SAMPLE Hotline Protocols Manual

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I. INTRODUCTION: INTAKE POLICY

1. Overview of the Intake Process
   a. Calls come in to a central intake number and are answered by an automated all
distribution system. Calls are distributed to the intake workers in the order in
which they are received.

   b. The intake worker does an initial screening for income and citizenship eligibility,
   conflicts of interest.

   c. The intake worker fills out an application for the caller, which includes a more in-
depth income and asset eligibility test. S/he then determines the caller’s legal
   problem, provides in-depth counsel and advice on the phone, which is usually
   supplemented by informational brochures and self-help packets sent to the caller
   and decides whether a referral to AGENCY, another legal services provider, or
   another organization is appropriate. Regardless of whether a caller is referred to
   AGENCY full service or to another legal service provider, the intake worker
   should always provide advice and counsel to the caller.

   d. Each intake worker is then responsible for routing the dockets s/he filled out on
   each caller to either a supervising attorney to be reviewed and closed or to the
   appropriate office for a callback.

2. Intake Procedure for Intake Workers: A Call Comes In
   a. Ensure that the caller meets LSC guidelines to qualify for AGENCY services.
   You must therefore verify the following information for each caller:
      i. Total household size;
      ii. Total household income;
      iii. U.S. citizenship or resident alien status; and

   b. Fill out a computer application, or “docket”, on each caller. A docket contains
   caller information, such as full name and middle initial, address, social security
   number, ethnic background, household size, income, assets, and conflict of
   interest information.

   c. Check for conflicts. Before assessing a caller’s legal problem and advising her
   about the same, you must make sure that AGENCY does not have a conflict,
   which would prohibit AGENCY from providing any assistance to the caller. To
   do this, you must conduct a conflict check on your computer on all potential
   “opposing parties”, i.e., anyone who is objecting, or may object, to the action
   being contemplated by the caller.

   d. Determine problem type, and gather information. If there is no conflict, you
   must then determine what the caller’s legal question is and the facts relevant to
that legal problem, such as significant dates, who’s involved, notices/papers received, what the caller wants AGENCY to help them with, and where the caller is in a court or administrative process. Your initials, the date, what the client said, and what advice was given should be included in the “Notes/Action statement” portion of the intake docket. The “problem” portion of the docket should contain a short description of the legal problem being discussed. (ADOPTION, DIVORCE, EVICTION, etc)

e. Provide assistance. Once you’ve identified the caller’s legal problem(s), provide the caller with advice and counsel using the desk manual and determine what options are available to the caller—either to proceed pro se with the help of brochures, pro se packets and/or counsel and advice; or brief or full service to AGENCY or another agency. You should access the resources available to you, such as the checklists, case acceptance criteria, the desk manual, brochures, memos and/or your supervisor, to help you to address the caller’s problem(s). You can also use the outside line on the phone to call AGENCY full service staff to ask specific questions not covered in the resource materials available to you in the intake room.

(A “subject area specialist” sheet is posted in the intake room)

f. Domestic Violence calls. Always ask female applicants calling with family issues whether they or their children are present or former victims of domestic abuse. (This will be handled in more detail in the family law training.) Whenever you speak with a domestic violence abuse victim, always: ask whether their phone number, answering machine and address are “safe”, and offer domestic violence information (TRO’s, safety plan, important numbers). If they decline, note that in the docket.

g. If available, make an appropriate referral to AGENCY full service attorneys or to another legal service provider using the case acceptance criteria provided on each intake desk. Since we speak with the highest number of low-income individuals with legal problems in the state, it’s important that you familiarize yourself with other legal service providers (see attachment “Legal Service Provider Referrals”). The case acceptance criteria will tell you when it’s appropriate to fax the docket to another agency for assistance, but there may be instances where you are not faxing the docket, and just giving the number of the agency for that person to call. In those instances, you need to make sure the referral is appropriate, so learn what the agencies do. Don’t make blind referrals.

h. When you finish with the call, print the docket and either route it to a supervising attorney to review (put the docket in the bin marked “to be closed by an attorney”) or to the appropriate referral folder next to the fax machine.

i. Sending brochures/self-help packets. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with our plethora of information brochures, self help packets, and other mailers (see the list of brochures in the attachments section). If you are unsure about what to send, ask a shift supervisor. You can either mail brochures yourself,
or have a volunteer do it for you. Envelopes, mailers and pro se packets are available in the intake filing cabinet. If you would like a volunteer to do the mailing for you, write the number of the brochure(s) on the intake log (see last section, Filling Out an Intake Log), make a copy of the log on the fax machine, and put the copy of the log into the “Brochures to be Mailed” folder.

j. Quantity of intake dockets per shift. Shifts are 4 hours, for 2 ½ hours the phone lines are open. Each call averages ½ an hour. If you take your last call at the end of the 2-½ hours, you have time for 6 calls, plus one hour to finish typing and routing your dockets. During your first 3 to 4 months, should be spent focusing on learning substantive areas of law, services available to callers, and appropriately filling out dockets. Don’t worry about quantity so much, but you should be taking at least 4 dockets in each shift. The ultimate goal for which to shoot is an average of 6 (some days 4, some days 8 - yes it’s not just possible, it’s totally do-able). Some timesaving techniques follow:

k. Interview techniques:
- Stay away from open-ended questions;
  - Send brochures to fill in gaps on advice. Most people won’t retain everything you tell them: focus on the immediate problem and send brochures for other issues;
  - Some cases require a long (45 to 60 minutes) interview, particularly abuse victims and seniors. But most don’t. If you find your interview going long, look at the conversation you are having objectively. If you are just repeating yourself, explain that you’ve given all the advice you can and need to help other people.
  - Separate out the legal issues of a person’s problem: ask yourself (and them) what can Legal Aid do for you?

l. Organizational techniques:
- Learn to type while you talk;
  - Type just highlights of the problem and action statements when you’re on the phone, then fill in the blanks at the end of your shift;
- In general, you should not take more than 3 or 4 minutes between calls;
  - Use (and abuse) cut and paste. If you have 3 divorce calls, cut and paste the advice sections, then tailor them for each docket;
  - Stay focused in the initial application portion of the call so that it takes no more than 5 minutes (should take less);
  - Keep a clock or watch next to you to time your calls. They should average 30 minutes.

3. Case Closure
NEVER CLOSE A DOCKET. Only a supervising attorney is authorized to do this. All dockets that need to be closed should be routed to the bin marked “To Be Closed By Attorney”

4. Quality Control
a. In general, dockets have to reflect the main content of your conversation with the caller, and especially the advice given. There are many intake staff members and they all have different styles. There is no one “right way” of handling the calls and preparing the dockets, but there are boundaries everyone must work within. A docket can’t be too long because of the time limits, but it must be long enough for the supervising attorney reviewing the docket to understand the problem and the advice given. For problem/action statements, incomplete sentences and abbreviations are great (it saves time), misspellings or grammar errors are not a big deal. But they must be clear, concise and thorough. KEEP IN MIND, dockets are the only record of the counsel and advice provided by the Hotline. They are also randomly selected for audit, so they have to comply with a quality standard.

b. Action Statement: Your action statement must reflect the highlights of your advice given. Never just write “gave advice per script”. It’s an ok start, but add more, i.e.: “gave advice per divorce script: jurisdiction, no fault, child custody: physical, legal, sole, joint; visitation, supervised; child supt.; alimony; % of prop and debt; div decree binding only on the parties, will not affect creditors; cont v uncont” etc. Then, write the referrals and the brochures that you gave to the caller.

c. Getting dockets back. Leave your egos at the door. When reviewing dockets, the supervising attorney will provide detailed comments to you when appropriate, and put the docket back into your folder. In most cases this is informational, or it is asking for you to correct a minor clerical error (e.g. change a code). But sometimes, you will be instructed to do a callback to provide a particular caller with additional information. In the beginning, you will get a lot of dockets back. You will almost never get a docket back that just says, “Good job”. That doesn’t mean you are not doing a good job. And getting dockets with mistakes back does not mean you are not doing a good job. This is simply our best way of maintaining quality control and furthering your training. Do not take it personally.

5. Scheduling, Attendance & Timeliness
a. Schedule: We are really flexible with scheduling requests, but require a minimal amount of structure to pull it off. On the bulletin board is a scheduling request sheet. Schedules are created monthly, and your request needs to be up in the first two to three weeks of the month prior (there’s a cut off date written at the top of the schedule request sheet).

b. Missing shifts: While we understand that emergencies and/or conflicts in scheduling arise, our policy on intake is for each intake worker to make every effort to find someone to cover for you in the event you have to miss a shift. If you simply cannot find coverage or even make the attempt because of illness or some other extenuating circumstance, then you need to contact a supervisor. Call the receptionist as well, so she can let us know what’s going on.
c. Time keeps on slipping ... We expect every intake worker to arrive on time for each of your scheduled shifts, if not a couple of minutes early to review any memoranda that may have been routed to your intake file prior to your shift.

6. Leaving Intake
   At some point, alas, you will leave us. The number one rule is: please give us warning. Don’t assume that we know, write it on the schedule request sheet to make it official. And please do the following:
   a. Print out any dockets on your open case list and give them to the supervising attorney to be closed. Paper-clip them all together and write a note on the stack explaining what they are.
   b. Clean out your folder. Complete dockets which were returned to you, and route them all for closing with the cases from your open case list.
II. HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN APPLICANT IS ELIGIBLE FOR AGENCY SERVICES

A person must meet three requirements in order to be eligible for Legal Aid’s services:

1. Financial Guidelines
   Federal funds restrict Legal Aid to representing persons living at 125% or below the federal poverty level. There are some exceptions, listed below.

2. Conflict Guidelines
   HI Rules of Professional Conduct prohibit law offices from serving opposing sides of the same or related matter.

3. Case Type
   AGENCY does not handle all legal matters. Federal funds prohibit AGENCY from handling certain types of cases.

1. FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

a. How to Determine Income Level and Number in Family

   “Income” means actual current annual total cash receipts before taxes of all persons who are resident members of, and contribute to, the support of a family unit. Income of other resident members of a family unit shall be counted as income only to the extent of that resident’s actual contribution, unless the individual has direct power and authority over and right to the income of said other resident, or said other resident has the legal obligation to provide support for the individual seeking assistance.

   “Family Unit” includes only those people related by blood or by law as relatives for whom legal responsibility attaches.

   A. Family Size
      When asking family size, you are only concerned with counting the people

      i. under the same roof; and,

      ii. with a legal relationship to the applicant (mostly spouses and legal kids).

      Parents have a legal responsibility for minor children (under 18). Parents do not have a legal responsibility for adult children (18 or older) unless they have attained guardianship over them.

      Married people have a legal responsibility towards their spouses. Unmarried people do not have a legal responsibility towards their partners. There is no “common law” marriage in Hawaii.
Adult siblings have no legal responsibility towards each other, unless one is the legal guardian for the other. The same holds true for cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents.

Based on these legal relationships, here are some examples of family size:

*Applicant lives with her boyfriend, and they have two children together. Applicant’s family size is 3, herself and two children. (No legal responsibility for boyfriend).

*Applicant lives with her sister and aunt. Applicant is family of 1, regardless of her age unless a legal guardianship exists between any of them. If there is a legal guardianship, applicant is family of 2.

*Applicant lives with husband and their 3 children plus husband’s child from former marriage. Applicant is family of 5, self, husband and their 3 mutual children. There is no legal responsibility towards husband’s child with former wife, unless applicant has legally adopted her.

*Applicant is married, but separated and living with her parents and one of her 2 children. Applicant is a family of 2, herself and her child living under that roof. Even though applicant has a legal responsibility towards her husband and child, you only count family members under the same roof.

B. Income

Once you’ve determined family size, you next need to ask the gross monthly or annual income of the applicant as well as any other family unit member living under the same roof as the applicant.

Income is from any source, including regular allowances or support payments:

- employment\(^1\)
- child support
- financial assistance, “welfare” (NOT Food Stamps)
- unemployment
- any other regular allowances or payments

Excluded from household income is:

- Food Stamps
- Irregular income (girlfriend gives him money once in a while)

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\(^1\)We need to indicate whenever we are speaking to a migrant. If a person indicates employment income, ask what type of work they do. If they indicate agricultural, hotel, fishing then ask whether their work requires them to be away from the home at least one night a year. If so, they may be considered a migrant and eligible for more services than others. See case acceptance criteria for migrant services.
In-kind income (someone pays the caller’s rent directly to the landlord)

C. Examples:
A wife separated from her husband receives $600 a month from him and $400 a month from a job has an income of $1000 a month. You do not add the husband’s income to the wife’s because he is not living under the same roof.

An adult child living at home who gets $400 a month from his parents for living expenses while he attends school has an income of $400. You do not add the parents’ income to the adult child as they are not members of the “family” unit.

All you ask for is the actual income to the applicant and her family unit under that roof, regardless of source. If a caller tells you they have no income, ask them how they buy food or otherwise get by. If income varies, get the current amount. If adult child has no income or allowance, but lives with parents rent free and eats their food, that applicant has $0 income. You do not add the income of non-“family” members living in the same household to the applicant.

b. How to Determine Assets

“Liquid Assets” are those that can be converted to cash. For a single individual, the liquid asset ceiling is **$8000**; each additional family member is **$3000**.

The following assets are specifically EXCLUDED by our financial guidelines:

- Primary residence e.g. if they own a home and live in it, we don’t count it;
- Applicant’s first car;
- Personal and household effects;
- Trusts from household funds for education and medical expenses;
  - Value of farmland essential to employment or self-employment, including Hawaiian homelands house and/or farm lot;
  - Work-related equipment essential to employment or self-employment if the owner is attempting to produce income consistent with its fair market value;
- Cash value of IRA/Keogh Plans, retirement/pension plans or life insurance;
- The value of a home that a victim of abuse left due to that abuse

c. Quick Test

If the caller receives AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependant Children), GA (General Assistance) or SSI (Supplemental Security Income), they are financially eligible for Legal Aid’s services.

This is not necessarily true for callers receiving Food Stamps (although you don’t count the value of the Food Stamps in the caller’s income), Unemployment
Benefits or SSDI (Social Security Disability Income).

2. EXCEPTIONS TO INCOME ELIGIBILITY

Determining eligibility is sometimes difficult. The general rule is to be inclusive when determining financial eligibility at the intake stage. Ask questions of over income callers, such as, “does your income ever vary,” or, “are you making that much this month?” If they really are over-income, Legal Aid is allowed to waive the financial test for certain clients. If you assist someone who is over income, you need to change the fund code.

a. Seniors: Any Income
   Change the funding code to: OAHU: Senior Hotline; BIG ISLAND: Hawaii County Title III; MAUI: Maui County Title III.
   Seniors with any income are eligible for counsel and advice, STATEWIDE. They are eligible for many brief and full services in the Big Island and Maui offices where AGENCY has a federal grant to provide legal services to seniors. On Oahu and Kauai seniors needing brief services should be referred to UHELP and the Kauai Senior’s Program respectively.

b. Applicants who are losing a public benefit: Less than 150% of poverty
   Change fund code to “State”.
   People who are losing a public benefit, such as welfare or public housing, can be exempted from the income guidelines. Make a note in the docket that they are over income, but they fit into this exemption.

c. Foreclosure: Any Income
   Change the funding code to “HUD”.
   Legal Aid has a federal grant from HUD to operate a housing counseling program. Anyone facing foreclosure should be routed to the HUD Housing counseling unit. Do the checklist, do not give any advice.

d. Affordable Lawyers: Gap Group income
   If you have a caller who does not fit any of the above exemptions, and who have a simple, uncontested legal issue, refer them to the Affordable Lawyers program (operated by Legal Aid) which offers legal services for a below market rate fee. Affordable Lawyers handles the following case types: Uncontested family (divorce, adoption, guardianship, modifications, living wills, wills, powers of attorney), Chapter 7 bankruptcies. Give them the number, do not open a docket.

3. CONFLICT CHECKS

Because a law office can not represent two sides to the same conflict, you must ask each applicant for Legal Aid’s services who the “opposing party” is to the particular legal
problem for which they are seeking service. You must then check Legal Aid’s computer files to determine whether the offices have served the “opposing party” in that, or a related, matter.

“Opposing party” is the person(s) and/or entity(ies) with an interest opposite the caller in a particular legal conflict. For instance, a person calling with an eviction’s opposing party is the landlord evicting them, and also the manager, if one is involved. Husbands and wives are opposing parties in divorces.

a. Conflict Checks for Non Family matters

For general intake (non-family law), we can not accept a caller if we have represented the party opposing them on the same or related legal issue/s. For example, if tenant calls about an eviction by their roommate, and we have advised the roommate on evictions and/or legal problems regarding that tenant, we can not represent that tenant. However, we may be able to accept the tenant if we have represented roommate on a completely different issue. For example, if tenant calls about an eviction by their roommate, and we have advised roommate on how to appeal a denial of unemployment benefits, we may be able to advise tenant on the eviction. This is because the two legal issues are separate, and we may not have obtained any confidential information on the unemployment benefits case, which could be used against the roommate in the eviction case.

b. Conflict Checks for Family matters

Family cases are a different matter. If a person calls seeking representation for a family law matter, you need to determine whether we have represented the opposing party for any legal matter. If Legal Aid has represented opposing party for any matter, we can not represent the applicant for any family matter that does now or may in the future oppose the former client’s interest.

The reason for the difference when the issue is family law is because our offices may have obtained confidential information regarding a husband in an unemployment case that could be used against him during the divorce. Therefore, if wife calls for divorce, and we have represented husband for anything (unemployment benefits, housing, etc.), Legal Aid can not provide counsel to wife for any family law matter against that husband.

We can, however, provide wife with counsel on (1) any non-family matter (food stamps, bankruptcy) and (2) any family matter not involving her husband or their mutual children. The reason we can do both of these is because in either case, the husband is not the opposing party.

c. Conflict Check for Guardianship and Adoption cases

Biological parents and both paternal and maternal grandparents should be entered as respondents (opposing parties) and checked conflict. If father is unknown or deceased, indicate so. Use the guardianship and adoption questionnaire/checklist.
d. **How To Do a Conflict Check**

You need to ask the caller for the name of the opposing party, and place that name in the conflict box on the docket. You should enter the opposing party’s name first in the computer to see whether they are already a client of ours on the same or a related legal problem. If so, there is a conflict.

Callers will not know what you mean by “opposing party,” so you will need to learn how to pinpoint (1) if there is an opposing party, and (2) who that party is. Use your common sense in making both these determinations. You are only looking for the party/entity that has a direct, legal, opposition to the caller **on the legal issue**. Persons with whom the caller is having non-legal problems with are usually not relevant, and persons who have no legal say in the matter are usually not relevant. Some examples are:

* Applicant is being evicted because his neighbors have complained about noise. The opposing party is the landlord, because the landlord is the person with the legal authority to evict the tenant. The neighbors are not “opposing parties” even though they may be fighting with the applicant, because the neighbors have no authority to evict the applicant. The eviction is the legal issue you are concerned with.

* Applicant is trying to get child support payments from her boyfriend for their child. Her boyfriend’s wife is telling the applicant that they can’t afford to pay child support. The boyfriend is the opposing party. His wife is not, because the wife can not be held responsible for the child support payments, she has no legal stake in the matter.

* Applicant has been turned in for welfare fraud by his boss from his part-time job. He wants to sue his boss and be defended for the welfare fraud. The opposing party for the welfare fraud is the Department of Human Services, and as Legal Aid never represents the state in these matters, we never have a conflict with DHS. The opposing party for suing the boss is the boss.

The best practice is **when in doubt, take all names and the relationship of everyone whom you think may be an opposing party when you are taking the application**, and we can straighten out who are the conflicting parties immediately with a supervisor or later before the callback.

The most important thing to remember is **NO LEGAL ADVICE AND COUNSEL MAY BE GIVEN UNTIL IT IS CLEAR THAT LEGAL AID DOES NOT HAVE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST WITH THE APPLICANT**. Referrals may be given to callers regardless of the conflict status.

4. **CASE TYPE**

The Federal Legal Services Corporation (“LSC”, one of AGENCY’s main funding
sources) prohibits AGENCY from handling the following types of cases:

1. Prisoner’s rights.
   We cannot assist anyone with an issue involving prisoner’s rights (e.g.; how they are treated while in prison.) Refer callers with this issue to the ACLU.

   Additionally, we are prohibited from providing anything other than counsel and advice to prisoners. We are able to open a docket on them, but inform them that AGENCY will not be able to represent them, or do anything on their behalf, other than provide them with counsel and advice and brochures.

2. Immigration matters.
3. Fee generating cases (when parties are suing for money damages).
4. Public housing evictions when the person has been charged (by police, not the Housing Authority) with illegal drug activity.
5. Others,
III. HOW TO HANDLE THE CALLS: INTRODUCTORY PATTER

1. Introduce yourself, thank the person for holding and give them a ‘head’s up’ about what you are going to do.

   “Hello, you’ve reached Legal Aid Hotline, thank you very much for holding. Can you hear me okay?”

   If training: {“We’re doing some training this week, is it okay if someone listens to our conversation? The information is still confidential.”}

   “Before we get to your legal problem, I need to ask some questions to make sure you are eligible for our services.”

2. BEFORE filling out the application on the computer, determine whether they are:
   a. A citizen or legal resident
   b. Income eligible for Legal Aid, and
   c. That there is no conflict.

Sample Patter:

   a. “Are you a citizen or legal resident?”
   b. “Including yourself, how many people in your household are you legally responsible for?”

   “What is your and your spouse’s monthly income before taxes?”

IF APPLICANT IS OVER INCOME, CHECK:

   “Does your income ever vary?”   (Try to fit them in)
   “Are you 60 or older?”   (Seniors are exempt from income restrictions)
   “What type of legal problem do you have?”   (i.e.; foreclosures are eligible for HUD housing program)

If applicant is not eligible, and within the “gap group” refer to Affordable Lawyers if they have an appropriate case type (see desk manual for Affordable Lawyers case type):

   “Are you willing to pay a reduced fee for legal services?”   (Affordable Lawyers program)

   c. Conflict checks are sometimes hard to ask for. Many people will not know what “opposing party” means, so use common sense to help determine who the opposing party is. Try something like these:
“I understand you’re calling us regarding a divorce; what is the name of your spouse?”

“You’re calling about eviction? I need the name of your landlord.”

Check the respondent’s name on the “LOOKUP” screen of your computer.

3. **IF THERE IS A CONFLICT** you cannot tell the caller the nature of the conflict.

You can say:

“I’m sorry, we have a conflict and will be unable to help you. If you tell me briefly your legal problem I can give you a referral.”

Most people will ask what is a conflict, do not give specifics:

“A conflict arises when a law firm or attorney has confidential information about a case. I can’t say what the information is in this case, but we won’t be able to help you. Please let me give you a referral.”

If the caller is particularly angry you can give the call to a supervisor.

4. Once you’ve determined they are eligible, enter their information into the computer. ([See AGENCY INTAKE MADE EASY: How to fill out a docket on the computer.](#))

“Thank you for being so patient. I need to fill out a brief application on my computer, then we can discuss your legal problem.”
IV. FILLING OUT A DOCKET ON THE COMPUTER

After you have determined the caller’s eligibility and no conflicts, enter their information into the computer. This is the first screen of the intake program:

(Get client or case)

When the instructions say “click on” (meaning with your mouse) you have the option of using the keyboard instead. If the box you want to select is bolded, press both the “control” and “enter” keys simultaneously. If the box has a dashed line around it you only need to press “enter” to select the box.

For example, in this screen, if you press:

2You should know there is no conflict by first typing in the name of the opposing party and ensuring that they are not already a client. In other words, the very first name you would type into the computer is actually the opposing party. Once you know there’s no conflict, then go ahead with entering the caller’s information into the computer.
1. **Click on “Get Client/Case”**. Enter the caller’s name, click on “Search on Name”

   Enter the caller’s name only. Other information like Social Security number will be deleted when you go to the next screen.
   Put middle initials, Jr’s, etc., after the first name.
   Make sure the spelling is correct, even if the name is Choo:

   “Could you spell your name for me?” or, “Is you name spelled C-h-o-o?”

   **a. If the caller is a former client**: a former client will have a social security number next to their name. A respondent will have the word “respondent” next to their name (see picture).

   (clients/respondents screen)

If they have called before, you need to look at their old cases to determine whether they are calling about the same matter or a new matter.

I. **You must open a new docket if**:
   The caller is calling regarding a different matter, or;
   The previous docket on the same matter was closed. In this case you must copy the information from the old docket into the new one using cut and
paste under “Edit”.

To open a new docket on an existing client,: click on “Open New Case” (see previous picture). This will pull up the first screen with their address, etc already filled in. Still, you must make sure this information is current:

“I see you’ve called us before, is your phone number still...”

* if caller is calling regarding the same matter and the previous docket is still open, you can just update the existing docket. You’ll know whether the case is still open by looking at the case status, called “Sts”, in the last column of the previous picture. C is closed, O is open. Hard, yah?

b. If their name does not come up : The computer will prompt: “Create new case?” Click “YES” And enter the client information.

“Thank you for being so patient. I’ll fill out this computer application for you, and then we can begin discussing your legal problem. What is your social security number?”

I. What client information is optional ?: Technically, everything except names of caller and opposing party, and income information is optional. For seniors, income information is optional, but birth date is not. Most people will give information without a problem. Explain that we need the information for quality control (being able to write, call them back) and for our funders. If they refuse to give information, you can open the docket with just the non-optional information.

(Client Information Screen)
II. What to put in Case Notes:

alternative phone numbers.

how caller survives/pays rent without income: i.e. “borrowing money from relatives, boyfriend is supporting her, recently fired from job -- living off savings, etc.

clarification on conflict status: i.e. “caller is listed as a respondent in an unrelated matter -- checked with Leslie (shift supervisor), O.K. no conflict”; and MOST IMPORTANTLY:

“NON-SAFE ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS”. If you are speaking with an abuse victim ask whether her phone and address are safe to leave messages with and mail things to. If either are not safe, DO NOT PUT THEM IN THE CLIENT INFORMATION SCREEN. Instead, put them in case notes, and copy them again into the problem statement, with the written explanation that it is not safe.

2. After the client information is filled out: you will go through a series of prompts. You move among the prompts by clicking on “Next screen” and “Go back”.

a. Enter/Update Respondents: (See “intake protocol” on determining conflicts.) You should already know who the opposing party is, and that there is no conflict. Now enter them into this screen. Remember to note Middle Initials!, to make determining future conflicts more accurate.

Enter only the name (no address) and in the address section note their relationship to the caller (e.g., “maternal grandmother”, or “co-signer”)

(Enter/update Respondents screen)

Click on “Do Conflict check”: unless you are entering a non-individual, for example, “creditors” or “DHS”. Then you only need to click on “Next screen”. (see picture)
Click on “No Conflict”: Since you did your initial conflict checks before entering any
client information, no conflict should be found.

**If entering more than one respondent:** Click on “Add Respondent” instead of “Do Conflict Check” and you will be put back into the Enter/Update Respondent screen.

**Conflict Check Reminders:**

- **Guardianship and Adoption calls:** Run conflict checks on the parents, and both sets of grandparents. (You can check first to see if a POA is more appropriate).

- **Consumer:** Co-signers are opposing parties! This includes spouses! Enter all debts to creditors as a single opponent: “creditors” (don’t enter American savings, Oceanic Cable, etc.) Check if the caller owes any individuals money: enter their name(s)

**b. Household Occupants:** Enter only the number of occupants in the appropriate age groups. Do not enter names/ages of dependants, this can be entered in the problem statement.

(\textit{HH occupants screen})

**c. Household Income:** See “Section II: How to determine if an applicant is eligible for AGENCY services: Financial guidelines” to determine what income is counted, and enter it in the appropriate field (e.g., employment, child support.) Ask leading questions to make sure you get all sources of income:

“Is that your only source of income? Do you receive any child support,
benefits?”

No income: If the applicant has no income, explain how they are getting by in “Case Notes”

Social Security vs. SSI: Make sure you learn the difference and enter the amount in the appropriate field.

(HH income screen)

d. Client Assets: You are determining if the caller is over-asseted for Legal Aid’s help.

Bank Account:
"Do you have any money in savings? How much?” Enter the amount.

2nd Car:
"Do you own more than one car?” If yes, enter the value.

2nd Home:
"Do you own a home you don’t live in?” If yes, enter the equity value.
(Client assets screen)

e. **Shelter Costs**: This screen helps to issue spot and collect data. You must:
   - Determine if they have subsidized housing, and
   - Enter the amount of rent they are paying.
   *If they say they are not paying rent, ask how they live. There is a field for “homeless” and for “Living with family/friends”.

(SHELTER COSTS)

f. **Additional Case Data/ Referral Source**: It’s important to our funders to pinpoint how people found out about us. Click on the box called “Referral Source” and scroll through the options. If they don’t have a referral enter “self-referral”, the first option on the list.

“How did you hear about us?”

Also in this screen, you need to note whether they are a citizen (USA) or legal resident (RES). Type this in the “KEYWORDS” section. This is very important, it’s mandated by our funders to record this information.
(Referral source)

After you have entered this information, you will be automatically prompted into the “main screen” (see picture). Immediately save data so it doesn’t get lost.

(Main Screen)

3. **Save Data**: After you have finished gathering the client information you will be put back into the main screen. Click on “Save Data”, the second box down on the left. This will prompt two screens:

   a. “Do you really want to save this data?”
      You would only click “No” only if you determined a conflict. Otherwise, **always save data.**
b. “Do you want to keep time on this case?”
Always answer “Yes”.

4. **Problem/Action Statement**: Click on the third button down on the right to enter the applicant’s fact pattern and the advice you give. See “intake protocol” on what to write in your docket.

    “Thank you for being so patient through the application process. Please tell me briefly what your legal problem is.”

*(Problem/Action Statement)*
5. **Case Information/Status**: After you have finished your call, go back to the main screen and click anywhere in the bottom right box (it says case #, etc.). This is the statistical information for case type/closure.

   **(Case Information/Status)**

For all dockets: Fill in the following fields:

- **Unit Code**:
- **LSC Problem**:
- **LSC Disp**:
- **Refd**:

For dockets you are referring: Assign the appropriate advocate (see “Desk Reference” for the appropriate advocate.) Either:

a. Click on “Assign Advocates”, the third box over on the bottom, to scroll through a list of advocates. Highlight the appropriate advocate and click “OK”, or

b. Type their initials into the “Advocate” box at the top right.
Click on “OK” to go back to main screen.

6. Print Docket:
   - Click on “Intake Form” to print the docket
   - Click on “Go Back” to return to main menu.

(create client docket)
V. WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR DOCKET AFTER YOU FINISH TYPING IT

1. FOR ALL DOCKETS:
Pull up the CASE STATUS screen (bottom right corner of main screen). You will change 3 things on all dockets:

DO NOT CLOSE CASE. LEAVE STATUS AS “O”, OR OPEN.

   a. Unit Code: Change to Family, Housing, Consumer or Public Ben., etc., as appropriate;
   b. LSC Problem: Change to the appropriate closing number, per Legal Problem Code, in the Intake Desk Reference.
   c. LSC Disposition: Change to “Counsel and Advice.”
   d. Fund code: Change the fund code for seniors and any over-income callers. If an applicant is over-income for AGENCY, un-check the LSC case box.

2. For applications to be Referred for Full Service Within Legal Aid
   a. In the office information screen, CHANGE ADVOCATE, either:
      Type in their three letter initials into the top right of the screen; or,
      Click on “Assign Advocate” (grey box on bottom of screen). Assign the appropriate advocate from the Assign Advocate list tacked to the wall next to the intake desks. Exit, and go to next case.
   b. Print docket and put it in the appropriate folder for faxing by a supervisor.

3. For applications to be Referred for Full Service with another agency
   _Do not change the advocate, just put the docket into the appropriate folder for faxing by a supervisor.

4. Applications to be Closed on Intake (no referral to a Legal Aid or other agency)
   After changing the Unit Code, LSC Problem Code and the LSC Disposition code, print docket and leave in bin marked “Dockets that need to be closed by an attorney”.

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