



Tip of the Month April 2025

## **Simplified Fee Waiver Applications for Clients Represented by Pro Bono and Legal Aid Attorneys**

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Minn. Stat. §563.01 sets forth the process for courts to waive court fees and costs for people who cannot afford them. Recent changes to this statute now provide additional options for attorneys requesting fee waivers when representing clients through a civil legal services or volunteer attorney program which provides services based on indigency.

The two new options are:

- Submit an affidavit that you are representing the client. The Court has even provided a sample affidavit on its website here: [www.mncourts.gov/getforms.aspx?c=19](http://www.mncourts.gov/getforms.aspx?c=19).

**OR**

- Make an oral attestation during a court hearing.

See Minn. Stat. §563.01, Subd (d).

Yep. That's it (insert sound of palms of rapidly swiping together back and forth here). To anyone who has spent time tracking down a client trying to get a signature or confirm one more piece of income information on the fee waiver form, this change will simplify your work. If these two options don't seem new to you, it is because they have been piloted in some of the counties where VLN does work. But now these options are now available statewide.

Additionally, the language and form for anyone to request a waiver has recently been updated and modified to make it easier to complete. Most notably, the form no longer uses the Latin

phrase “In Forma Pauperis” and instead uses the plain language words “Fee Waiver”. More and clearer completion instructions are included throughout.

These new changes are welcomed time saving measures that align with the intent of the statute - to reduce barriers encountered by low-income people when accessing the legal system.