



Housing Practice Tip (9.22.20)

Practice Tip: Three Steps To Becoming a Housing Phone Advice Attorney with VLN

During the COVID pandemic, VLN is providing legal services through scheduled phone advice shifts every weekday from 2-4pm. If you would like to begin taking phone advice shifts, VLN has a three-step process for you to get involved.

First, you will need to be a registered volunteer with VLN. To register, please complete the [Volunteer Attorney Registration](#) form and indicate your interest in taking landlord/tenant phone advice shifts.

Second, you will need a basic understanding of landlord/tenant law in Minnesota. If you already have experience in landlord/tenant law in Minnesota, great. Skip to step three. If not, VLN suggests the following training schedule. We further suggest you review the trainings in the order provided.

1. [VLN's Eviction Basics](#) (April 2018)
2. [VLN's Anoka County Housing Court Clinic Training](#) (March 2020) [much of the information in this training is non-Anoka specific and provides a helpful basic background for clinic services]
3. Eviction Prevention Training for Lawyers including COVID-19 protections (May 2020). This training is available on the [ProJusticeMN](#) website.^[1] Once you are registered, you can find the training by accessing:
 - CLE Archive > Housing > Eviction Prevention Training, including COVID-19 protections (5/1/20)
4. [Homeline's COVID-19 webinar recording on the Eviction Moratorium and Executive Order 20-79](#) (August 4, 2020)
5. [Eviction Expungement CLE](#)
6. For questions about Ethical Obligations as a volunteer lawyer with VLN, you can review this helpful PowerPoint available on [ProJusticeMN](#) website: *PowerPoint Presentation: Current Issues in Professional Responsibility Public Interest Lawyers June 2018*. You can find the training by accessing:
 - CLE Archive > Ethics > Doing Ethical Work (6/27/18) > PowerPoint Presentation: Current Issues in Professional Responsibility Public Interest Lawyers June 2018

Also important to know is that VLN has created a website for use during your shift. The website includes a list of links for phone advice [resources](#) that will be helpful in navigating housing law questions during your phone shift.



Third, sign up for an advice phone shift by contacting VLN's Housing Case Coordinator, Kait Ripley (kait.ripley@vlmn.org). Prior to each shift, you will receive datasheets for 2-4 clients. Those sheets will have information on how to contact the client and include a general description of the legal question for each client. New volunteers will meet with a VLN staff member to review client issues prior to the first shift. Then, during the shift, VLN staff will be available for phone consultation if new or unexpected issues arise. New attorneys can continue to meet with VLN staff prior to shifts to review case/client information and have a VLN staff attorney on call during their shift until they feel comfortable proceeding without these supports.

Please note that phone advice clients are scheduled to receive a call anytime in that two hour window (from 2-4pm). If you do not get a hold of a client, please leave a message and a way to get back to you, and move onto the next client.

When the eviction moratorium comes to an end, volunteer attorneys will also be needed to staff shifts at initial appearance calendars in housing court. These will be remote advice shifts as well. Volunteers interested in providing services at initial appearance calendars should consider signing up for phone advice now. The training above is equally as helpful for initial appearance calendar shifts and full representation.

One additional training we recommend for people who will be providing further services at initial appearance calendars is:

7. [Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid Settlements Training](#): Password: 3q.pa*i=

Further training for initial appearance shifts will be provided once the eviction moratoriums end.

[1] If you are not registered with ProJusticeMN, it is an easy process to sign up and gain access to all of the helpful resources available on the website.