



TIPS FOR CONDUCTING AN ASK- A-LAWYER EVENT

Ask-a-lawyer events are conducted in a variety of ways. We have suggested the following as an example.

PARTNERS

There generally are several groups who welcome the opportunity to partner on an Ask-A-Lawyer event. You may wish to consider:

- Local bar associations
- Local pro bono groups
- Legal services organizations
- Local attorney groups or individual attorneys (family law bar)
- Judges
- Clerks of Court
- Paralegal organizations

The participation or encouragement of a judge or the court will often spur attorney interest in the project.

RECRUIT ATTORNEYS TO PARTICIPATE:

While the groups above often bring in their own participants, it may be necessary to contact members and ask them help with the event. A sample email is attached.

Sample Draft E-mail Text:

ABC Organization/Committee/Program is asking your help with a one-time pro bono project to support the Louisiana Month of Legal Service. Thousands of litigants who go to court each year are unable to afford an attorney, but could benefit greatly by a small amount of legal advice or information. The judges of the **123 JDC** are anxious to have us conduct an ask-a-lawyer legal clinic on **date** beginning at **time**. We will be allowed to set up a table near the **place** to meet with individuals at the court. We hope to have 2 or 3 volunteers at the table at all times and ask volunteers to staff the table for at least one 2-hour shift. **A scheduler will pre-screen the visitors, but** questions are most often general in nature and we will provide access to reference material. Providing information not only helps the litigants, but the judges also. **Please let us know that you can help by contacting John Doe at ###-####.**

ADVERTISE THE EVENT:

Advertisement for the event may be limited by the resources in your community, but can generally take a variety of forms. Most of the advertising is generally done within 2 weeks of the event.

Create flier and write press release, and post as follows:

- Send copy of flyer to participating attorneys
- Send notice to local paper with event details and the groups who are assisting.
- Send notice to local TV station for public service announcement
- Post flyers at parish resource locations, such as courthouse, DCFS, United Way, local churches, legal aid offices, etc.
- Put upcoming clinic in local bar association publications

CONFIRM ATTORNEY PARTICIPATION

Email confirmation of participation with general information.

Dear **Attorney**,

Thanks for agreeing to participate in the upcoming ask-a-lawyer event. Attached is some general information on the event.

Location:

Date:

Time:

You are schedule to staff the desk:

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact **contact person**.

CONFIRM LOGISTICAL ISSUES

If the ask-a-lawyer event is held in the courthouse, as we hope many will, you will need to confirm the availability of a space for the date and time. This can be made much easier if contact is made with a supportive judge, court administrator or clerk at the beginning of the project.

PRE-SCREEN CLIENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY

Some ask-a-lawyer events simply invite people to wait their turn to see the next available attorney without any pre-screening. Others have an administrator ask the visitors to provide the name and brief explanation of their problem. Visitor with certain legal issues may then be

directed to attorneys with more relevant skills. Stress to visitors that this is an ask-a-lawyer event, that they will only be receiving limited advice, and the individual they speak to is not their lawyer. You may wish to have them sign an acknowledgement to this effect. Sample documents below may help you coordinate visitors.

THE DAY OF THE CLINIC:

- Supplies to Consider:
 - Administrative documents (sign-in, disclaimers, etc)
 - Pens, paper
 - Louisiana's Legal Services and Pro Bono Desk Manual
 - Access to computer
- One individual should be in charge of organization –
 - Greeting visitors
 - Assisting with completion of any forms
 - Maintaining the sign-in sheet(s)
 - Assigning visitors to attorneys
- Snacks for volunteer attorneys
- THANK Volunteers!!
- Maintain list of volunteers