

**SOUTHERN MINNESOTA REGIONAL LEGAL SERVICES (SMRLS)
VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY PROGRAM**

Guidelines for Volunteer Attorneys

1. Volunteer Attorneys must be licensed to practice in Minnesota.
2. As a Volunteer Attorney, you authorized SMRLS to verify your disciplinary status with the appropriate board, and will notify SMRLS immediately if you become subject to disciplinary proceedings.
3. When you take a SMRLS case, you are responsible for representing the client, not SMRLS.
 - You may not charge attorney fees for a VAP client.
 - You may keep court-awarded attorney fees.
4. When you take a SMRLS case, prepare a Representation Agreement. You can use the form provided by SMRLS if you wish. Please provide a copy to SMRLS.
 - You do not have to do an appeal if the client does not like the outcome.
 - If a VAP client asks you to handle any additional issues beyond the original case, you are not obligated to do so.
 - You may do legal work separate from the VAP case for the client on a paid basis.
5. Please let your SMRLS VAP Coordinator know promptly if you decide to not take or continue with a case because of:
 - Little chance of success
 - Poor client follow through
 - Conflict of interest
 - The case will take more time than you are able to donate, or
 - Any other reason.
6. SMRLS provides malpractice coverage for VAP cases. Please notify your VAP Coordinator promptly of possible malpractice or legal action.
7. Avoid filling fees and other costs for the VAP client. Seek an In Forma Pauperis waiver for filing fees. A Supplemental In Forma Pauperis may be able to avoid additional costs.
8. SMRLS will provide support and assistance to you when representing and VAP client to the extent of SMRLS available resources.

- SMRLS will provided an interpreter if needed.
 - Please call your VAP Coordinator if you are having problems with the client.
9. Please be sure to send a Case Closing Sheet promptly after completion of your VAP case. This important step allows for more accurate recordkeeping for our funders.