

AGREEMENT BETWEEN CLIENT AND VOLUNTEER LAWYER

You have asked for legal help from the Northwest Colorado Legal Services Project (NCLSP), a civil legal aid program which is part of Colorado Legal Services (CLS). Your case has been referred to a volunteer lawyer who takes cases from NCLSP.

This Agreement describes what you, _____, the client, and _____, your volunteer lawyer, can expect from each other.

1. Lawyer will help you with _____.
Lawyer agrees to help you with this one case without charging you attorney fees.
2. No lawyer, not even the lawyer volunteering to help you, can promise a successful ending of your case. Your lawyer will work carefully on your case, of course. Any opinion about your case, provided to you by your lawyer or by anyone at NCLSP or CLS, is only an opinion and cannot be considered a promise of how a case will end. You or a judge will decide how your case will end.
3. You must pay the costs of your case, and your lawyer can ask you to pay these costs, and can ask you to give your lawyer money to pay any expected costs. (Your lawyer must return your money to you if it isn't spent.) Costs include court fees that can't be waived, office expenses like postage and copies, long distance charges, costs to serve papers, and other costs of your case.
4. Your lawyer can collect and keep attorney fees, if the court orders the other side to pay your attorney fees, or if the other side pays your fees for some other reason. You will not have to pay attorney fees to your lawyer.
5. You are being helped because your income and assets are within CLS limits. If your income or assets change, or if you didn't give NCLSP all information on your income and assets, your lawyer will contact NCLSP. NCLSP will then decide if you still qualify for NCLSP. If you do not qualify, your lawyer can stop helping you. You cannot be charged attorney fees for any legal help you received as a client of NCLSP.
6. Your lawyer is volunteering his or her time to help you with the legal problem listed in this agreement. If you have other legal problems, come back to NCLSP for help. Your lawyer could charge you attorney fees for talking to you about a problem which is different from the problem listed in this agreement.
7. Your lawyer represents you, and will talk with you about what you want to do about your legal problem. Your lawyer may recommend that your case be resolved by arbitration, mediation or negotiations, or by a court or administrative case. Your lawyer cannot settle your case without your agreement. However, you cannot ask your lawyer to do anything unethical or illegal, and your lawyer does not have to do things which your lawyer thinks would hurt you or your lawyer, or would not be likely to succeed. Your lawyer can stop representing you if you and your lawyer cannot agree on the best way to handle your case.
8. Everything you tell your lawyer is confidential (private), unless you give up your right to confidentiality. Your lawyer must get your agreement before talking to anyone else about your case. If you talk to friends or other people about your case, you may be giving up your right to confidentiality.
9. You must give your lawyer complete and true information about your case. You must also cooperate by keeping in touch with your lawyer, telling your lawyer if your address or phone number changes, keeping your appointments, telling your lawyer if the other side tries to contact you, and responding right away to reasonable requests from your lawyer. If you don't do these things, your lawyer can stop helping you.
10. If you do not contact your lawyer within a reasonable time (usually, five working days) after being referred to your lawyer, your case will be closed and your lawyer will not be able to help you.
11. If you do not cooperate with your lawyer, and your case is closed, NCLSP may not be able to refer your case to a second volunteer lawyer. You will have a chance to explain what happened and why you did not cooperate.
12. If you do not like the help you get, or if your case is closed because you did not cooperate, you can ask for a review. Colorado Legal Services will conduct a review of your case. As part of the review, your volunteer lawyer may be contacted. If you do not understand how to ask for a review, contact NCLSP, which will help you.
13. You must respect your lawyer's time. Write down your questions before you call or visit your lawyer. Always make an appointment before visiting your volunteer lawyer. Lawyers normally charge their clients for all time they spend on a case, including phone calls, visits, and writing and reading letters. If you have important questions, you can call your lawyer, but be considerate and call only when necessary. Call only during regular office hours.
14. Talk to your lawyer first before talking to the other side or their lawyer. You should let your lawyer know if the other side or their lawyer tries to contact you.
15. You can tell your lawyer to stop helping you whenever you want. If your case has been filed in court, your volunteer lawyer must continue as your lawyer until the judge approves a request to withdraw from the case.
16. Everything you have told NCLSP about you, your financial situation, and your case must be true.
17. You have been given a copy of this "Agreement between Client and Volunteer Lawyer", and a copy of "Client Rights and Duties" to keep.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD, AND I ACCEPT THIS AGREEMENT BETWEEN CLIENT AND VOLUNTEER LAWYER.

Client

Date

Volunteer Lawyer

Date