

**Kalispell Listening Panel Members**

**Hon. James Jeremiah Shea**, Montana Supreme Court

**Hon. Heidi Ulbricht**, District Court Judge, 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (Flathead County),

**Hon. Daniel Wilson**, Flathead County Justice of the Peace,

**Peg Allison**, Flathead County District Court Clerk

**Don Murray**, Board Member, Montana Justice Foundation and past president of State Bar of Montana

**Randy Snyder**, Immediate Past President, State Bar of Montana and Access to Justice Commission Member

**Andy Huff**, Chief Legal Counsel, Office of the Governor and Access to Justice Commission Member

***Thank you to all who attended in an effort to learn more about and be part of increasing access to justice in your community.***

***To learn more about the Access to Justice Commission and its work, visit <http://courts.mt.gov/supreme/boards/a2j>***