

NEW CLIENT INTAKE/SCREENING POLICY FOR NEW COVENANT LEGAL SERVICES

1. New Covenant Legal Services (“NCLS”) provides legal services to individuals living on fixed or low-incomes. NCLS’s mission is to demonstrate that Jesus Christ’s love and justice are sovereign in the world. This mission will be accomplished through a Christ-centered approach to addressing legal problems and achieving social justice, in partnership with Christian churches in the St. Louis area.
2. NCLS handles the following types of cases: lemon autos and other forms of consumer fraud, financial exploitation, wrongful debt collection actions, credit restoration, landlord/tenant issues, racial and religious discrimination in housing and employment, sexual harassment or exploitation, domestic/child custody, expungements, municipal and minor criminal cases. NCLS is not equipped to handle major criminal cases, property/probate disputes, immigration cases, or bankruptcy cases, although we do have a number of private practice attorneys to whom we periodically refer these type cases to.
3. To be eligible for NCLS services, the individual must normally meet the following criteria: (a) Be on a fixed income. This means an individual income of less than \$25,000 per year or a family income of less than \$35,000 for an individual with three or more dependents; (b) Be a resident of St. Louis City. We will be flexible on this requirement and we will consider otherwise qualified individuals who are residents of inner-suburbs such as University, Wellston or Jennings; (c) Not have received counsel or representation from NCLS in the past 24 months for the same issue; and (d) Not currently be represented by an attorney on the same legal issue. We will consider waiving or modifying some of these requirements on a case-by-case basis.
4. We provide services to individuals on both a “pro-bono” (no legal fees charged) and what we refer to as a “low-bono” basis (a small charge for legal fees) depending on the nature of the problem and the individual’s personal and family resources.
5. Most referrals come through one of the following sources: NCLS-sponsored clinics at various local Christian churches, faith-based ministries, other Legal Services organizations, or our volunteer attorneys or lay volunteers. NCLS will take cold calls but we may ask that the caller go through one of our intake clinics held at various churches. It the goal of NCLS to not simply resolve legal problems in a Biblical fashion, but to assist its clients, when necessary, in achieving personal, spiritual, and financial maturity as they walk through the process of resolving their legal needs and problems with NCLS.
6. Individuals seeking services or wishing to make a referral should call the NCLS offices at (314) 726-6489 and ask to speak with NCLS Director Mr. Al Johnson or a NCLS staff member. As noted above, if the potential client is calling NCLS directly rather than coming through a referral source, we may ask that they make an appointment at one of our intake clinics. We do not take walk-ins; we ask that you make an appointment.
7. If NCLS decides to take the case, a contract will be signed with the client outlining the terms of the representation. The representation will either be conducted by Mr. Johnson directly, or by one of the volunteer attorneys who partners with NCLS.
8. If the new case is referred to one of NCLS’s volunteer attorneys, NCLS will maintain regular contact with the attorney to whom the case is referred and offer counsel and/or litigation support services when necessary.
9. NCLS reserves the right to refuse any case that is referred if our review of the circumstances indicates that NCLS is not able to help the individual or that they otherwise do not meet our guidelines.