

# NHCBA Lawyer Referral Service

## Operating Principles

1. The New Haven County Bar Association (*NHCBA*) recognizes the provision of a Lawyer Referral Service (*LRS*) as a means and opportunity for the legal profession to better serve the public.

2. The LRS will be administered by the NHCBA under the policy guidance, oversight and evaluation of the Lawyer Referral Service Committee (*the Committee*). The Committee shall consist of not less than three attorneys appointed by the President of the Association. Appointments will be for terms of one year, but members shall serve until their successors have been appointed. The President shall also appoint a chairperson of the Committee. Any issue upon which the members of the Committee are unable to reach agreement shall be referred to the Executive Committee of the New Haven County Bar Association for resolution

**If you would like to participate on the Committee, please contact the NHCBA office at (203) 562-9652.**

3. The Committee will work to actively promote, market and advertise the availability of the Lawyer Referral Service, including but not limited to public service programming. Committee members and LRS service attorneys should be willing to volunteer to staff such events when needed.

4. The NHCBA, acting through the Committee, will provide the administrative staff necessary to operate the service. LRS staff will secure information from each client to determine the client's identity, residence, nature of the legal problem, and other factors which will enable them to make the most appropriate referral, in accordance with the LRS Referral Procedures (rev.4/08).

5. The Committee shall ensure that all attorneys in good standing on a panel will have an equal opportunity, on a rotating basis, to receive referrals.

6. The Committee will establish and maintain panels of lawyers in all areas of law to provide consultations to clients referred by the LRS. Membership in the LRS shall be available for a basic yearly listing fee: the NHCBA member rate is \$95 for listing in 6 standard areas of law ("panels") and \$15 for each additional area, and the non-member rate is \$225 for listing in 6 standard areas of law and \$15 for each additional area. All attorneys must complete both the Application and Agreement form and the annual Certification & Agreement form. Clients will be referred to the individual participating attorney, not to the law firm. The year shall be calculated from October 1- September 30. Membership on panels identified as "Experience Panels" will require the submission of a separate Certification & Agreement, payment of any panel fees in addition to the annual basic LRS listing fee, and agree to adhere to the experience panel standards. All fees will be set by the Committee.

7. Members of the referral panels shall be free to reject any particular referral. Such rejection shall count, however, as an accomplished referral for purposes of maintaining an equitable order and sequence of referrals within the panel, unless such rejection is based upon a demonstrable conflict of interest. **If the attorney is unable to represent the client for a demonstrated reason (conflict of interest, etc.), the client should be referred back to LRS for a second referral. The client should be advised to contact LRS to arrange for this second referral.** A client may reject a referral to a lawyer and may request another referral. This rejection shall not count against the original attorney as an accomplished referral for purposes of maintaining the sequence of referrals.

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8. Members of each panel shall report periodically to LRS on the disposition of each referral on forms provided by LRS. If the matter referred is in one of the areas of law where the NHCBA has determined an attorney will remit a percentage of the gross fee received by counsel, according to the individual panel agreement, an attorney disposition sheet will be mailed or faxed to the attorney the same day the referral is made. The attorney will notify LRS as to whether he/she has accepted the referred client. Requests for status reports will be sent to the attorney periodically for an update on the progress of the case. **Any attorney who does not respond to a status report within four months of the date on which it is sent will be suspended from participation in LRS until the completed status report has been received by the LRS office.** Remittance of a percentage of the gross fee received by counsel is payable to Lawyer Referral Service upon receipt by attorney. **A 15% remittance fee will be due to NHCBA on all cases, with the exception of representation of debtors in personal bankruptcy, on anything over \$200.00.** LRS reserves the right to audit a participating attorney's records and to take legal action against the participating attorney for failure to comply with the terms of this agreement, including failure to pay remittance fees due to LRS. In the event legal action is taken, LRS shall be entitled to reimbursement for reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

9. Members of each panel shall maintain professional liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 (each claim) and will provide the NHCBA with a certificate of insurance. Members will also authorize their insurance carrier to verify coverage upon request of the NHCBA.

10. Members of each panel shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Professional Responsibility and standards applicable generally to lawyers in the State of Connecticut; moreover, lawyers shall discharge their duties to referral clients with no less a degree of diligence and care than that accorded regular clients. Members may be suspended if/when an attorney receives a final determination that s/he committed a grievance by the Connecticut Statewide Grievance Committee.

11. Any applicant for Lawyer Referral Service or any of the Experience Panels may appeal a decision not to include the lawyer in the Service and/or any Experience Panel to the LRS Committee. Any such applicant may appeal an adverse decision to the Executive Committee of the New Haven County Bar Association within 30 days of the decision of the appeal.

12. LRS members may be suspended or removed from the Service by the LRS Committee if Operating Principals and Procedures are not adhered to. Members may appeal such a decision to the LRS Committee. Any member may then appeal an adverse decision to the Executive Committee of the New Haven County Bar Association within 30 days of the decision of the appeal.

13. The NHCBA reserves the right to modify these principles from time to time, upon written notice to the panels. A lawyer may resign from the panels at any time upon written notice to the LRS.

Dated at New Haven, Connecticut this 25th day of January 1989.  
Approved by the Lawyer Referral Service Committee on July 17, 1989.  
Approved by the Executive Committee, New Haven County Bar Association, on July 25, 1989.  
LRS: 7/89. Revised 1/91,5/92,10/97,4/99,10/97, 9/04, 3/08, 1/10

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