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.
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
2015-2016 Volunteer Calendar

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

Fall 2016

Friday, July 29, 2016  Application Deadline
August 1-5, 2016  Volunteer Interviews
Monday, August 29, 2016  Volunteer Training
Tuesday, August 30, 2016  First Day – Fall Volunteer Schedule

Winter 2017

Monday, November 21, 2016  Application Deadline
November 28 - December 2, 2016  Volunteer Interviews
Monday, January 9, 2017  Volunteer Training
Tuesday, January 10, 2017  First Day – Winter Volunteer Schedule

3/2016
Contact Information
Full Name:
Phone/Primary:
Phone/Secondary:
Email/School/Office:
Email/Home/Permanent:
Address/Local:
Address/Home/Permanent:

Education
Degrees/Schools/Graduation:
Current School/Program/Standing/Expected Graduation:

Employment
Current Employment:
Prior Experience:
Please attach/send a resume.

Court and Legal 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.

Second Language
Are you fluent in a language other than English?
If yes, what language?

Access/Accommodation/Scheduling:
Do you have transportation to and from downtown Grand Rapids?
Describe any disability accommodations needed to volunteer 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 for credit at the LAC (Undergraduate Only)
___ serving in a work study position (Davenport Only)
If yes to either, for what academic term?
Volunteering at the LAC
How did you learn of this volunteer opportunity?
Please provide 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.

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

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