



## Reduced Fee Initiative

Shore Legal Access screens clients who are slightly above our income guidelines for pro bono legal services, but who are still unable to afford standard attorney fees. We place these clients with attorneys willing to provide legal services at a reduced rate, typically half the amount they charge per hour or for a flat rate. The average hourly rate for attorney's fees on the Eastern Shore is currently \$300 (9/1/2023). We ask that attorneys on the reduced fee panel accept cases for \$150 per hour or less, or a reasonable reduced flat rate depending on the type of service.

Shore Legal Access helps clients connect with attorneys on the reduced fee panel. It is the responsibility of the attorney and the client to agree upon an appropriate rate for services. Then the client pays the attorney directly. Once the connection is made between attorney and client, Shore Legal Access involvement ceases.

## Reduced Fee FY24 Income Guidelines

70% Maryland median income

To qualify for pro bono legal services at Shore Legal Access, clients' income must be below 50% of Maryland median income. However, to qualify for reduced fee services, clients' income must be above 50% but below 70% of Maryland median income.

Family Size	Annual Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
1	\$49,665	\$4,139	\$956
2	\$64,947	\$5,412	\$1,250
3	\$80,228	\$6,686	\$1,544
4	\$95,510	\$7,959	\$1,838
5	\$110,792	\$9,233	\$2,132
6	\$126,072	\$10,506	\$2,426
7	\$128,939	\$10,745	\$2,482
8	\$131,804	\$10,984	\$2,537
9	\$134,669	\$11,222	\$2,592
10	\$137,535	\$11,461	\$2,647



## Reduced Fee Panel Attorney Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Counties available to provide services: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Admission to the Maryland Bar (mm/dd/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Check all areas of law that you are willing to accept a reduced fee for services:</b>	<b>Lowest hourly rate you are willing to accept for this type of case?</b>	<b>Lowest flat fee you are willing to accept for this type of case?</b>
	Custody/Visitation		
	Divorce/Separation		
	Adoption		
	Guardianships		
	Consumer Debt		
	Bankruptcy		
	Foreclosure		
	Deeds/Real Property		
	Landlord/Tenant		
	Contracts/Warranties		
	State Benefits (SSI, Disability, Veterans)		
	Health (Medicare, Medicaid)		
	Employment Law		
	Education/Public School		
	Wills or Probate		
	Financial Power of Attorney		
	Advanced Medical Directive		
	Immigration		
	Torts/Small Claims		
	Business Law		
	Expungements		
	Other:		

Do you accept fee-shifting cases:  Yes  No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Shore Legal Access Code of Ethics**

*Adopted by MSPB Board of Directors, January 19, 2022*

***Vision:** We envision a world where all Eastern Shore residents have access to civil legal representation and individuals feel respected and empowered throughout the legal system.*

***Mission:** To support and assist individuals and families who are unable to afford representation in civil matters and to provide connections to community resources.*

The Shore Legal Access (SLA) Code of Ethics has been adopted to ensure adherence to the Organization's Vision and Mission. The Code applies equally to Board Members, employees, and volunteers. Individually and collectively, we are committed to:

- Maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards in our development and delivery of programs and services for our clients.
- Honesty and transparency in our interaction with each other and with our clients, partners, and supporters.
- Ensuring the confidentiality of client information and communications related to our delivery of services.
- Responding in a forthright manner and with appropriate urgency to conflicts of interest.
- Inviting information about actions that place SLA, its employees and/or clients at risk and ensuring protections for reporters (Ref. Whistleblower Policy).
- Ensuring adherence to the highest standards of fiscal management and reporting (Ref. Fiscal Management Policies and Procedures).
- Ensuring that relationships and interactions among and between Board Members, staff, volunteers, and the people we serve are professional and respectful.

### **Policy and Procedure**

As a Board Member, employee, or volunteer of SLA an individual agrees to abide by the Code of Ethics, and to not engage in activities that are detrimental to SLA.

Revised 01/19/2022

Final determination of violations of the Code of Ethics rests with the Board of Directors (the Board) in accordance with procedures outlined below. The responsibility to investigate and to present findings and recommendations to the Board President when employees and volunteers are the subject of alleged violations rests with the Executive Director (ED). If the ED is the subject of an alleged violation, a final determination rests with the Board.

The person or persons responsible will endeavor to execute fairly this responsibility with the procedure defined below:

1. The Board President (President), the Treasurer and the Executive Director (ED) are responsible to oversee implementation of this policy and procedure. They will maintain ongoing communications regarding new or pending potential violations, related investigations, and dispositions.
2. Board Members, staff and volunteers will be notified at the time of their election, hiring or appointment of this policy and at least annually thereafter. At the time of their notification, each individual will be asked to sign the Code of Ethics Attestation (Attachment A).
3. An individual alleging a violation of the Code of Ethics (the Complainant) must make the charge in writing, including evidentiary documentation. Documentation must include factual evidence that a violation has occurred. The Alleged Violator is entitled to see the complaint and evidence provided and may submit a written statement relating to the alleged violation with which they are charged.
4. Alleged violations may be further investigated by the responsible person(s), with legal consultation if necessary to gather additional documentation, to speak with the Complainant, and/or the individual about whom the allegation is made.
5. When an employee or volunteer is the subject of an alleged violation, the ED will initiate an investigation to include interviews with the Complainant, the accused, and witnesses when appropriate. The ED will present their findings and recommendations to the Board President. Only the board can find the Charged Party guilty of the Violation and impose disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include but not be limited to admonishment, suspension for a specified period, or termination of employment or volunteer activity. The President will present the ED's findings and recommendations to the Board Executive Committee. If a simple majority of committee members determine that there was a violation, the President will inform the ED who will in turn inform the Violator of the disciplinary action taken by the board. If the violator refuses to accept the disciplinary action s/he may request a hearing before the Executive Committee. The President will then convene the Executive Committee at the earliest possible time. Subsequent to the hearing, The Committee's findings and recommended action will be added to the agenda of the next regular or special board meeting. The action of the Board is final with no rights of appeal or reversal. Pending action by the Board, the employee or volunteer may

be suspended. If the ED is the subject of the alleged violation, the complaint will be referred to the Board Executive Committee.

6. When a Board Member is the subject of a complaint, the Board Executive Committee will initiate an investigation to include interviews with the Complainant, the accused, and witnesses when necessary. If a member of the Executive Committee is the subject of the alleged violation, they will not participate in interviews with the Complainant or other witnesses nor in the Committee's deliberations and findings. If a simple majority of committee members determine that there was a violation, the Committee's finding and recommendations will be added to the agenda of the next regular or special Board meeting, provided that at least 30 days' notice is given to the Member prior to the board meeting. A two-thirds majority of the current Board is required to find a Charged Violator guilty of a violation or violations of the Code of Ethics or of actions that are detrimental to SLA or both. If the charged violator or the complainant is a board member, that individual may not vote. The action of the board is final with no rights of appeal or reversal. Between the time a complaint is lodged against a Board Member and final action by the Board, the Member will be excluded from all Board functions.
7. The Board Secretary with the assistance of the ED when appropriate shall keep or cause to be kept, reports, records related documents of all alleged ethics violations, investigations, and findings.

## **Attachment A**

### **Shore Legal Access Code of Ethics Attestation**

In my role as a member of the Board of Directors, an employee or volunteer, I will endeavor to promote the highest standards of professional conduct by:

- Practicing honesty and maintaining personal integrity, including avoidance of conflicts of interest with those of Shore Legal Access;
- Adhering to high standards of personal conduct;
- Striving for the objective and fair presentation of financial information and protection of SLA resources;
- Fostering excellence in the development and delivery of SLA programs and services by keeping abreast of pertinent issues;
- Maintaining the confidentiality of privileged information; and
- Promoting a greater understanding of our programs and services among others in the field and seeking increased public understanding through communication about the needs of the population we serve.

By signing this attestation, I certify that I have read and agree to abide by the SLA Code of Ethics Policy and Procedure.

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Name

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Position

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Signature

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Date