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**Scranton Road Legal Clinic**

**Volunteer Handbook**

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**Intro to Scranton Road Ministries C.D.C. & Scranton Road Legal Clinic**

Scranton Road Ministries C.D.C. is a faith-based and vision driven 501(c)(3) organization, focused on revitalizing Cleveland’s near west side, one life at a time. Serving in Ohio’s most diverse neighborhood, we are focused on representing and investing in our youth and families, and promoting community-based economic development. We are committed to impacting our neighbors with God’s redemptive love, and to raising-up indigenous leaders.

Scranton Rd. Ministries C.D.C. is located in the heart of Cleveland’s near-west side, on the geographical border between the Tremont and Clark-Fulton neighborhoods. Our programs are focused within this target area, although our positive impact and client base stretches across the Greater Cleveland community.

Within our target area:

* The average unemployment rate in our target area is 14%- exceeding state and national averages.
* An average of 60-65% of local families with children live at or below 100 percent of poverty.
* The 2000 census indicates that our primary target area is the most diverse community in Ohio.
* The local High School graduation rate is 52%.

Our ministries include Youth Jobs Partnership, a workforce development initiative for students aged 16-24; After School Enrichment Program, offering academic and recreational programming for children; the Community Health Fair & Family Carnival, providing medical screenings, health education, and fun games to hundreds of local residents annually; and the Scranton Road Legal Clinic, providing brief advice and legal education workshops to the Greater Cleveland community.

Scranton Road Legal Clinic began in 2012 and since then has provided over 1,000 Greater Cleveland residents with brief legal advice, community legal education workshop, assistance with pro se paperwork, and referrals to low-cost or pro-bono attorneys. Our goal is to educate and empower our neighbors to make prudent, educated legal decisions that benefit their families and communities.

**2**

**Scranton Road Legal Clinic Program Information**

**Service Area:**  Greater Cleveland (focus on near west side neighborhoods)

**Financial Qualification:** Currently no requirements; $20 one-time fee assessed but can be waived if there is a financial hardship

**Times Available:** Brief Advice is available by appointment only M-Th by calling (216) 861-5323 or e-mailing [legalclinic@scrantonroadministries.org](mailto:legalclinic@scrantonroadministries.org).

**Brief Advice:** Wills, Powers of Attorney, Living Wills, Visitation, Custody, Expungement/CQE, Guardianship, Landlord/Tenant, Debtor/Creditor, Special Education, Contracts, Consumer, Expungement/CQE, Dissolution/Divorce/Separation, Domestic Violence, and more.

**Workshop Topics:** Wills, Powers of Attorney, Living Wills, Guardianship, Expungement/CQE, Family Law (Visitation, Custody, Child Support), Grandparents’ Rights, Spotting Scams, Navigating the Legal System, Translation Resources, Debtor/Creditor, Special Education, Domestic Violence, Foreclosure Resources, and more.

Brief Advice Sessions are conducted with volunteer attorneys. Participants can discuss their rights, responsibilities, and options for moving forward. Assistance with forms/letters/pro se paperwork is provided. Referrals to low cost/pro bono attorneys may be provided if necessary and available. We do not provide legal representation. We do not accept Criminal cases (except for record-sealing and CQE) or Immigration cases.

Workshops are conducted in collaboration with local nonprofit organizations and are for educational purposes. Opportunities for Q&A and assistance with paperwork will be provided.

While the Scranton Road Legal Clinic is a faith-based organization, we do not limit our services to any race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or religion.

For more information or to schedule an appointment/workshop, please contact Sheila Fell, Program Director at (216) 861-5323 or [legalclinic@scrantonroadministries.org](mailto:legalclinic@scrantonroadministries.org).

**3**

**Tips for Successful Brief Advice**

**Before the Session**

* All participants must complete our intake form. You may assist them with completing the form. The attorney/paralegal/law student will gather basic information and work with the participant to summarize their legal problem. The second page requires the participant to sign off on our acknowledgements and for the attorney to sign as well. Reviewing the acknowledgements will allow you to be able to explain them to participants. **Please sign where it says “Volunteer Attorney” on the Acknowledgments**. The final page is for paralegal/law student/attorney notes.
* Participants incur a one-time $20 administrative fee. This can be waived if the participant lets you know they cannot afford the fee.

**During the Session**

* **Listen with both compassion and attention to details**. Most participants aren’t sure which aspects of their story are legally pertinent. While it’s important to listen to their whole story to help them feel understood and heard, feel free to steer them in the direction of giving the important legal details.
* Feel free to refer to our alphabetized legal library for resources on addressing issues. Resources are available for printing on [www.lasclev.org](http://www.lasclev.org), [www.ohiolegalservices.org](http://www.ohiolegalservices.org), and court websites (for forms).
* Ask clarifying questions, and offer them your feedback and legal insight. **Please indicate if the participant needs follow-up or a referral.**
* Don’t feel that you need to know every answer right away. If you don’t know an answer, let the participant know you need to do some research, consult another attorney, and get back to them via phone, email, or later appointment.
* **Situations requiring access to a legal research database and extensive case law research/analysis are often beyond the scope of our services.** Participants should be referred to an outside attorney for representation.
* If the participant needs formal representation, we have a list of attorneys and nonprofits willing to do work on a pro bono or “low bono” basis. Let me know if you need a referral and I’ll work with you to choose the most appropriate attorney.
* You are also welcome to contract privately with the participant to provide representation. We have sample pro-bono agreements available.
* We encourage you to be polite, friendly, and compassionate. Participants often feel confused, frustrated, emotional, or disenfranchised. The best customer service experience you can provide is one in which you listen, show concern, and deliver legal options with clarity and acknowledgement regarding the difficulty of addressing legal issues.
* At times, we have participants with mental health concerns; in these situations, it is often difficult to determine the accuracy or validity of the legal claims. Try and work through the problem slowly, asking for details and evidence of the asserted claims. Oftentimes these participants simply desire to be heard and understood.
* If a participant is acting angry or belligerent, please feel free to come to me. We want your experience to be positive, and we want our participants to recognize that we are providing a valuable service.

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**Tips for Successful Community Legal Education Workshops**

* **Before the Workshop**
  + Utilize the information available to you. We have powerpoint presentations, handouts, applications, flyers, and more available to you.
  + Research any updates to the law in the subject area covered. We try and keep our information up to date, but welcome any updates you may have come upon.
  + Practice, practice, practice! It doesn’t hurt to go through the material to a friend or family member – they can help to ask clarifying questions to ensure you are communicating the material well in “layman’s terms”.
* **During the Workshop**
  + Establish a policy for questions. Some presenters like to take questions as they go along and some like for them to be held to the end. Either method is acceptable – whichever helps you to present best is what we would welcome.
  + Be aware that some participants will want to ask personal questions. Prior to beginning, we would suggest letting participants know that personal questions should be discussed one-on-one so as to protect their privacy and to allow for a more detailed answer.
  + Use language that a non-lawyer would use – i.e., say “provide the person you’re suing with a copy” instead of “serving opposing counsel”; say “everything you have will go to the state” instead of “your assets will escheat to state”.
  + If you don’t know the answer to a question, you don’t need to make something up - say you would need to do some research and get back to the person. We are not all experts in every area of the law, and that’s okay!
  + Speak clearly and slowly. If you have an interpreter translating your presentation, speak in short sentences to give them time to translate.
  + For specific questions you are not able to answer, refer participants to our office for Brief Advice.
* **After the Workshop**
  + Distribute our surveys. These brief, anonymous surveys help us to determine whether our programming has been effective for participants.
  + Feel free to communicate with us about what worked, what didn’t, what to add to the material, what questions came up, etc.

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**Sample Prayer for Brief Advice Participants**

Because of the challenging and emotional nature of legal concerns, prayer is an extremely important part of what we do at Scranton Road Legal Clinic. Although a Christian faith (or any faith for that matter) is not required to receive services and we do not discriminate on the basis of faith, we do offer to pray with participants during our Brief Advice Sessions. Participants may refuse and that is perfectly fine. If they accept (which most do!), here are some ways to pray. Please pray as you feel led!

**Opening prayer**  
Dear Lord,

We thank you for this meeting today with [client] and ask for your presence with us today.  May your Holy Spirit be with us and bless our time together.

We pray this in Jesus' name,

Amen

**Closing prayer**

Dear Lord,

We thank you for this meeting today with [client] and for your presence with us.  We ask for your blessing on [client] in her [brief statement of problem, e.g. "dealings with her ex-husband" or "dispute with her employer"].  Lord, you have stated in your word that all things work for the good of those of who love you and are called according to your purpose.  We know that you love [client] and ask for your Spirit to be with her, give her strength, and guide her through this situation.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

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**Scranton Road Legal Clinic**

**Volunteer Registration Form**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Firm (if applicable):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Best Way to Reach You: Phone E-mail**

**Availability: M T W Th Fri Weekends**

**(Circle all that apply) Mornings Afternoons Evenings**

**I am a licensed attorney I am a law student I am a paralegal**

**What type of legal experience do you have? (*Check all that apply*)**

Family Special Education

Probate (Guardianship, Will, Power of Attorney) Immigration

Bankruptcy/Creditor/Debtor Public Benefits

Housing/Landlord-Tenant Contract Disputes

Criminal/Expungement Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Which volunteer opportunities are you interested in? *(Check all that apply)***

Completing Intake Forms *(Attorneys, Paralegals, & Law Students Only)*

Giving Brief Advice *(Attorneys Only)*

Teaching a Community Legal Education Workshop *(Attorneys Only)*

Administrative Assistance *(All Volunteers Welcome)*

Prayer *(All Volunteers Welcome)*

**How did you find out about Scranton Road Legal Clinic?**

Flyer/Newsletter Website/Facebook Word of Mouth Other:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**For Attorneys Only:** *I agree to opt-out of brief advice sessions in which a conflict of interest is possible.*

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Attorney Signature Date

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