



# LRS NEWS

NH Lawyer Referral Service Newsletter

August, 2018

## YEAR IN REVIEW

Our fiscal year ended on May 31<sup>st</sup> and I have been busy compiling statistics. WOW! What a year this has been! Below are some of the highlights:

- Attorneys earned \$1.6 million in fees from LRS referred cases, up from \$1.3 million over last year.
- Referrals remained steady at 3,024 full-fee referrals compared to 2,955 last year, despite operating with half of our usual staff for 6 months of the year.
- LRS is now an ABA-approved Lawyer Referral Service.

It's obvious that our increased marketing efforts are paying off. You may even have heard our underwriting spots on NHPR or seen our ad spots in NH Magazine. We also participated in the WZID Women's Expo and will have a booth at the Manchester Artfest in September. Our source statistics show that 57% of the people who contact LRS found us on the internet, as opposed to 38% last year. This is a good indication of an effective Google Adwords campaign. And, with the increase in percentage fees, we will be increasing our marketing budget to keep up the momentum!

Over the last year, we have had few changes to staff and to our LRS Subcommittee. Intake & Referral Specialist Jacqueline Geddes left LRS to move out West in January (see below). LRS has contracted with a few temps through a staffing agency and we anticipate filling the position permanently soon.

Additionally, the LRS Subcommittee bade farewell to long-time attorney member, Don Hebert, and founding member, Tom Trevethick. Both contributed immensely to the growth and success of the programs and they will be greatly missed. While saying goodbye is not easy, we were thrilled to welcome Attorneys Katherine Morneau, Cassandra Brown, and Mark Cornell to the Subcommittee. Their ideas and enthusiasm are already helping to shape the future of LRS.

In the December 2017 newsletter, I mentioned that the LRS Subcommittee would be reviewing and updating LRS rules and policies for implementation effective September 2018. (See page 2 for a detailed description.) Developed by the Subcommittee and approved by the NHBA Board of Governors, many of these changes result from issues for which LRS lacked adequate rules to address, while other changes simply clarify existing rules.

LRS rules and policies have not changed much in the 15 years I have worked in LRS. To be competitive in today's marketplace, LRS must adapt to consumer needs and trends. Your continued participation and feedback will help in that regard. Thank you for your efforts in making last year such a success! ~ *Sheila Vermacy*



## In This Issue

- Year in Review
- LRS Rules Update
- New Case Types



Former LRS Intake & Referral Specialist, Jacqueline Geddes, hiking in the Rockies.

## OVERVIEW OF LRS MEMBERSHIP RULE CHANGES

Below is a summary of the LRS membership rule changes approved by the Board of Governors on June 29, 2018, that take effect starting in September 2018.

- Clarified the process for panel members to appeal decisions of the LRS Subcommittee;
- Expanded membership requirements to say that a member of the NHBA, who has not been the subject of any professional conduct discipline, suspension, or disbarment within the preceding twelve months, is eligible to apply. A waiver of this rule may be requested and granted by the LRS Subcommittee at its discretion;
- Expanded the time period for notifying LRS regarding a lapse in insurance coverage or reporting public discipline from “immediately” to “within ten business days”;
- Added additional reasons for removal, suspension, or denial of admission to the LRS panels to include engaging in unethical or unprofessional conduct and/or engaging in conduct inconsistent with the stated mission and goals of the LRS program or detrimental to the interests of the LRS programs and its participating members;
- Added an additional reason for temporary suspension by the LRS Director to include arrest or charge for any criminal offense;
- Added an additional reason for suspension by the LRS Director and/or the LRS Coordinator to include failure to pay percentage fees or executing a payment plan within 75 days of invoice; and,
- Added a requirement that panel members authorize the Attorney Discipline Office to release to LRS records of any and all disciplinary complaints, whether pending or completed, private or public, during the current membership year and the two prior calendar years;

The last rule change is intended to address the occasional serious client complaint that requires the LRS Subcommittee to determine whether or not to suspend a panel member’s LRS membership. Information about any pending actions before the ADO or similar complaints by other clients should aid the LRS Subcommittee in making such determinations. This is a common rule among Bar-sponsored LRS programs and the decision to review a discipline record will not be made lightly. All information obtained will be kept confidential.

Most of these changes were made to section **D. Formation of the Referral Panels**, starting on page two of the LRS Programs Descriptions and Guidelines. They may be found in the Member Services and Benefits section through your member portal at the NHBA website. We will be happy to email you a copy upon request to [LRSreferral@nhbar.org](mailto:LRSreferral@nhbar.org). As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. – *Sheila Vermacy*

## NEW CASE TYPES

LRS is currently developing a new experience panel under the Administrative Law section for Attorney Licensing Issues, representing attorneys before the Attorney Discipline Office and the NH Supreme Court. The standards have not yet been finalized, but we would like to get an idea of how many existing LRS members would be interested in joining that panel.

Additionally, we have heard from some panel members who would like to limit their family law referrals to unbundled services only. In response, we have now have an unbundled case type specific to family law. The more general unbundled case type that we use to cross-reference with other subject matters will remain.

Lastly, we have been receiving more calls lately regarding Nursing Home Neglect/Abuse and have found that our existing case types do not adequately cover it. We have added this case type under the Probate Law section.

If you would like to add any of the case types mentioned above, or have thoughts/ideas about other case types, please contact me at [svermacy@nhbar.org](mailto:svermacy@nhbar.org).

