

**INDIANAPOLIS BAR ASSOCIATION INDY LAWYER FINDER  
REGULATIONS AND RULES OF OPERATION  
PREAMBLE**

The Indianapolis Bar Association (IndyBar) recognizes that there exists a large group of citizens who need assistance finding a lawyer they can trust. In order to respond to the needs of those persons, the IndyBar has established and maintained Indy Lawyer Finder (ILF). These Regulations and Rules of Operation are promulgated as the policy of the IndyBar to cover the operations of ILF and shall remain in effect until modified or altered by the IndyBar.

**I. OBJECTIVES:**

ILF: The objective of the IndyBar in establishing ILF is to assist the general public by providing a way through which any person who can afford to pay a reasonable fee for legal services may be referred to a competent lawyer of the IndyBar and to acquaint people in need of legal services with the value of consultation with a lawyer.

**II. LAWYER REFERRAL POLICIES COMMITTEE:**

The Legal Services Advisory Committee (hereinafter “LSAC”) of the IndyBar will be charged with the responsibility of establishing the operating procedures of ILF consistent with the Regulations and Rules of Operation. The President of the IndyBar shall appoint members of the LSAC, as well as the Chair person under the established rules that govern committee appointments and operations. This Committee shall meet on an as needed basis as set by the Chair.

**III. THE SERVICE:**

ILF will be operated from the IndyBar offices utilizing members of the staff under the general supervision of the LSAC. A person seeking a legal service may do so by telephone, internet, or written correspondence to the IndyBar offices. A referral will be made to a panel member of ILF on a rotating basis. Fees shall be by agreement between the referred person and the ILF member attorney (“Panelist”).

**IV. FORMATION OF THE PANEL:**

1. Any attorney in good standing with the IndyBar who is actively engaged in private practice of law may qualify as a Panelist.
2. An attorney, in filing Panelist’s application as provided, agrees that:
  - (a) Any charge for further service will be as agreed upon with the client and the Panelist.
  - (b) Panelist carries, and will continue to carry, professional liability insurance in the minimum amounts as required by the LSAC and ratified by the Board of Directors, with evidence of such insurance coverage being furnished to the LSAC and IndyBar staff.

- 1) **\$250,000 Per Claim/Aggregate Policy** for cases involving Administrative Law, Criminal Law, Debtor/Creditor, Family Law, Education Law, Employment Law, Immigration Law, Landlord/Tenant, Social Security/Disability, Wills, Estates and Probate.
- 2) **\$250,000 Per Claim/Aggregate Policy** for Criminal and Family Law Modest Means Cases.
- 3) **\$1,000,000 Per Claim/Aggregate Policy** for cases involving Appeals, Business Law, Civil Law, Civil Rights, Entertainment & Sports, Environmental Law, Insurance/Pension, Intellectual Property, International Law, Liability/Negligence, Medicaid/Medicare, Military/Veteran's Affairs, Real Estate (excluding Landlord/Tenant).

(c) Panelist will abide by the Regulations and Rules of Operations of ILF as they exist upon the date of Panelist's application, and as same may be amended from time to time; and Panelist will in no event hold, or claim to hold, the IndyBar or any of its officers, members or employees liable in connection with the operation of ILF or use of the information contained in the application in connection with the activities of ILF.

(d) Panelist authorizes the IndyBar or any of its Grievance Committees, after notice to Panelist to furnish information concerning any past, pending or future grievances, complaints or ethical violations against Panelist for use by the LSAC in evaluating the application or membership on the panel so long as Panelist is a member of ILF.

3. Panelist agrees to abide by the following terms:

(a) In submitting an application of membership on the panel, the Panelist shall list those areas of legal work which the Panelist desires to handle. In doing so, the Panelist shall certify to the IndyBar that Panelist is competent to handle legal matters involving those areas as defined by the Rules of Professional Conduct which provides: Rule 1.1: Competence - A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

(b) In accepting the registration of any applicant, ILF may require such information and certifications as it deems necessary to have the Panelist show that Panelist is a member of the Bar in good standing, qualified to practice, and that Panelist adheres to the recognized ethical standards of the profession. The LSAC may conduct further investigations and require further information bearing upon the responsibility, capability, character and integrity of any applicant or registered lawyer, as the LSAC deems appropriate and necessary, including but not limited to obtaining information from the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission. The LSAC may also require such information as it deems necessary in continuing registration of any applicant or registered lawyer on any panel or panels that may be established.

4. Any applicant may be denied registration and registered lawyer may be withdrawn from registration as a Panelist if Panelist has:

(a) Willfully failed to pay any fee, failed to render any report, or otherwise failed to abide by these Regulations and Rules of Operation or any other established rules of ILF.

(b) Signed any application or other certification or report to ILF which shall be found to be untrue in any material respect.

(c) The failure of the attorney to maintain professional liability insurance as required by these Regulations and Rules.

(d) Failed to meet or maintain the required standards of responsibility, capability,

character and integrity.

5. The procedure for denial of registration in the first instance or causing a registered lawyer to be withdrawn from the registration will be as follows:

(a) The Chair of the LSAC shall bring such basis for denial of registration or requesting withdrawal of a registered lawyer from registration to the attention of the President of the IndyBar for initial review. If the President determines that grounds for refusing registration or withdrawal of registration exists, then the Chair shall so notify the lawyer in writing of the denial or withdrawal of registration. If the denied lawyer so requests, in writing within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the denial notice, the President of the IndyBar shall appoint three (3) members of the IndyBar at large, with the Chair of the LSAC to be an ex officio member of that committee (Hearing Committee) to make a further factual investigation and conduct a hearing. Such Hearing Committee shall first notify the attorney involved, in writing, stating the reason for the investigation and allowing said attorney ten (10) days time to respond in writing and setting a time and place for a hearing not more than forty-five (45) days following the notice. At said hearing, the attorney will be allowed to be present, to be represented by counsel and to present witnesses and evidence and to cross-examine witnesses.

(b) After the Hearing Committee has concluded its investigation, if there is no factual basis to deny registration or to cause withdrawal of registration of the registered lawyer, the matter will be closed and the registered lawyer will be allowed to participate fully in ILF.

(c) If the Hearing Committee concludes factually by a preponderance of the evidence and majority vote that the registration should not be allowed, or the registered lawyer should be withdrawn from registration, then the Hearing Committee will make a written report of such finding to the Board of Directors, who will either ratify or deny the report.

(d) The President of the IndyBar shall promptly notify the attorney of the decision of the Board of Directors.

6. Subject to a subsequent hearing as provided in subparagraph 4, an applicant shall be denied registration and a registered lawyer shall be removed from the panel immediately and without hearing should any of the following occur:

(a) Applicant/Panelist fails to inform the ILF Committee within ten (10) days of receiving notice of any grievance filed against Applicant/Panelist which is designated "misconduct";

(b) The suspension or disbarment of the attorney or the attorney's resignation from the practice of law;

(c) The filing of a suit against the attorney by the Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission for suspension or disbarment;

(d) The institution against the attorney of felony or misdemeanor charges involving moral turpitude or involving theft, embezzlement or fraudulent appropriation of money or other property;

(e) The involuntary or voluntary commitment of the attorney for mental illness, drug addiction or alcoholism;

7. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, a Panelist who fails to comply with the reporting procedures of the Indy Lawyer Finder Agreement ("ILFA") or fails to comply with the Rules and Regulations of ILF ("Rules") for a period of sixty (60) days or more shall be subject to suspension. The rules and procedures governing suspension shall be as follows:

(a) The Panelist shall be given written notice that he or she has failed to comply with ILFA and/or Rules for a period of sixty (60) days or more. The written date of said notice shall

be the date it is mailed to the President.

(b) Said written notice shall advise the Panelist that he or she shall have twenty (20) days from the effective date of the notice to cure any failure to comply with ILFA or Rules.

(c) If, after twenty (20) days from the effective date of the written notice, the Panelist to whom said written notice was mailed does not cure said failure to comply with ILFA or Rules, said Panelist shall be placed on suspension.

(d) A suspended Panelist will not receive referrals from ILF.

(e) A Panelist shall receive written notice by certified mail that he or she has been suspended, and the effective date of suspension shall be the date the written notice of suspension is mailed to the Panelist.

(f) Said written notice of suspension shall advise the Panelist that he or she will no longer receive referrals from ILF until said failure to comply with the ILFA or Rules is cured, and a \$100 reinstatement fee is paid. Said written notice of suspension shall further advise the Panelist that he or she shall be subject to removal as a registered lawyer with ILF if said failure to comply with the ILFA or Rules is not cured and the reinstatement fee is not paid within thirty (30) days of the effective date of suspension.

(g) A suspended Panelist who does not cure said failure to comply with the ILFA or Rules within thirty (30) days of the effective date of suspension shall be subject to withdrawal as a registered lawyer.

(h) A suspended Panelist shall remain liable to ILF for referral fees pursuant to Panelist's ILFA.

(i) The reinstatement provision is outlined above. Currently, these rules require a \$100 reinstatement fee and the curing past rules violations with no provision referencing a reinstated member is "on probation" for a set period of time. Such a member would be subject to removal for rules violations, just as any other member (though a reinstated member theoretically has one strike against him/her). Formal removal can occur without a reinstatement policy pursuant to our existing regulations, subject to the right to hearing etc. The suspension provisions also apply to a reinstated member just as any other member.

#### **V. FEE FOR MEMBERSHIP:**

Any attorney in good standing with the IndyBar, with offices in the Greater Metropolitan Indianapolis, Indiana, area shall be eligible for membership upon the payment of the subscription fee. For Indianapolis Bar Association members, the fee is three hundred dollars (\$300.00) to be paid annually upon application or re-registration. For non-members, the fee is six hundred dollars (\$600) to be paid annually upon application or re-registration.

This fee provides the panelist with referrals in the IndyBar's service area. In addition, for and in consideration of the referral of the client, in recognition of the service provided by ILF and to help defray the cost of operation of ILF, any attorney receiving legal fees derived from full-fee referrals in excess of \$100.00 for the performance of services to a client referred by ILF shall agree to pay the sum of ten percent (10%) of any such legal fees received for services performed by such client as a direct result of such referral from the service.

#### **VI. WITHDRAWAL FROM MEMBERSHIP:**

A Panelist may at any time withdraw Panelist's name from participation in ILF upon ten

(10) days written notice to the LSAC addressed to the IndyBar, subject to Panelist's obligation to pay any fee required under the Indy Lawyer Finder Agreement. Following withdrawal, reporting and remittance must continue until all retained cases obtained through ILF have been closed.

### **VII. OPERATION OF THE PANEL:**

ILF—Full Fee Referrals

1. Referrals will be made to the members of the panel in rotation.
2. Panelist may accept any referral or initial review in those areas in which Panelist has indicated on Panelist's application that Panelist is willing and competent to handle. However, should any referral give rise to a conflict of interest, Panelist shall contact ILF and refer the client back to ILF to obtain a new referral for the client.
3. Once a client is referred to a Panelist, that attorney maintains sole responsibility for the client's matter, if employed by the client, until completion of the matter, unless the attorney refers the client back to ILF or to another attorney who is employed in the same office and is also a member of ILF and who will accept such sole responsibility. If the Panelist determines in the course of Panelist's responsibility that this client's matter requires co-counsel or the referral to another attorney for this particular matter, the co-counsel attorney or referred attorney must acknowledge in writing to ILF, within ten (10) days, that it accepts such case pursuant to the conditions of ILF Rules and Regulations of Operations. The Panelist shall also notify ILF in writing within ten (10) days of his co-counsel status or of the referral to another attorney and the Panelist remains responsible to ILF for ALL services rendered to the referred client.

### **VIII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND REPORT OF REFERRALS:**

The Panelist shall update every case referred by ILF no less than thirty (30) days after receiving the referral and no less than every thirty (30) days thereafter until the case is closed. Failure to report within the time specified may justify ILF in removing Panelist's name from active rotation. Nothing herein will require an attorney to violate the attorney/client privilege. The Panelist shall permit ILF to contact the referred client for purposes of identifying client contact and random sampling regarding attorney fees charged and quality of service.

### **IX. RECORDS AND REVIEW:**

ILF will keep on file a confidential report of all referrals and reports of Panelists which will be subject to examination and inspection by the LSAC and the Board of Directors of the IndyBar. All referrals will be reviewed at least quarterly with a follow-up questionnaire, at the discretion of ILF, to the referred clients inquiring about status of a case, fees paid, services performed and any other information deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee.

*Revised January 2020*