Volunteer Information and Application
Would you like to volunteer at the LAC?

What is the LAC?

The Legal Assistance Center is a nonprofit legal self help center. We help people who are trying to solve basic legal problems or to use the courts on their own. Our goal is to help people be informed, be prepared and be heard.

At the LAC, trained volunteers, along with a small, dedicated staff, provide information, forms, resources, referrals and assistance to the public. We do not give legal advice or provide representation, but we do assist with family law, landlord/tenant, small claims, consumer collection, probate and other basic legal matters.

The LAC is open to the public on a walk in basis Tuesday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

What you can experience at the LAC

As a volunteer you will learn first-hand the operations of the Michigan Circuit and District Courts. You will become familiar with the substantive law and procedure of family law, landlord/tenant law and other civil matters. You will learn the forms and resources available to court litigants and the community. You will learn the special skill of working with people facing legal challenges without an attorney.

Expectations for LAC volunteers

We ask that student volunteers be willing to serve a minimum one shift per week, morning or afternoon, for two academic terms. We provide initial and ongoing training. You do not need legal experience or to be studying law to volunteer.

We rely on our volunteers and so do the people we help, so we do expect volunteers to be able to serve consistently on their scheduled shifts.

Special Opportunities for Davenport and GVSU Students

You may qualify to serve an internship or work study position at the LAC. We do ask students to serve one term as a volunteer before joining the LAC as an intern or work study student. Check with your program director and LAC staff.

If you are interested, apply soon!

More potential volunteers apply to the LAC than can be accepted. A position description, volunteer application and volunteer schedule are available on the website, www.legalassistancecenter.org. Applicants will be interviewed before a volunteer position is offered.
2015-2016 Volunteer Calendar

Fall 2015

Friday, July 31, 2015       Application Deadline
August 3-7, 2015          Volunteer Interviews
Monday, August 31, 2015    Volunteer Training
Tuesday, September 1, 2015 First Day – Fall Volunteer Schedule

Winter 2016

Friday, November 20, 2015  Application Deadline
November 30- December 4, 2015 Volunteer Interviews
Monday, January 4, 2016    Volunteer Training
Tuesday, January 5, 2016    First Day – Winter Volunteer Schedule

Summer 2016

Friday, March 25, 2016     Application Deadline
March 28-April 8, 2016     Volunteer Interviews
Monday, May 2, 2016        Volunteer Training
Tuesday, May 3, 2016       First Day – Summer Volunteer Schedule
LAC Volunteer Position Description

Objective: To assist, educate and support LAC patrons in meeting their legal needs and insure the quality and integrity of the LAC program.

Qualifications:
Willingness and ability to learn basic law and procedure
Excellent listening and verbal communication skills
Respect for and desire to work with a diverse, vulnerable population
Patient, compassionate, professional and positive demeanor
Willingness and ability to maintain confidentiality
Ability to follow directions and maintain program boundaries

Responsibilities:
Welcome patrons and assure sign in and waiver
Talk with patrons to understand needs and desired outcome
Demonstrate respect for patrons, their needs and challenges
Investigate pending cases using AccessKent
Communicate basic law, procedures and options
Consult and confer with staff as appropriate
Provide appropriate forms and resources for patrons
Provide guidance to patrons for the completion of forms and pleadings
Review, copy and assemble patron materials
Identify patrons who may qualify for Legal Aid or ATJ Clinic
Provide information about and make referrals to legal and non-legal community resources to meet patron needs
Assist in the response to patron phone calls as requested
Assist with support of program and operations as requested

Location: Legal Assistance Center, Kent County Courthouse, 5th Floor
180 Ottawa Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Commitment: Volunteers serve a minimum of one shift - 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., one day per week, Tuesday through Friday, over a minimum of two "terms" – January to April, May to August and September to December.

June 2014
Volunteer Application (Please Print or Type)

I. Contact Information

Name ________________________________________________________________

Phone  Primary: ______________________(C/H/W) Secondary: ________________________

E-mail  School/Office ______________________________________________________

Home/Permanent _________________________________________________________

Local Address __________________________________________________________

Home/Permanent Address ________________________________________________

II. Education

Degrees, Schools, Dates of Graduation _______________________________________

_________________________________________________

Current Program, School, Standing and, Expected Graduation: _________________

_________________________________________________

III. Employment

Current __________________________________________________________________

Prior Experience __________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

IV. Court Experience

If you have worked for or as an attorney or for the court system, describe your experience.

________________________________________________________________________

If you now have or have in the last 5 years had a civil matter pending, describe the case.

________________________________________________________________________

If you have been convicted of a crime, other than a routine traffic matter, describe the case.

________________________________________________________________________

V. If you are fluent in a language other than English, what language? ______________

VI. Access/Accommodation/Scheduling:

Do you have transportation? ________________________________________________
Would you need any disability accommodations to serve at the LAC?

Will you commit to serving for two, consecutive full “terms” at the LAC? (January-April/May-August/September-December)

What is your preferred shift for your first term? Please rank 1, 2 and 3 in order of preference.
   Tuesday AM ____ Tuesday PM ____ Wednesday AM ____ Wednesday PM____
   Thursday AM ____ Thursday PM ____ Friday AM ____ Friday PM ____

Are you interested in [ ] serving an internship at the LAC or [ ] work study? If yes, for what academic term?

VII. Volunteering at the LAC

How did you learn of this volunteer opportunity?

Please attach a one paragraph answer to each of the following questions.

(1) Why would you like to volunteer at the LAC and what would you hope to get out of your experience here?
(2) Describe a life or educational experience that reveals something about you.

Please attach a resume.

VIII. References

Please provide one reference. If you are currently a student, your reference should be someone connected to your school or program. Include their name, title, contact information and the nature of their connection to you.

IX. Other Comments or Questions

Mail or E-mail Application to:
Deborah J. Hughes, Executive Director, deborah@legalassistancecenter.org
Charlie Campbell, Program Coordinator, charlie@legalassistancecenter.org
Legal Assistance Center, 180 Ottawa Avenue NW, Suite 5100, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2751

February 2015