The Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice will hold its first 2016 meeting on Friday, February 12, from 12:45 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. at the Hotel Duval in Tallahassee. The meeting is open to the public and will be broadcast live on the Florida Supreme Court’s Gavel to Gavel website at http://wfsu.org/gavel2gavel/ and on The Florida Channel.

Major topics of discussion Friday include the method of triage for requests coming into the proposed civil justice gateway portal and whether to recommend creation of a permanent Access to Civil Justice Commission to continue work on the subject beyond the end of the current fiscal year.

Made up of leaders from all three branches of Florida government, The Florida Bar, The Florida Bar Foundation, civil legal aid providers, the business community, and other stakeholders, the Commission is working in a coordinated effort to identify and remove economic barriers to civil justice. It was created by an administrative order signed in the fall of 2014 by Florida Chief Justice Jorge Labarga.

Chief Justice Labarga explained the need for the Commission: “The American and Florida judicial systems are founded upon the fundamental principle that justice should be accessible to all persons regardless of economic status or disadvantage. However, this foundational principle is, for some, nothing more than a theory.”

Civil cases involve matters of the utmost importance – divorce, child custody, foreclosure, landlord-tenant dispute are just some examples. Many people find themselves forced to deal with these life-changing events without the help of an attorney. This difficulty is not limited to people who live in poverty but reaches into the middle class, where people earn too much to qualify for...
legal aid but often don’t have enough money to hire an attorney. These people fall into the “legal services gap.”

The meeting agenda is attached to this release. Other information is on the commission’s website at http://www.flaccesstojustice.org/.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation to participate in the Commission meeting should contact Francisco-Javier Digon-Greer at (800) 342-8060 ext. 5793 or email flaccesstojustice@flabar.org as much in advance as possible. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech impairment, and who use specialized telephone equipment may contact Mr. Digon-Greer through the Florida Relay Service by dialing 7-1-1.

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ATTENTION NEWS REPORTERS: Your coverage of all or part of the meeting is welcome. In addition, a media availability will be held at 11 a.m. in the Eighth Floor Ballroom for interviews with Chief Justice Labarga, Bar officials, and others. Please contact Craig Waters or Jackie Hallifax at the Florida Supreme Court, 850-414-7641 or watersc@flcourts.org or hallifaj@flcourts.org if you plan to attend the availability or the meeting so that we can assist with set-up.
Agenda
Florida Supreme Court Commission on Access to Civil Justice
February 12, 2016
Tallahassee, Florida
Hotel Duval

11:00 – 11:30  Press Availability: Horizon Ballroom 8th Floor
11:30 – 12:30  Buffet Lunch: Lobby Level at Shula’s Restaurant
12:45 – 1:15  Triage Pilot Presentation: Horizon Ballroom 8th Floor
1:15 – 2:45  Questions and Input from the other Subcommittees on the Triage Pilot Program:
  ▪ Outreach
  ▪ Funding
  ▪ Technology
  ▪ Continuum
2:45 – 3:00  Break
3:00 – 4:00  Final Report Recommendations Discussion: possible recommendations on the need for the establishment of a permanent access to justice commission in Florida.
4:15 – 4:30  Commission Chair Chief Justice Labarga; closing statement.

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