HLRS Compliance Handbook
About HLRS

Established in 1958, the Houston Lawyer Referral Service (HLRS) is a non-profit, community service program of the legal profession. The HLRS is sponsored by ten local bar associations*, certified by the State Bar of Texas, and is one of a select few programs nationwide that meets the standards of the American Bar Association.

Our staff is trained to help identify the caller’s legal situation and make a referral to an attorney according to the area of law, geographic location, and spoken language. Depending on the nature of the caller’s legal situation, HLRS staff also offers referrals to community service programs that might better serve the caller.

The HLRS serves over 125,000 individuals each year in Harris, Montgomery, Fort Bend, Brazoria, and Galveston counties.

In addition to telephone referrals, HLRS offers a web referral system that is available 24/7 through the internet. After providing their contact information, the referral system will list an attorney that matches the criteria they submitted.

Contact Information

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Referrals

Your office will receive HLRS referrals in the following ways:

Telephone Call transfer - When a caller contacts our office and a referral is made, we strive to put each caller in contact with the attorney’s office by transferring their call. If the attorney is unavailable, please talk to the caller, get their information and pass it along to the attorney.

Referral Telephone Call - At times, a caller prefers to call an attorney at their convenience. Some callers call that same day while others wait days or weeks to call the attorney. The callers are instructed to let you know that they were referred to them by HLRS.

Web Referrals - You will receive an email/fax confirmation from our web referral system indicating that a referral was made. Please wait until they contact you before proceeding with the referral.

For referrals made through our office (telephone calls), you will receive an email/fax confirmation with their contact information as well as the type of law they are seeking, date of referral, and case ID number.

If, for any reason, the attorney cannot help out, please refer the callers back to HLRS for further help.
Referral Fees

There are two (2) types of fees that can be due to HLRS:

Consultation Fee - For the first 30 minutes of their initial consultation, the client has been instructed to pay $20.00. $15.00 is remitted back to HLRS and $5.00 remains with the attorney.

Percentage Fee - When a case is retained, the percentage fee remitted to HLRS follow these guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fees to Attorney</th>
<th>Remitting to HLRS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $250.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250.00 - $499.99</td>
<td>$10.00 flat fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $500.00</td>
<td>15% of attorney fees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referral Case Manager

Referral Case Manager is HLRS’ online reporting system. It can be accessed through our website (www.hlrs.org) by clicking the “Attorney’s Only” link on the left hand side of the screen.

After logging in, you will see the Case Manager home page with tabs across the top. The “My Referrals” tab will contain all your cases for a given period. Click on it to get started.

Once in the “My Referral” tab, you will see your current cases listed. To view more information about a case, click on the “Case ID”. You can enter case payments, change status, and add comments to any cases on this list.

To enter a case payment and/or change the status of a case, click the “Report” checkbox (to the right of the desired case), then:

- (for a Consultation Fee) enter the amount of the collected consultation fee in the box labeled “Consultation Fees”, above the “General Comments” box to the right of the case information.
- (for a Percentage Fee) enter the amount you are remitting in the last column labeled ”% Fees Remitted to HLRS”. The fee reminders are listed below.
- (for a Status Change) choose the status that best suits the current disposition.

Repeat for all the cases listed, even if the status remains the same. When done, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the “Next” button.

The next screen shows a summary of the case status information that you intend to report. If you click the “Next” button, the new case statuses will be recorded and your case payments will be added to your payment cart. Press the “Previous” button to make changes.

Once in the “View Cart” tab, you can view items in your payment cart. You can click on any item to edit. Click “Checkout!” to finalize a payment.

The only option currently available is “Mailed Check”. Please make sure the amount of the check being mailed matches the amount on the screen. Press “Process” to complete your transaction and reporting.
Case Status Codes

There are nine (9) status codes that can be used to describe a case. Please use the one that best describes the current disposition at the time you submit your report. During the life of the case, it can have multiple/different statuses, depending on how it is progressing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNR</td>
<td>Unreported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEC</td>
<td>Telephone/Email Contact Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOC</td>
<td>No Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICD</td>
<td>In Office Consultation Due, Remitting Fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOS</td>
<td>No Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPN</td>
<td>Open (client hired attorney)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>Not a Retained Matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFD</td>
<td>Closed, Remitting Fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>Possible Additional Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case Status Reports

Your office will receive three (3) types of reports during the course of the membership year.

**Monthly** - Monthly reports will be available for review the 15th of each month through our online reporting system. They are due the 12th of the following month. The monthly reports will contain all unreported cases, cases marked “Open”, and any case where a fee is due.

**Quarterly** - Quarterly reports follow the same reporting schedule as Monthly reports, but will include all referred cases, regardless of case status, for the previous three months only. Quarterly reports are available for review every March, September, and December.

**Yearly** - Yearly reports follow the same reporting schedule as Monthly reports, but will include all referred cases, regardless of case status, for the previous twelve (12) months. Yearly reports are available for review every June.

Case Status FAQ

1. **What if I receive a confirmation email from HLRS, but no one has called our office?**
   If no contact has been made at the time the report is due, then use NOC. Please note that a client can sometimes take days or weeks to call an attorney.

2. **What if they called our office, but we couldn’t help them?**
   Use TEC to designate you did speak to the referral, but nothing became of it.

3. **Isn’t that the same as using NRM?**
   Yes and No. We make the following distinction: TEC is when a referral initially calls your office, but the attorney couldn’t help them. NRM is that after the initial consultation, further review of the case shows that the attorney can’t help.

4. **Can I leave a case UNR when submitting my report?**
   No. Please use one of the other case status codes that best describes the case disposition.
5. **When do I use the POS designation?**
   POS - Possible Additional Services is used as a place holder when no other case status codes match the current case at the time the report is due. When another case status matches the disposition, please change the appropriate changes.

6. **The attorney met with the referral, but was not hired so the case is closed. Should I use ICD or CFD?**
   If the initial office consultation is the only thing that occurred, then use ICD when remitting fees. CFD is used when the client hired the attorney and the case is closed.

**Professional Liability Insurance**

HLRS Members are required to carry professional liability insurance in the minimum amount of $100,000/$300,000. Please send a copy of your Declarations Page (noting amount, date, and who is covered) at the time of your policy renewal.

**Attorney Leave**

If the attorney is not going to be available for more than a couple of days - illness, vacation, full court schedule - please let us know. Please know that the Phone Call Policy states that a referred individual must be contacted within 24 hours of the potential client’s email or phone call.