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| Client Referral GuidelinesOne of the key services of Good Samaritan Advocates is helping clients who are in dire need to find a pro bono or reduced fee referral attorney.  While this is so important for so many clients, it's not always easy to make a successful referral.  Therefore, to help you through the process, please keep in mind the following steps when attempting to make a referral:1.)  **Determine if a client's case merits a referral.**To determine if a client's case merits a referral, consult our Referral Policy and fill out the referral form. Also determine whether a pro bono or reduced fee referral is most appropriate and realistic. (See \* below for more.)2.)  **Set realistic client expectations.**If the client's case merits a referral, instruct the client that you cannot guarantee a successful referral.  You must also instruct the client that it is not your role to negotiate fees, but that you will disclose the client's financial need.  Also, remind the client that you may need to share facts about their case with potential referral attorneys.  Keep in mind that full scope cases are difficult to refer, so set realistic expectations for the client, and for yourself.  (Note: Domestic relations cases are the most difficult to refer. See \*\* below for more.) 3.)  **Be creative.**  Some case types are harder to place than others, so think through the different referral types.  Can you find an attorney to make a one-time appearance instead of full scope representation? Perhaps mediation is a more cost-effective option?  Maybe a client can be prepped to represent himself through a 1 hour consultation with a subject matter expert?  Would you be willing to make a one-time appearance under the guidance of an experienced referral attorney? (great option for protective orders)4.)  **Prep our Referral Attorneys so they can make an informed decision.**  To make a referral or request a consultation for a client with an attorney or firm that is a member of our Attorney Referral Program, email the attorney a copy of the client's intake form along with the referral request form and a specific indication of the type of referral help being sought (i.e. free 1 hr. consultation, 20 minute phone call with client, reduced fee representation, entry of appearance, etc.)  Be sure to write "Confidential" in the email subject line if making the request via email.  Be sure to ask the referral attorney to keep the client's information private. 5.)  **Know when you've exhausted all options.**Sometimes, it may be difficult to know when to stop looking for a referral attorney.  If you've contacted all of the attorneys in our network, next try our referral partners.  If that does not work and your client is in VA, contact the [Virginia Poverty Law Center](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001FlaoAoO_EQj2SIGoUQHFXB9d6aK9lWKdOozYr-tBdl5SMEKpB0ugg07pK75zQZDTh0imoEeqkEBauIcf0ERzk87rpmWcd49FYqmowAarR0bzuSJwuCXkyPUvIbfFwlGQFHhsQD5rxyf6kA0WrgHQHMEnxUVUd5TIz3SNv1aYcrEraOKHTN4XXfRQhByi7oKfTNtRDpNQQRw=&c=OkDumKC7KPOIFDV_DqrpfFGS3gmql1VMy4EanetAqWzPjc5j-S23bQ==&ch=8RNYFfZiVGWB_3fRo3P9ArIUvxlXnyjeSVx7RIn3lz20nCn-spgZKg==) ([http://www.vplc.org/topics/practice-areas/) who](http://www.vplc.org/topics/practice-areas/%29%C2%A0who) will brainstorm with you about other referral options, or give the client the number to the VA referral attorney service 866-534-5243. If your client is in MD, contact the [Maryland Legal Aid Bureau](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001FlaoAoO_EQj2SIGoUQHFXB9d6aK9lWKdOozYr-tBdl5SMEKpB0ugg07pK75zQZDTHPu7wHHMPVyZNvUwGgvZT0UznGJvb4RMmuR9IQtjoh1hzmQamokcsvsCWa-kxLTXjWz93heM9mqg8JWHQCoCswerLFrGzMnHg-KfYd4IL_cFVvDPFGBO7Dn82VtBBxoE&c=OkDumKC7KPOIFDV_DqrpfFGS3gmql1VMy4EanetAqWzPjc5j-S23bQ==&ch=8RNYFfZiVGWB_3fRo3P9ArIUvxlXnyjeSVx7RIn3lz20nCn-spgZKg==) (<http://www.mdlab.org/get-help-services>).  If one month has gone by without being able to make a successful referral, gently inform the client that you were unable to find a referral attorney and if appropriate, offer the client a follow-up clinic appointment to discuss pro se coaching. \* Generally, if any of the following facts are present, it may not be a good idea to refer the client to a pro bono attorney:* the client already spent thousands of dollars on a family law attorney and has now come to Good Samaritan Advocates because they "ran out of money"
* the client expresses unrealistic expectations for the outcome of the case, i.e. "my husband is crazy and I won't stop until I have full custody."
* the client tends to speak incessantly about their situation,  seems unwilling to listen to your advice, and/or seems unreasonably demanding
* the client is not truly indigent.  If there is a question as to your client's financial status, please ask for proof of income. If you are unsure about how to do this, ask your clinic directors

\*\*Domestic relations cases are the most difficult to refer for a number of reasons: * it is often impossible for a referral attorney to determine how much time and firm resources a case will take
* it is difficult to determine the veracity of a client's story without spending much time with the client
* it takes much time to determine the means and motivation of the opposing party
* the client may have unrealistic expectations due to the emotional nature of many family law cases

Do you have questions?  Contact your clinic directors first.  If they can't answer your question, our Executive Director will be happy to help where possible.   |

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