

**BRISTOL COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**  
**LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE RULES**

(Adopted April 16, 1986)

Resolved, that the Bristol County Bar Association shall sponsor a Lawyer Referral Service (the Service) to be operated commencing on or about April 16, 1986, in accordance with the following guidelines:

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Service shall be to assist the general public by providing a way in which any person meeting the criteria stated herein may be referred to a qualified member of the Bristol County Bar Association residing in or practicing law in Bristol County.

**CRITERIA:** The Service shall be available to any person who in the opinion of the Service meets the following criteria:

- (1) can afford to pay a reasonable fee for legal services; and
- (2) states there is no attorney in Bristol County that he or she wishes to engage for the contemplated services.

**COMMITTEE:** The president of the Bar Association shall appoint a committee and a chairperson thereof, to be known as the Lawyer Referral Service Committee. The Committee shall supervise the operation of the Service.

**PANEL:**

- (A) Any member of the Bristol County Bar Association is in good standing and living in or operating a full time office for the practice of law in Bristol County, may qualify as a panel member.
- (B) In submitting an application to participate in the panel, the applicant may list up to **FIVE** areas of law in which referrals will be accepted. In so listing, an applicant represents to the committee that he or she is competent to render legal service in each of those areas.
- (C) An applicant who files an application to participate in the panel agrees to the following:
  - (1) where the client requests a consultation only, the applicant agrees to grant an initial consultation to the client for a fee to be fixed by the attorney.

- (2) the charge for further services rendered (if any) will be as agreed upon with the client and in keeping with the code of Professional Ethics.
- (3) the applicant agrees to grant all clients referred by the Service an appointment as soon as practical after the referral is made, but no later than ten days after the referral is made.
- (4) the applicant agrees to abide by all of the rules of the Service and will not hold the Bristol County Bar Association liable in connection with the activities of the Service.
- (5) the applicant agrees to abide by all decisions of the Committee with regard to his or her application and continued eligibility as a member of the Service.

**ANNUAL  
REGISTRARTION  
FEE**

Each panel member of the Service will pay to the Lawyer Referral Service Committee a non-refundable annual registration fee of \$75.00 or such other sum as the Committee may from time to time establish for each year of his or her membership.

**ADDITIONAL  
CONTRIBUTIONS**

As additional contributions toward operating this Service, each panel member shall pay a sum equal to 10% of the total of each fee. All fees thus received will be held by the Committee and used to defray the costs of operation of this Service.

**MAL-PRACTICE  
INSURANCE**

Each panel member shall be required to carry minimum Professional Liability coverage of \$100,000/\$300,000.

**WITHDRAWAL  
FROM THE PANEL**

A panel member may withdraw his or her name from participation in the service at any time upon giving five days written notice to the Lawyer Referral Service Committee. (The annual registration fee is non-refundable.)

**OPERATION  
OF THE PANEL**

- (A) The Service shall maintain a list of panel members who have registered in each area of competence. Referrals will be made to members of the panel in rotation. Rotation will be initially chosen at a random point in the alphabet and proceed thereafter alphabetically until all members have been referred one referral and continue thereafter in the same

sequence. New members will be placed in rotation in alphabetical order.

If a member is next in alphabetical sequence but is not referred because he or she did not indicate practice in a field of need of the person requesting the referral, the lawyer will remain at the top of the list until a referral is made in the area he or she indicates a field of practice.

A member may suspend his rotation sequence position by notice to the Service at any time.

- (B) If the Service ascertains that a person is presently represented by a lawyer on any matter, no referral will be made until the Service has verified that the lawyer/client relationship does not apply to the contemplated services by a panel member.
- (C) Except for cause, a panel member shall accept any referral for initial interview in those areas in which he or she has indicated in his or her application that he or she is willing and competent to act. If any referral should give rise to a conflict of interest, the attorney agrees to contact the Service. The attorney may not refer the client to any other attorney, including a member of his or her firm. The attorney shall then be considered next in rotation for a substitute referral
- (D) Nothing herein shall obligate a panel member to accept employment or to render services beyond the initial consultation.
- (E) Nothing herein shall obligate a panel member to accept employment or to render services beyond the initial consultation.
- (F) The name of a panel member rejecting a referral without cause deemed sufficient by the Service might be moved to the bottom of the list.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Within 15 days after each referral, a panel member will complete and return the referral report form forwarded by the Service. The panel member will return the final report upon completion of the case.

Failure to return the report forms within the time specified by the Service will justify the Service in removing his or her name from the panel. Nothing herein will require any attorney to violate the attorney-client privilege.

#### **RECORDS AND REVIEW**

The Service will keep on file a confidential report of all referrals and report of panel members, which will be subject to examination and inspection only by the committee and by the president of the Bristol County Bar Association. The Service will maintain in its name a checking account and shall deposit therein all required fees and other proceeds received by it. Expenses of the Service shall be paid out of this account as far as these funds permit. Remaining expenses of the Service shall be paid out of the general treasury of the Bristol County Bar Association.

#### **PUBLICITY**

The committee will publicize the existence of the Service in a manner consistent with the Code of Professional Ethics of the American Bar Association.

#### **COMMITTEE SUPERVISION AND REPORTING**

The Committee shall be subject to the supervision of the Executive Committee of the Bristol County Bar Association and shall report annually to the members of this Association.