



Pro Seniors Helpline Referral Attorney Panel (HRAP)

What is the Helpline Referral Attorney Panel? Pro Seniors' Legal Helpline for Older Ohioans offers free legal advice to callers age 60 and older. While many problems can be solved over the phone, some cannot. That's why the Helpline Referral Attorney Panel (HRAP) was created. HRAP assists these vetted clients who need more personal attention from an attorney near where they live for legal problems such as transactional documents, filing a lawsuit or estate planning.

The HRAP has attorneys throughout Ohio who have chosen to accept HRAP referrals for full fee or contingency fee or reduced fee or *pro bono* cases, or any combination of fee-type referrals. When appropriate, the Legal Helpline also refers clients to local legal aid offices and other community resources available to assist them.

I'm an attorney, how do I qualify?

- Be, and continue to be, an attorney in good standing with the Supreme Court of Ohio;
- Maintain an office separate and distinct from any other business or residence;
- Be actively engaged in the private practice of law;
- Carry, and continue to carry, professional liability insurance equivalent to at least \$100,000 per occurrence and \$300,000 in the aggregate, which insurance is acceptable to Pro Seniors;
- Represent clients in a professional and businesslike manner in all respects;
- Meet the minimum CLE credits in areas of expertise indicated; and
- Abide by HRAP rules and procedures.

How do I join the panel? It's easy. Mail the following to Pro Seniors:

- Your completed registration form; and
- The declarations page of your professional liability insurance.

How does the panel work? Referrals are made to attorneys in the order in which their names appear in the rotation system. You will accept any referral for initial consultation except for those matters you indicated in your application that you are unwilling to handle. However, if any referral creates a conflict of interest, you must advise the client to contact the HRAP coordinator for another referral. Nothing herein may be construed to obligate you to accept employment beyond the initial consultation.

You must interview the client and, except in extraordinary situations, not refer the prospective client to another attorney. If you deem the situation extraordinary, you must first obtain the HRAP's approval before referring the client to another attorney. You can receive referrals either at an office location or by agreeing on the registration form to visit homebound clients in their homes. Your relationship with a referred client reflects upon the HRAP and upon Pro Seniors. That's why we ask you to be professional in every client contact, including, but not limited to, honoring all fee arrangements.

What are the benefits? In addition to fee-paying clients, you gain the benefit of:

- Legal Pamphlets: You can receive, at no charge, pamphlets prepared by Pro Seniors on areas of elder law. You can order any of the more than 50 additional pamphlets on legal and long-term care issues.
- Elder Law Consultations: Call Pro Seniors' staff attorneys, who practice exclusively in elder law, for technical assistance on behalf of your HRAP referrals and non-HRAP clients.

What are the Rules? Panel members agree to:

- Permit any dispute concerning fees arising from a referral to be submitted to binding arbitration by their local bar association;
- Grant all clients referred by the HRAP an appointment as soon as practical after the referral is made;
- Make no charge for the first 30 minutes of consultation at the initial meeting with the client;
- Abide by all rules of the HRAP, and in no event to hold or claim to hold the HRAP, Pro Seniors, or any of its officers, members or employees liable for the operation of the HRAP, information contained in your application, or HRAP activities;
- Complete and return HRAP referral reports as soon as possible and no later than the deadline given; and
- Annually certify that you have not been suspended from the practice of law or found to be in violation of the Code of Professional Responsibility.
- Nothing herein requires you to violate the attorney-client privilege.

Failure to Comply with HRAP Rules You may be denied registration or suspended from the panel for any of the following:

- Failure to pay any fee due the HRAP;
- Failure to send in any report due the HRAP;
- Failure to carry the required liability insurance;

- Submitting a registration form or making a report to the HRAP which is untrue in any aspect;
- Failure to abide by the Ohio Code of Professional Responsibility;
- Failure to abide by the HRAP fee schedule (if participating voluntarily in the reduced-fee or pro bono panels); or
- Failure to maintain a proper office.

Fee Sharing: If any attorney fees you receive from a full-fee or contingency-fee client referral is \$100 or more, you must pay to Pro Seniors, Inc. 15% of that fee. Payment is due to Pro Seniors within 30 days after receipt. This percentage of fee requirement lasts as long as you continue to receive fees on a referred case.

Client Fees: You can choose to receive one or more of these fee types:

- full fee,
- reduced fee,
- contingency fee, and/or
- *pro bono* clients.

If you choose to accept reduced fee case referrals, note that the reduced fee schedule is the last page of the [registration form](#). Remember, you must agree to provide the initial half-hour of consultation at no cost regardless of the case fee type. Please note that the income from the percentage fee you pay Pro Seniors is used to pay the reasonable operating costs of the HRAP and to fund public service activities of the HRAP or Pro Seniors.

Continuing Legal Education Credit for Pro Bono Services: If you choose to provide qualifying *pro bono* assistance to a client Pro Seniors has referred to you, you may be eligible for [CLE credit](#). Contact Helpline Manager [Mike Walters](#) for more information.

Volunteer Opportunities: If you're an attorney in Greater Cincinnati, Pro Seniors can use your help. Volunteer at the Helpline and learn more about the growing field of elder law. Interested attorneys should contact the Katie at (513) 458-5505.

Other Ways to Help: Even if you can't accept referrals right now, you can still support the Legal Helpline by [making a tax-deductible contribution](#) to Pro Seniors. When you make a contribution equal to your hourly billing rate, you're entitled to the pamphlets and all other support that referral attorneys receive.