

SOME COMMON CLIENT ISSUES

How should lawyers deal with the preparation of a client's documents?

As tempting as it may be to take over the task of document preparation for a struggling client, we encourage lawyers to protect their boundaries and not take on more than necessary unless it is easily manageable.

Alternative methods of dealing with the drawing of documents are:

- Encourage the client to hand write the document with the benefit of your advice. If necessary dictate the draft.
- If the client has difficulty in writing, suggest he/she bring in a friend at the next meeting to help.
- Ask the client if he/she can find or hire a typist. Sometimes your *pro bono* coordinator can provide the name of a volunteer.
- In exceptional circumstances, write a draft in long hand.

It is advisable to copy for your file everything you give the client in such a case.

What if the client's problem is outside your specialty?

If the lawyer encounters a major problem outside his or her field, the Intake Coordinator should be notified and we will arrange an appointment with a more appropriate lawyer if possible.

What if the client abuses our service?

We make every attempt to screen clients before the session. However sometimes those who can afford a lawyer slip through. Furthermore, Some clients may try "shopping around" with our lawyers until they find one that gives them the answers they seek. Please advise the Executive Director if any such abuses come to your attention.

Please fill in your contact information below and mail, email, or fax to:

Western Canada Society to Access Justice
1440 West 12th Ave
Vancouver, BC
V6H 1M8
Office Phone: 604.482.3195
Office Fax: 604.324.1515
Email: help@accessjustice.ca

LAWYER DETAILS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Areas of Practice: _____

**Access Justice recruits lawyers in cooperation with other pro bono providers. If we are not able to offer a suitable placement we will be pleased to recommend other opportunities.*



**ACCESS
JUSTICE**
JUSTICE FOR ALL

Lawyers - Please Give

*A Moment for
Justice*

Access Justice Office: 604-482-3195
Access Justice Client Hotline: 604-878-7400
Toll Free: (from outside Greater Vancouver)
1-87-PRO BONO-4 (1-877-762-6664)

Website: www.accessjustice.ca
E-mail: help@accessjustice.ca
Fax: 604.324.1515

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We are approved by Pro Bono Law B.C. as a "Pro Bono Provider".

WHO ARE WE

Established in 1990, The Western Canada Society to Access Justice is a non-profit society. Our directors and volunteer lawyers are dedicated to justice for those who cannot afford it. For the past several years, our focus has been on developing *pro bono* summary advice clinics. All services are free. Facilities are provided without charge by social agencies, court houses, churches, and other community organizations.

Our mission

To provide first-class free legal assistance to all persons who cannot obtain legal aid or afford a lawyer.

Our vision

To foster the principle that all Canadians are entitled to effective access to justice.

WHAT WE DO

The Western Canada Society to Access Justice (“Access Justice”) operates *pro bono* summary legal advice clinics in over 60 locations around B.C. These clinics are staffed by volunteer lawyers, and are supported by host agencies and non-lawyer volunteers.

We need your help to staff these clinics. Please volunteer a “moment” of your time. Basically, all you need to do is attend and see the clients. We arrange the locations, we book the clients and assist with conflicts checks, we provide forms to record the meeting, and we provide supporting resources.

As we are an approved *pro bono* provider by *Pro Bono* Law of BC under rules of the Law Society of BC, there is no insurance deductible for any claim arising from clinic advice. And, insurance coverage is provided at no cost for non-practicing and retired members.

Details of our program are outlined in this brochure, and further details available at our website under the “Lawyers” link.

CLINIC ADVANTAGES

The lawyer's time is better utilized

Lawyers usually attend once a month for a 2-hour session and see approximately 4 clients. Clients call us, not the lawyer, for any follow-up appointment.

Pro bono clinic clients are screened

We train our staff and our partner agencies to sort clients into criminal, family, immigration, and civil categories; we screen out those eligible for legal aid or able to afford a lawyer, and we make client appointments. We send the lawyer a conflict list with opposing parties and counsel.

The *pro bono* clinic can meet other needs of the client

Frequently, *pro bono* clients suffer from a host of problems, only some of which may be legal. Most agencies hosting *pro bono* clinics have counseling and other services that can help meet those needs.

Convenience

Given our large number of clinic locations, we can arrange a location which is relatively close to most lawyers.

PROCEDURE

Terms of Engagement with Client

To establish boundaries and protect your time and privacy at the outset, we recommend you clarify these terms of engagement at the beginning of the meeting.

Your Notes

We provide lawyers a pre-printed client advice form. We urge lawyers to make as complete and legible notes as possible, especially as to your advice and limitation dates. A copy is provided to the client, and the lawyer keeps the other copy.

Follow-up Meetings

We suggest you ask the client at the outset if he/she has seen one of our *pro bono* lawyers previously. If so, the client should show you the previous lawyer's advice form so that there is some continuity, and you have the benefit of knowing what was previously advised.

Conflicts

If a person opposed in interest to your client has received advice from another *pro bono* lawyer at the same clinic, this will not create a conflict problem for you. We take care not to keep client information, and the client's confidentiality is preserved, even though the adversary may be seen by another lawyer at the same clinic. To help you avoid a conflict, whenever possible, a client list will be faxed to you a day or so before the clinic. This service is an aid only and we cannot guarantee that the information is complete or correct.

Remuneration

Our policy is to request lawyers not go on to act for clients for remuneration. If a client wishes to pay you for additional services, please call our Executive Director and in exceptional circumstances permission to continue a private retainer may be given.