

Effective Date: Referrals made after July 2021

**CONDITIONS AND OBLIGATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE
REDUCED FEE PANEL PROGRAM OF NEVADA LEGAL SERVICES, INC.**

A. ESTABLISHMENT OF PANEL

Members of the private bar or other professional pro bono volunteers who elect to participate in the paid referral program are under no obligation to accept any paid referral, but do agree to consider acceptance of all such referrals when contacted by Nevada Legal Services (hereinafter "NLS"). Panel members who decline to accept a case when contacted, or after an initial conference with the client, will not be penalized in regard to future referrals. However, repeated refusal or inability to accept paid referrals may result in the attorney or professional's name being removed from the paid referral list. A list of attorneys and professionals who have agreed to participate ("panel members") will be maintained, and cases will be referred on as needed basis. Panel members will also not receive CLE credit for cases reimbursed under this program.

B. FEES

The Federal regulations governing NLS and the reduced fee panel program require that referrals to professionals and the private bar be made on a "reduced fee" basis. This fee can be no more than one-half of the "going rate" for services rendered.

45 C.F.R. 1642.4(b) requires that participating panel members who are paid to represent clients pursuant to this program may not seek fees in those cases from another source. However, sanctions imposed by courts or administrative agencies on adverse parties for behavior that violates court or agency rules may be accepted by panel members because they are considered to be penalties rather than fees [45 C.F.R. §1642.2(b)(3)]. Finally, this restriction does not apply to the reimbursement of costs and expenses made by the opposing party or the client [45 C.F.R. §1642.2(b)(4)].

Under no circumstances shall a participating panel member bill a referred client for professional services provided pursuant to a case referred under the paid referral program. The panel member agrees to accept the compensation outlined below as full payment for the time and all incidental expenses of providing services to the client such as secretarial time, telephone, copying, travel, postage and other expenses.

Panel members that utilize paraprofessional staff to assist with cases and client representation may also bill for the time of the paraprofessional at 50% of the reduced fee NLS provides to the panel member.

This contract is on the condition that if payments exceed \$25,000 in a year, the professional, attorney or law firm will engage in a subgrant agreement that will need LSC's approval. 45 C.F.R. §1627.2(b)(1). This contract is also conditioned upon the regulation that

fees received under this contract must be less than 50% of the professional, attorney or firm's projected annual professional income.

Pursuant to 45 C.F.R. 1610.7, fees or other funds received by a panel member from NLS may not be expended for any activity prohibited by the Legal Services Corporation Act, 42 U.S.C. §2996 et seq. or by Public Law 104-134, 110 Stat. 1321 (1996), copies of which may be obtained from NLS' central office located in Las Vegas.

Panel members electing to participate agree to handle referred cases at the fees and/or rates set out below. Federal regulations require each panel member to keep time records on every case referred. No fee will be paid where the panel member decides not to accept the case, either before or immediately after initial consultation with the client.

1. Amount of Fees

NLS will pay \$150 per hour for the services rendered. NLS will pay paraprofessionals \$75 per hour.

2. Filing Fees and Other Litigation Costs

The responsibility for filing fees and other litigation costs rests with the client, and NLS will so inform the client prior to the referral. However, panel members should seek to have such fees and costs waived through a Statement of Legal Aid Representation, Affidavit to Proceed In Forma Pauperis, or other fee waiver whenever possible.

NLS may reimburse panel members for fees and other expenses advanced to the client for litigation that cannot be waived, but the panel member must obtain a prior written commitment from the Directing Attorney. A commitment should be sought, and can only be given, after the panel member determines that the client is unable to pay such costs.

Panel members that utilize consultants, expert witnesses or other outside professionals in the court of their assistance to the client may also invoice NLS to compensate for those costs.

In order to obtain prior approval, the panel member must:

1. Attempt to collect the fee or costs from the client and certify to NLS at the time of billing that the client is unable to pay such fees and/or costs;
2. Attempt to have such fees and/or costs taxed against the opposing party and certify to NLS at the time of billing that the fees and/or costs cannot reasonably be collected from the opposing party; and
3. Certify to NLS at the time of billing that the fees and/or costs cannot be waived by a court or agency or a waiver request was made but denied.

If NLS reimburses filing fees or other costs and they are later collected by the panel member, the panel member agrees to reimburse NLS.

3. Travel Expenses

Travel costs for appearing in court or visiting with clients outside of the county in which you work, and not including the incidental costs that are covered by the reduced fee payment, will be reimbursed as follows:

1. Mileage at the federal mileage rate per mile for travel outside of the county where the panel member's office is located. If the panel member maintains offices in more than one county, mileage will be reimbursed only if the panel member does not have an office in the county traveled to, and mileage must be computed based upon distance from the panel member's closest office.

2. Twenty-five dollars (\$25) per hour for travel time to court, when the panel member's office is outside the county where the court sits.

3. With the exception of #2 above (travel time to court outside the county) NLS will not reimburse the above expenses in excess of \$150.00 per case unless approval is obtained in advance from the Directing Attorney.

C. CASE REFERRALS AND PAYMENT OF FEES

NLS will conduct an initial intake interview to determine the client's eligibility and the basic facts concerning the client's legal problem. NLS will then contact the panel member about the case, and if the panel member agrees to accept the referral, NLS will instruct the client to contact the panel member to schedule an appointment.

1. Expectations for Referrals

a. INITIAL CONFERENCE

Panel members will be paid a \$150 per hour consultation fee for initial client conferences of no more than 2 hours duration in order to give the panel member a chance to evaluate the merits of the case and attempt to resolve the case with advice or limited action. If no further action is required or if the client withdraws or decides not to proceed with the case during or immediately following the consultation, the panel member must promptly notify NLS of the case closing and submit an invoice for payment. In order to be approved for case closing and payment, the panel member must provide NLS with enough information about the advice given or the limited action undertaken so that we may close the case in accordance with the federal regulations governing our program. The panel member must submit the CLOSING MEMO form provided, if this information is not contained in another document, and provide a detailed description of the advice given or any actions undertaken.

NLS will instruct the client to contact the attorney after the referral is accepted within 14 days. If, after the 14 days, and in no event after more than 30 days, the client fails to keep an initial conference or appointment, the panel member shall notify NLS so that we may timely close the case. The panel member may submit the CLOSING MEMO form provided.

b. EXTENDED SERVICES

After the consultation, if the panel member finds that further representation of the client is warranted or necessary, but does not require representation in court or administrative proceeding, the panel member may provide up to an additional 10 hours of service. The panel member must first notify and seek approval from NLS before engaging in any further work.

After consultation, if the panel member finds that further representation of the client in a court or administrative proceeding is required, the panel member may continue the representation of the client in a court or administrative proceeding. At that time the panel member and NLS shall negotiate an approved estimate for the hours that would be necessary for further representation. NLS will pay \$150 per hour for all time spent in court or administrative hearings, research, document preparation, trial/hearing preparation, and other necessary activities for the representation. The panel member will invoice NLS for the first 2 hours and thereafter on a monthly basis for cases involving continued representation.

If the panel member is unsure of the amount of hours that may be necessary, the panel member can request the additional 10 hours, and continue to request approval in 10 hour increments, until the matter is concluded.

If the client withdraws, or fails to keep subsequent appointments after approval for extended services, the panel member shall timely notify NLS, provide the CLOSING MEMO form provided, and submit an invoice for the time expended and approved prior to the client's withdrawal.

All requests for hours must be approved by the Directing Attorney or designee. **Invoices for services rendered in any calendar year must be submitted within that calendar year for payment** so that we may remain in compliance with our federal regulators and the regulations governing our program.

D. PAYMENT OF FEES

Payment of approved fees and any approved expense reimbursement shall be made only after appropriately invoiced and requested. A W-9 must be completed and returned to Nevada Legal Services in order to receive payment. The request for payment shall be sent to the NLS office that referred the case at the conclusion of the initial consultation and then monthly for extended service matters, and shall consist of the following documents:

1. An itemization with descriptions of time and expenses for which reimbursement is sought, and, if relevant,

2. A CLOSING MEMO, which will be provided at the time of referral, and must include a detailed description of the services provided to the client, including any advice actually given.

Requests for payment must be submitted (1) promptly after the initial consultation and (2) monthly for extended services matters. Final requests for payment must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days after the case is ready for closing, absent unusual circumstances. Payment will be mailed directly to the panel member within a reasonable period of time after receipt of all required documents by the NLS Administrative Office.

E. APPEALS

NLS will not compensate a panel member for an appeal of a matter accepted under this program unless prior written authorization from the Directing Attorney or designee of the referring office has been obtained.

In every case where a referred client wishes to take an appeal and the panel member believes there is just cause for such an appeal, the panel member shall immediately contact the Pro Bono Coordinator. In the event an appeal is recommended by the panel member, NLS will decide whether or not to refer the case for representation to the panel member or, if required, another panel member on appeal. In every case where a referred client wishes to take an appeal but the panel member does not believe that an appeal would be meritorious or likely to be successful, the panel member shall advise the client accordingly and further advise the client of the applicable time limits to allow the client sufficient time to attempt to secure other representation.

F. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Once a referral is made and accepted, NLS has no responsibility for handling or supervising the handling of the case, except to the extent necessary to verify representation has been completed before releasing payment to the panel member. In most cases such verification will consist of the document specified in section D. However, NLS will consult with the panel member about the progress of the referred case. If a case has not been billed in a timely manner after referral pursuant to the LSC CSR Handbook, inquiry will be made by NLS to determine the status of the case.

Panel members have full authority to represent referred clients in the same way as any other client. However, NLS is required to provide a complaint procedure for referred clients. In the letter notifying the client of the case referral, clients will be told that they may register complaints about the manner or quality of services with the referring NLS office. In response to such complaint, NLS may confer with the panel member about the case.

As with any other client, upon the acceptance of a case referred pursuant to the paid referral program, a panel member accepts full responsibility for representing the referred client in accordance with the Nevada Rules of Professional Conduct or other appropriate guidelines or regulations regarding professional conduct.

NLS staff will provide support, advice, counsel or other assistance to panel members with respect to cases which have been referred. However, NLS will not assume the status of co-counsel on any case referred under the paid referral program and nothing herein shall be construed as placing NLS in the posture of co-counsel with respect to any such case.

G. WITHDRAW FROM PROGRAM

Either the panel member or NLS may terminate participation in the paid referral program at any time by providing written notice to the other party, provided the panel member fulfills his/her professional obligation in regard to referred cases previously accepted.

NLS REDUCED FEE PANEL PROGRAM
AGREEMENT AND ENROLLMENT FORM

Please return the originally executed agreement and enrollment form to NEVADA LEGAL SERVICES, Attn: Directing Attorney of the Referring Office.

I, _____, hereby elect to participate in the NLS Reduced Fee Panel Program. I understand and agree to the “Conditions and Obligations for Participation in the Reduced Fee Panel Program of NLS” referenced herein, pages 1 through 5, and I have received and reviewed a copy of the same.

I acknowledge that this Agreement and Enrollment Contract is not valid without a signature of an NLS Directing Attorney.

Panel Member

Date

Approval, Directing Attorney or Designee

Date

PLEASE COMPLETE PAYMENT INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

CHECKS ARE TO BE MADE PAYABLE TO: _____ my firm
_____ me personally

If checks are to be made payable to my firm, the firm's FEDERAL TAX I.D. NUMBER is _____ and the name of the firm is _____.

If checks are to be made payable to me personally, my SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER is _____.

NAME: _____

FIRM NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ FAX: _____

Please list any case types you agree to accept or leave blank to evaluate any referral:

Please choose the counties you are willing to work in:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carson City | <input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Churchill | <input type="checkbox"/> Lyon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clark | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Douglas | <input type="checkbox"/> Nye |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elko | <input type="checkbox"/> Pershing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Esmerelda | <input type="checkbox"/> Storey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eureka | <input type="checkbox"/> Washoe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humboldt | <input type="checkbox"/> White Pine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lander | <input type="checkbox"/> Any County |