



# Lawyer in the School On-Boarding Guide

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# WELCOME!

Hello and welcome to your new position within Legal Aid of West Virginia and specifically as part of the Lawyer in the School team. This guide is meant to give you an overview of the project as well as its goals, expectations, and to provide you with a helpful guide as you begin. You were hired because we believe that you will be an invaluable member of our team and that you bring with you not only the ability to do the necessary work, but to connect and impact our clients and their families lives in a profoundly positive way. Legal Aid of West Virginia has a rich tradition of working with vulnerable West Virginians to help them resolve their legal issues and it is this tradition that we now welcome you to.

### **A brief history on the Lawyer in the School Program**

The Lawyer in the School (LIS) program was started in Kanawha County at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary School and was intended as a way to meet families struggling with legal issues in an environment that was easily accessible to them. The initial project, which is still ongoing, operates regularly scheduled clinics from the school for caregivers to come in and discuss their legal issues. The Kanawha County project was also a pro bono project where we regularly had volunteer attorneys come in to help staff clinics and interview school families who need help. From there, the program grew to Marion County and has been operating in three schools since 2019. After the Marion County expansion, the project was established in Wayne and Cabell Counties, and was expanded further into Taylor and Preston Counties. Our latest expansion now includes McDowell and Mercer County.

All of these sites operate on the basis of working with the local board of education, superintendents, principals and individual schools to provide legal assistance to families in need. While each team member may adapt how they accomplish this goal, the work we do is primarily working within the schools to provide legal help to families with kids in school to stabilize their lives. What we hope you will be able to do in your new position is to continue to build off of the success we have seen in this program, and to adapt it in ways that reach more people.

### **Expectations**

As a Lawyer in the School attorney, you will be expected to hold regular clinics at the schools which have either been established or identified. These clinics can be tailored by you to meet the number of attendees you typically have or expect. Further, you will be expected to assist people with their legal issues as best you can. Your level of assistance can range from providing advice to in-court representation if the situation so calls for it. Ideally, you will not have the majority of your cases being only advice cases nor the majority of your cases being full in-court representation. Barring unusual circumstances like a judge calling you and “insisting” you help a particular party (it’s happened before!) the decision on the level of assistance you provide will be your own. You should seek to balance your case

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load by the services you provide in order to ensure that the other responsibilities that you have are not adversely impacted.

These responsibilities will include working with local and established stakeholders who may provide you with referrals. Additionally, you may be expected to attend school events (such as Family Night events) to provide an overview of the program or to update families on changes in the law which may affect them. Your role is to be an attorney to your clients and a source of legal information to our stakeholders, schools and families.

## **Organizational Structure - “Who do I report to?”**

As with any large organization, the question of “Who do I report to?” is of vital importance. The answer to that question will be, it depends. It depends on the issue and who is involved. While this will not be a comprehensive guide as to who you must seek out if you have a question, it should provide you with an idea of the types of thing each manager you interact with will be responsible for. It’s important to keep in mind that all large organizations invariably have overlapping managers who share responsibility for issues. The best thing you can do if you have a question, is just to ask.

Since you will be part of the Lawyer in the School team, any project related questions should be directed to me, the Project Supervisor. These types of questions can include:

- Who from the school do I contact regarding my clinic?
- What flyer are we providing to the schools this month?
- How should I handle this issue with a principal (or stakeholder)?
- Do I need to attend this school event?
- How do I collect data for our grant?
- When are grant numbers due?

These are just some of the questions that you can direct to me. In addition to working with me, you will also have a Supervising Attorney (SA) in your local office who you can direct questions to. Sometimes it will be easier to seek out your SA, especially if they are working in the office next to you. Your SA will also be responsible for reviewing your timesheets and approving leave requests. Further, your SA will be your primary contact for issues relating to:

- Your office (heat or. AC not working)
  - Maintenance issues (needing a new computer or other equipment)
  - Coordinating coverage amongst other attorney’s should staff be unavailable
  - Emergency absence (due to personal issue or weather related. Your SA will also be responsible for any office closure)
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There may also be issues that potentially come up that both the SA and the LIS Project Supervisor will both need to deal with and these include:

- Goal setting for the year
- Interoffice conflict involving other staff
- Scheduled absences, such as for vacation.

If you're unsure whether an issue needs to be directed toward your SA or your Project Supervisor, just ask! You'll never go wrong with asking a question concerning something you don't know.

### **Important Programs You'll Be Using – KEMPS but soon to be LegalServer**

While the programs we use to keep track of cases and submit leave requests are gone over in more detail elsewhere, we want to provide you a simple, 10,000 foot guide on how to put in your time and access your client files. Our case management system is known as KEMPS. However, we are in the process of transitioning to a new system known as LegalServer and this transition will be complete in April 2022. Until then, KEMPS is the program you will use to keep your time, access client files and generate reports for grant purposes.

For timekeeping purposes, you will bill your time in 6 minute increments (.1). It's best practice to keep your time contemporaneously. To do so, once you have logged into KEMPS you will select "Add" on the top of the screen, then select "Staff Time" —> "Block 6". On the next screen (which when working I would encourage you to keep up so you can keep your time contemporaneously) you can put in your time. There are two ways that you can classify your time, which are "Matter" or "Supporting Activity" in field box 4. A couple examples of how to put in your time are:

- Working from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. on reviewing and responding to e-mails, will be billed as .5 —> Supporting Activity in Box 4, billed as 150 (Cost Allocation - because it is not directly tied to your grant) in box 6 and SGC (General Clerical Work) in box 7.
- Giving a presentation from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m to community stakeholders about the LIS program will be billed as 2.0 —> Matter in Box 4 (because it involves more than just administrative work) and will be billed under your funding code (which is the code tied to your grant, such as 1 if you're funding by LSC or 169 if you are funded under the OVC grant) in box 6 and MOU (Outreach) in box 7.
- Conducting legal research on a specific case from 2:00 p.m. to 2:45 p.m., will be billed as .8. In this scenario you will look up your clients in box 4 (Open Cases). Once you have done so, you will need to put in the appropriate case work in the box listed "Case Work" under Box 7. In this scenario, you will select LER "Legal Research".

Complicated? Yes. Confused? It's OK if you are! This system is not the most intuitive to use. But, until we make the switch to LegalServer, this is how you will keep your time. It's also important that you include a description of the work you do regardless of whether it is a "Matter" or "Supporting Activity" in the "Notes" section. Additionally, when you are working on a case and save your time, also include a description in the "Notes" then select "Save/To Case Notes."

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## **Important Programs You'll Be Using - E-Forms (How you request leave time)**

E-Forms is the program you will use to submit your timesheets as well as request expense reimbursements and submit leave requests. As further detailed in the policy manual you'll receive, you will have 4 different types of leave time. These include Annual Leave, Sick Leave, Floating Leave, and Comp time. Depending on the reason for your leave request (sick vs. vacation) you should strive to schedule your time out of the office with as much notice as possible, typically at least two weeks. Obviously, if you become sick unexpectedly or a family member does, then you will just need to inform your SA and the Project Supervisor to let us know and to provide us with a timeframe as to when you may return. This helps insure we have proper coverage for any case work or outreach efforts.

Should you work over 37.5 hours in a week, you will accrue Comp Time, which can be used in lieu of Annual Leave or Floating Leave. Should you wish to take an afternoon off on a Friday, you do not have to submit a leave request via E-Forms. Rather, just reach out to your SA and ask them. You do not need to get permission from your Project Supervisor, but please let me know if you will be leaving the office early. Typically, any leave taken longer than one day, will need a leave request from E-Forms.

## **Important Programs You'll Be Using - H Drive and SharePoint**

The H Drive is the main legal database for all LAWV offices and where client files, templates, questionnaires, and documents are kept. If you are looking for a "Petition for Guardianship" typically you can search the H drive and find an example. We are in the process of creating a specific LIS Sharepoint page which will contain flyers, templates, letters, and everything else you may need. No client files will be located on the SharePoint page. To access the H drive you will need to be logged into the central server, which happens automatically when you log in while in the office. You will need to set up a Virtual Presence Network (VPN) with Chris Martin in the IT department if you wanted to access the H drive while outside of the office.

A practice tip, when using others work to draft legal documents, it's best to copy the entire document and paste to a new document and then save it your own file. Please **DO NOT EDIT ANOTHER'S LEGAL DOCUMENT AND THEN SAVE IT.**

The SharePoint page is accessible via any wifi connection and once it is completed, it will be where you can easily access documents you may need as well as grant information.

## **Grant information - Alphabet Soup**

The Lawyer in the School program is funded by several grants and while its not necessary as you begin working to understand the complete workings of each, it is useful to know which grants are involved so that when we discuss these you understand what it is we are talking about. Here is a list and brief description of each grant that makes up the Lawyer in the School program:

- Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) - A grant from the Department of Justice and is administered by JBS, whom we have frequent calls with to discuss updates and progress.
  - Jobs and Hope - A grant from the State of West Virginia which is currently being worked by Emily Issacs.
  - Legal Services Corporation (LSC) - We receive some money from LSC which is funded by Congress in its annual budget. LSC funding comes with several restriction and reporting requirements. If your position is funded by LSC we will discuss these restrictions at another time.
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- The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (TGKVF)—Kanawha County Lawyer in the School receives a grant from TGKVF to help us provide legal help to families, but also to host Family Nights at the school where we provide a class on a legal topic while also providing food for families.

## The LIS Team

It's important to know who you may be working and collaborating with. Despite being spread out amongst the state, the Lawyer in the School team is always willing to help you as you start out. Below is a bit about your new colleagues to better help you in knowing who you can seek out when you have questions.

**Richard Morris:** I have been an attorney with Legal Aid of West Virginia for 7 years now. I began my career under an Equal Justice Works Fellowship in 2015 working on behalf of veterans. I then moved to be a TANF attorney before moving against to working with survivors of domestic violence. For the past 3 years, I have been responsible for the Marion County LIS program. E-mail: [rmorris@lawv.net](mailto:rmorris@lawv.net)

**Madison (Maddie) Stahl:** Madison has been an attorney with Legal Aid of West Virginia since 2019 and has been a member of the LIS for the last two years. She works out of the Morgantown office and has established clinics in Preston and Taylor County. E-mail: [mstahl@lawv.net](mailto:mstahl@lawv.net)

**Jenny Layne:** Jenny has been the paralegal support for the Marion, Preston, and Taylor county programs. She has been integral in the expansion of the LIS program through her outreach efforts. She is responsible for the collection of grant data and reporting it. E-mail: [jlayne@lawv.net](mailto:jlayne@lawv.net)

**Barbara (Barbie) Finley:** Barbie is the Lawyer in the School attorney covering Wayne and Cabell counties. Having initially started under a grant from Marshall University, she is now covered under the OVC grant. E-mail: [bfinley@lawv.net](mailto:bfinley@lawv.net)

**Hannah Ferguson:** Hannah is the support paralegal for the LIS program in McDowell and Mercer County. She helps with the clinics as well as doing intakes and helps with outreach events. [hferguson@lawv.net](mailto:hferguson@lawv.net)

**Emily Issacs:** Emily is the attorney who is responsible for McDowell and Mercer Counties. She has begun establishing clinics with schools and has knowledge in how to roll out this project in a new area. [eissacs@lawv.net](mailto:eissacs@lawv.net)

**Kate White:** Kate is Legal Aid's Access to Services Manager. She helped to start the Lawyer in the School program in Kanawha County. She's been at Legal Aid for 10 years. [kwhite@lawv.net](mailto:kwhite@lawv.net)

## Goals for the first two weeks:

We understand that when you begin, you will be wondering what you need to do first. A lot of information will be thrown at you, but our hope is that this will provide you with a roadmap of how you can begin to settle into your role as part of the Lawyer in the School team. So, some things to work on when you first begin:

- Review the Personal and Policy Manuals for LAWV and read the LIS Onboarding Guide
  - If you are an attorney, reach out to the Project Supervisor to schedule a meeting to go over questions
  - If you are a new paralegal, then reach out to the attorney you will be working with along with the Project Supervisor to schedule a meeting to go over questions
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- If you are coming into a situation where the LIS is already established, then reach out to the school principals where clinics are held and introduce yourself
- Review your protocol (how cases will be directed to you from ATLAS - our intake center) with your Supervising Attorney
- Get to know the staff within your office
- Examine MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) that we have with county boards of education
- Introduce yourself to established stakeholders (especially the local Healthy Grandfamilies program) and begin to inquire as to when their next meetings will be held
- Review inherited cases and begin reaching out to schedule appointments with clients so that you can access the scope of assistance you will be providing

### **One last thing...**

We are so excited that you are now part of our team. I want you to know that even though we may be working in different places, we are a group that wants to help you in whatever way we can. Know that you were brought in because we believe that you will continue the great work that we have started with this program. I look forward to meeting with you myself and hope that you have a wonderful first day here at Legal Aid of West Virginia!

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**LEGAL AID OF WEST VIRGINIA ON-BOARDING FOR LIS**

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