

March 2016

Dear NLAP Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Neighborhood Legal Assistance Project. With your help, NLAP will provide valuable and much-needed services to homeless and indigent individuals right here in the South Loop. Although Chicago is blessed with a vibrant and diverse community of legal service providers, NLAP hopes to fill a gap by serving a hard-to-reach population at an accessible time and location. The problems we hope to address – criminal record expungement / sealing and obtaining state IDs – are critical to helping people find housing and employment and in some cases, qualify for governmental benefits. We also hope to refer NLAP clients to outside agencies where they can receive case management services and assistance with public benefits.

Here are some things to keep in mind about NLAP:

Time: Four to six NLAP volunteers assist guests from 9:00 am until 12:00 pm every other Saturday. **Volunteers must arrive by 8:45 am on the day of their shift!** After you've completed the NLAP training, you can sign up for as many or as few shifts as you'd like. Please consider volunteering once a month, as you'll feel more confident and competent if you volunteer regularly. Also, a stable cohort of volunteers will improve the quality of services we offer our guests.

Location: Grace Place Episcopal Church, located at 637 S. Dearborn Street.

Your Commitment:

- You must arrive on time (8:45 am) and stay until 12:00 pm. In addition to our Supervising Attorney and Intake Coordinator, each session is staffed by a handful of volunteers, so we are counting on YOU. If your schedule changes, please notify one of the Intake Coordinators as soon as possible. If you fail to attend a scheduled NLAP session, we may not permit you to volunteer in the future.
- Your work as an NLAP volunteer will be supervised by a licensed attorney. To protect yourself and to ensure that our guests receive accurate legal information, please consult frequently with the Supervising Attorney as you serve each guest.
- In the course of your services to a guest, it may become necessary for you to do some work following the NLAP session. For instance, you may need to call a school district to inquire about obtaining a guest's records or you may need to visit the Daley Center to obtain the guest's criminal record. Any work outside an NLAP session should be noted on the guest's Interview Form. This form is your retainer agreement, so once you promise to do something, you must complete it.

Your Responsibilities to Guests

Punctuality: Each volunteer is an integral part of our team. Please arrive by 8:45 am so our session will run smoothly.

Respect: Most of our guests are experiencing difficulties of one kind or another; your respect will go a long way to building trust.

Competence: We owe our guests the very highest level of service. Please consult with the Supervising Attorney at least twice during each guest interview. You should speak with the Supervising Attorney in order to confirm or develop a strategy to assist the guest after you've gathered all the necessary facts. Once you've completed the front of the Guest Interview Form, consult with the Supervising Attorney again before you make a copy to ensure that you've included all the necessary information.

Confidentiality: Keep all guest information confidential, sharing only as necessary (with NLAP staff, volunteers and partners) to ensure high quality services.

Know Your Limits:

- **Time:** Listen respectfully to guests as they explain their problems, but remember your time constraints. You and your partner should aim to serve at least three guests each session, so you will need to gently lead and limit the conversation.
- **Subject Matter:** NLAP can assist guests with problems related to criminal record expungement / sealing and obtaining state IDs. Many, if not all guests will have legal problems outside of NLAP's priorities. Do not attempt to answer questions about areas of law outside of NLAP's priorities. Speak with the Supervising Attorney or the Intake Coordinator. If time permits, you can use Illinois Legal Aid Online to provide referral information to the guest.
- **Legal Information vs. Legal Advice:** As a law student, you must avoid the unauthorized practice of law, which includes giving legal advice. You may, however, provide legal information. What's the difference? Legal information includes things like the substance of the law, court rules and procedures, answering questions about the completion of forms, and explaining the meaning of terms used in the court process. Legal advice includes advising litigants whether to take a particular course of action. Do not answer questions that contain the words "Should I?" If it becomes necessary to analyze the information based on the guest's specific circumstances, you are about to give legal advice. Stop, and include the Supervising Attorney. He can review your analysis and convey any necessary legal advice.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you have while serving as an NLAP volunteer. I hope you find your volunteer experience both rewarding and fun.

Sincerely,

Pro Bono & Community Service Initiative Team

NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

PLEASE READ: Important Notice to Guests

Welcome to the Neighborhood Legal Assistance Center. The Center provides guests with information related to criminal record expungement and sealing and obtaining state IDs in Illinois. Project volunteers are law students who are supervised by a licensed attorney. Volunteers can provide educational materials and information, assist guests in completing forms and legal pleadings and, in some cases, provide referrals to legal services and other community agencies that may provide additional services.

The Neighborhood Legal Assistance Project is limited to providing brief legal information and services. The Project does not provide lawyers to represent guests in court. Based on the information a guest provides, project volunteers and staff will determine what, if any, assistance the Project can provide. Volunteers and staff will communicate advice, information and services to be provided to guests in writing on the Guest Interview Sheet. **NLAP's services are limited to the information and services provided or promised on the Interview Sheet.**

Some legal problems may be too complicated for Project volunteers to address. If brief legal services are not enough to resolve a guest's problem or if a guest requires a different type of service than the Neighborhood Legal Assistance Project offers, Project volunteers may refer the guest to or provide the guest with information about a legal services or other community agency that provides additional services. Volunteers and staff may ask guests questions relating to a ranges of issues, including but not limited to the guest's housing, public benefits, and social service history. These questions are being asked in order to determine whether a referral to another community agency may be appropriate. **However, the Project does not guarantee that guests will obtain additional services, including representation, through one of the referred agencies.**

A Project volunteer cannot provide *legal* information or services to guests who already are represented by a lawyer. However, guests already represented by a lawyer may receive *non-legal* information at the Project.

Guests who do not fully understand this Notice should inform the Project Supervising Attorney and ask for assistance.

I acknowledge receiving the "Important Notice to Guests" and understand and agree to its terms and conditions. (Note: Guests must sign below and write the date before being assisted by a Project Volunteer.)

Guest Name (Printed): _____

Guest Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**DePaul College of Law
Center for Public Interest Law / Pro Bono and Community Service Initiative**

NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT INTERVIEW FORM

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Zip: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone: _____

Do you receive public benefits? _____ If so, please list _____

Do you have a case manager or social worker with whom you are working? _____

If so, please list agency _____

In the past 2 years, has your Section 8 voucher been terminated or have you been evicted from public housing? _____ If so, please provide details _____

State ID:

- First visit to NLAP
- Counseled on documents for State ID
- Written signature (column A)
- Date of Birth (column B)
- Social Security Number (column C)
- Address (column D)
- Homeless Certification completed
- Application filed
- Other: _____

Expungement/Sealing:

- First visit to NLAP
- Criminal history obtained at clerk's office
- RAP sheet requested
- Complete criminal history obtained
- Eligible for expungement
- Petition filed
- Other: _____

Based on the facts as presented by the Customer, below is a brief statement of information provided, including any additional steps for the guest to take:

NLAP's services are limited to the information and services provided or promised on this form.

- YES** Pursuant to the "Important Notice to Guests" that the guest already received and to which s/he agreed and signed, I informed the guest that the Neighborhood Legal Assistance Project is limited to providing brief legal information and services. The guest understands that our services are limited to those described on the previous page.

- YES** The guest consented to the disclosure of information with a legal or social service agency in an effort to better serve the guest or to refer the case for additional services, possibly including representation. The customer was informed that the Neighborhood Legal Assistance Project does not guarantee that s/he will obtain additional services, including representation, through one of these agencies.

Interviewer's Summary of Facts and Comments (As Needed):

Interviewer's Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____