

MEMORANDUM

TO: Summer Interns
FROM: NHLAA
DATE: August 31, 2016
RE: Format of all memos & other assignments as student intern

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum explains our expectations for the format of assignments that you complete while you are working under our supervision as a student intern or volunteer at New Haven Legal Assistance Association (NHLAA). It also includes information about where you can find sample documents in our organization's database, as well as a few tips about how to be a good intern or volunteer here at NHLAA.

FORMAT OF MEMOS

For all written research assignments (other than letters or documents/pleadings to be filed in court), we prefer that you use the format that you see in the memo that you are reading right now, including the caption at the top of this memo, with the same underlining, bolding, spacing, etc.. Always **include the date** that you complete your assignment and **an introduction paragraph**, with a few sentences describing what your memo is about. Also, please **insert page numbers** in your memos at the bottom, centered. Formatting the memo this way helps us a lot, because it ensures that we can see who wrote what, to who, when, and what it's about – plus, it provides a uniform format that we can skim quickly and easily.

You should use this format even when what you are writing is not exactly a “legal research memo.” For example, perhaps you are writing a memo that summarizes notes from a meeting with an opposing attorney. You can still use the format above – just be sure to include an appropriate “Re” line and intro paragraph so we know what your memo is about. After that, you can make up whatever headings you'd like for any subsections of your memo in order to organize your work appropriately. Of course, if your direct supervisor provides you with specific instructions about how to format your assignment, then please follow his or her instructions.

When you are writing letters, or pleadings that will be filed in court, then you will need to change your format to fit the type of document you are writing. In other words, if you are asked to write a motion for contempt, then you should draft something that looks like a motion for contempt, not a research memo.

We have a “macro” set up in Microsoft Word that lets you create “pleading paper” or “letter head.” When you are in Microsoft Word, go to “view” on the top tool bar, then click on “Macros,” then click on “View Macros,” then run the macro that fits the description of what you want to write (i.e. letter or pleading). This will make more sense after you've written a few pleadings or letters; don't be afraid to ask if you don't get it the first time.

Whenever an attorney gives you an assignment, he or she will likely tell you where you can find an example or old version of a document so you have something to model your work after. If they don't tell you, then please ask, because it is possible they simply forgot to tell you.

When you draft a document on the computer, you need to save it to your "G Drive" folder and also send a digital copy to the attorney, either by email or via a link to what you've written and saved in your G drive folder. When the document is completely finished, it will likely need to be saved in the client's file in Legal Files (our client file management software) and a hard copy would be placed in the client's paper file. Your supervising attorney should go over file organization with you in person, but if you have questions, just ask.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR EXAMPLES OR TEMPLATES FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

At NHLAA, we have a database of digital files. It is called the "G" Drive. If you click on "My Computer" when you are at your Citrix desktop, you'll then see an icon called "nhlaa (\\lsdata)(G:)". That's the "G" drive. There is an individual folder for everyone in our office, named using their three-letter logon initials. You will have a folder as well. Everyone's folder, including yours, is visible to everyone on our network all the time.

THINGS TO HELP YOU DO WELL AS AN INTERN/VOLUNTEER

Here are a few things you might want to do to be a good intern or volunteer.

- always bring a note pad and pen to every meeting with a supervising attorney
- be sure to check your NHLAA email everyday; attorneys plan to give you assignments both in person and by email
- ask questions about any assignment you are given, so you are clear about what is expected of you
- always ask WHEN at attorney expects an assignment to be completed
- if you think you need more time to complete an assignment, tell your supervisor as soon as you can, so deadlines can be adjusted appropriately
- Keep a list of projects you have worked on: attached is a sample case log if you want to use it. Some students prefer a more detailed list of cases, with descriptions of the facts, the issues, their questions, and sources of law. Attached is an example: sample case note log
- Think about what you want to get out of your internship/volunteer experience & talk to your supervisor so that he or she can help you

Please ask if you have any questions. We're looking forward to a GREAT semester, etc.!