How to Find Legal Assistance and Build Effective Partnerships

2017 National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Conference
Panelists

- Nan Heald, Executive Director, Pine Tree Legal Assistance (ME)
- James Heaton, Lead Project Attorney, MISSION UNITED Veterans Pro Bono Project, Legal Aid Service of Broward County (FL)
- Sara Sommarstrom, Vetlaw Director, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MN)
NCHV Legal Track

- Removing Criminal History Barriers for Homeless Veterans: the Success of State Level Criminal Justice Reform
- Bankruptcy, Bad Credit, and Consumer Debt Defense
- Legal Services at Stand Down: Courts and Civil Legal Assistance
- Child Support
- Embedding Lawyers in Veteran Service Organizations

- Friday Morning Listening Session
What We’re Covering

Where do you find attorneys and how do you get them to help?

Finding them:
- How to Get Legal Aid to Assist eligible Veteran Clients
- Bar Associations
- Pro Bono Programs
- Private attorneys

Getting them to help:
- Engaging attorneys
- Range of services (brief advice, clinics, full rep)

Developing a legal program

How to help if you can’t find a lawyer
What questions do you have about connecting your clients to legal services?
Finding Attorneys

- How to Get Legal Aid to Assist Eligible Veteran Clients
- Public Defenders
- Bar Associations & Courts
- Pro Bono Programs
- Private Practice and Solo Attorneys
Legal Aid and Public Defense Programs

Civil Legal Aid Programs
- Only work in civil legal matters
- Income and priority guidelines
  - 125% Federal Poverty Guidelines
  - Higher income allowances for seniors (sometimes)
- May have further restrictions based on funding resources
- May serve area based on geography, legal issue, or a combination of factors

Public Defense
- Only work with defendants in criminal law cases
- Income and priority guidelines
- Variety of ways to connect; practices differ between jurisdictions
  - Request representation in court
  - Call local public defender’s office
- Federal Public Defenders for criminal cases in Federal Court
Finding Attorneys: Pro Bono Programs

- Bar Associations
- Law School Clinical Programs
- Law Firm Pro Bono Programs
- Corporate Counsel
- Medical-Legal Partnerships (MLPs)
- Social Services (e.g. Shelters, Domestic Violence programs, etc.)

Directory of Legal Programs for Veterans can be found at:

www.statesidelegal.org
Finding Attorneys: Private Practice

- Contingency Fee Arrangements
  - SSA/VA benefits
  - Personal Injury and Medical Malpractice
  - Limited Consumer and Employment Actions

- No Harm In Asking...
  - Pro bono/Low bono
  - Limited Scope Representation
  - Payment Plans
Engaging Attorneys

Getting to “Yes”
- You’ve got competition
- Make it as easy as possible
- Provide support
  - Make the call
  - Communication
    - Assisting the veteran
    - Office support
    - Managing expectations

Carrots
- Understanding Pro Bono Rules
- Trainings with CLE credits
- Sponsorships and Recognition
Developing a Legal Program

- How much money do you have?
- How many lawyers do you know?
- How much do you know about the legal needs of your clients?
- What geographic area will you cover?
- What are the restrictions based on your funding sources?
Where do you start?

1. Define purpose and goals of legal component
   1. Who are you serving?
   2. What legal issues are you trying to address?
   3. What are your desired outcomes?
2. Connect with appropriate legal resources
   1. Criminal law – start with the court system
   2. Civil law – local bar associations and legal aid offices
How to Help Without a Lawyer

Self-Help Resources

- Court-Sponsored
  - Legal Forms & Instructions
  - Legal Information
    - Court calendars
    - Filing and Fee Instruction
    - Courtroom Preparation Assistance
- Legal Advice Clinics
  - VAMCs: [http://www.va.gov/ogc/docs/legal-services.pdf](http://www.va.gov/ogc/docs/legal-services.pdf)
  - Courthouses
  - Community Sites

Preparing for Court

- Know What to Expect
  - How long might it take?
  - What type of hearing is this?
  - What does the other side have to prove? What does the veteran have to prove?
  - Who is deciding this case?
- Basic Tips:
  - Courtroom Etiquette
    - Listen to the Judge
    - Answer Truthfully
    - Be Respectful
  - Requesting a Continuance
Online Court Forms

COURT FORMS

Contact a Self Help Center
Help Topics Homepage

Court Forms do not yet adhere to accessibility standards. For assistance, please visit the Americans with Disabilities Act Accommodation page.

Please go to the Help Topics Homepage to learn more about what forms you may need and find other resources related to many of the topics listed below.

Court Forms Categories:

- Adoption
- Appeals
- Bankruptcy
- Child Custody / Parenting Time
- Child Protection
- Child Support
- Civil
- Commitment
- Conceal and Carry
- Conciliation / Small Claims Court
- Confidential Information
- Contempt of Court
- Criminal
- Criminal Expungement
- Divorce / Dissolution
- Domestic Abuse
- Family
- Fee Waiver / In Forma Pauperis
- Forfeiture and Impoundment
- Guardianship / Conservatorship
- Harassment
- Housing / Landlord-Tenant
- Juvenile Delinquency
- Motor Vehicles
- Name Change
- Other
- Parental Notification
- Paternity
- Probate
- Protective Orders
- Service of Process
- Spousal Support
- Subpoena

Washington State Court Forms

Here you will find forms that are used statewide in Washington Courts. This is not a complete list of all forms. Your Court may have forms you must file in a case. Please check with your local Court to confirm. Additionally, you may want to check the Local Court Rules for forms and for more information.

- View the List of All Forms
- Response forms for old Domestic Relations Petitions.

Browse Forms by Category

Ending the Marriage
- Divorce (Dissolution)
- Legal Separation
- Consent Legal Separation

Domestic Violence
- Petition
- Temporary Orders
- Other

Domestic Violence Protection Orders
- Domestic Violence No-Contact Orders
- Other

Juvenile Court Forms
- Juvenile Record
- Other

Protection Orders
- Domestic Violence
- Other

Unmarried Parents
- Parental Plan
- Residential Schedule

Unmarried Parents: Parental Plan
- Permanent Guardianship
- Temporary Guardianship

Washington LawHelp
- Find self-help information and legal service providers

Resources in Other Languages
- Spanish
- Russian
- French
- Arabic
- Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt

Self Help Resources
- E-Mail Self Help Center
- Washington LawHelp

List of All Forms

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Thank You!

QUESTIONS?