

Lawyer Referral and Information Service

A public service sponsored by the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association



2022 RULES OF OPERATION



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I. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Lawyer Referral and Information Service of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association ("LRIS") is a non-profit lawyer referral and information service certified under the rules and authority of the State Bar of California. LRIS is owned and operated by the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association.
- 1.2 The purposes of LRIS are as follows:
 - a) to provide a way in which any person may be referred to a qualified, insured attorney who is available and is willing to render needed legal services;
 - b) to provide information about attorneys and the availability of legal services which will aid a member of the public in his/her selection of an attorney;
 - c) to inform the public when and where to seek legal and dispute resolution services;
 - d) to provide general, legal and dispute resolution information needed by the public;
 - e) to improve the quality of legal services available to the public; and
 - f) to provide access to affordable legal services to the public.

II. ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1 LRIS membership is offered to attorneys in good standing with the State Bar of California and who satisfy the requirements of the LRIS as set forth in its application and rules. Membership may be denied or terminated at the sole discretion of the LRIS Governing Committee. The Committee's decision may be appealed to the Board of Directors of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association, and the Board's decision shall be final. In the event of termination of membership, fees submitted for participation in the LRIS will be prorated over 12 months, if applicable, and returned to the member. The termination from LRIS participation shall not relieve the attorney from the obligation to report and remit referral fees to LRIS pursuant to the membership agreement.
- 2.2 LRIS is certified by the State Bar of California to serve San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties.
- 2.3 LRIS shall be supervised in its establishment and operation by a committee to be known as the Lawyer Referral and Information Service Governing Committee ("the Committee"). Under the direction of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Board



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of Directors ("SLO Bar Board"), the Committee shall have the power and authority to operate LRIS in a manner consistent with these Rules, and with the Rules and Regulations of the State Bar of California Pertaining to Lawyer Referral Services Including Minimum Standards for Lawyer Referral Service in California ("State Bar LRIS Rules"). A Director and other staff may serve under the direction of the Committee, subject to the consent and oversight of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Board of Directors.

- 2.4 The Committee shall have the responsibility of regularly reviewing these Rules and making recommendations to the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Board of Directors for changes and additions as may, from time to time, be deemed appropriate to carry out the purposes of LRIS.

- 2.5 Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the President of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors.
 - 0.01 At least fifty percent (50%) of said Committee members shall be active members of the State Bar of California and the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association.
 - 0.02 No more than fifty percent (50%) of said Committee members shall receive referrals from LRIS.
 - 0.03 The Committee shall have no less than three members and no more than seven members.
 - 0.04 Decisions of the Committee shall be based on a majority vote of the Committee members in attendance at a meeting, so long as a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as three Committee members.

- 2.6 LRIS shall be subject to the policies, rules and regulations of the State Bar of California, which rules shall supersede the rules of LRIS in case of conflict.

- 2.7 The Committee shall meet at regular intervals to review records and operations of LRIS including a review of Client satisfaction, attorney Panel Member's qualifications, the nature and scope of services offered, and all other aspects of LRIS' operations and policies.

- 2.8 LRIS reserves the right to refuse service to anyone for any lawful non-discriminatory reason whatsoever.



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III. MEMBERSHIP IN LRIS

- 3.1 Panel Members of the LRIS must meet the following requirements:
- 0.01 Be an active member of the State Bar of California.
 - 0.02 Shall not have been removed from a Lawyer Referral Service within the past two years.
 - 0.03 Shall regularly practice and maintain at least one commercial business office in San Luis Obispo County or Santa Barbara County. Member agrees not to meet with client at Member's home. In the event that the Member serves on a Panel that has fewer than four Members the Committee reserves the right to modify the office requirements. In exercising its discretion to modify the office requirements, the Committee may consider the number and nature of any other Panels served by the Member seeking a modification, community needs for the Panel with less than four Members, the nature of alternative office arrangements available to the Member and any other factor deemed relevant to the Committee.
 - 0.04 Shall not currently be the subject of State Bar disciplinary proceedings nor have any current criminal charges pending without satisfactory explanation to the Committee.
 - 0.05 Shall never have been the subject of State Bar disciplinary proceedings closed in a manner adverse to the member (including matters closed by private removal) nor convicted of a criminal offense, without satisfactory explanation to the Committee.
 - 0.06 Agrees to be bound by these Rules, State Bar Rules, the Rules of Professional Conduct, and to maintain minimum standards of conduct consistent with qualification for panel participation.
 - 0.07 Shall meet the minimum qualifications for inclusion on at least one LRIS panel.
 - 0.08 Shall be in good standing with LRIS by complying with these Rules of Operation.
 - 0.09 Shall certify that s/he does not have any current actions pending before the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association's Fee Dispute Arbitration Program. An application may not be considered until all such pending actions are resolved.
- 3.2 Each Panel Member of LRIS shall be covered at all times by errors and omissions insurance with a minimum coverage of \$100,000/\$300,000. Proof of such coverage shall be submitted with the attorney's application for panel membership and thereafter



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on the anniversary date of said policy. Each Panel Member shall immediately report to LRIS any policy cancellation or material change in coverage. A Panel Member's failure to comply with the above shall result in immediate suspension from LRIS.

3.3 Annual Registration

0.01 An annual registration fee and a membership application (completed to the satisfaction of LRIS) is due on or before January 1 of each year. The fees and membership application are delinquent if not received by January 31. Any Panel Member whose fees and/or membership application are delinquent may be suspended pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section VII of these rules. All fees are non-refundable.

00.02 The annual registration fee for active members of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association:

- Individual 2022 20th Year Anniversary Membership Special..... FREE**
(Includes 2022 annual LRIS registration and membership in **ONE** panel)
- Individual Annual Membership:.....\$150.00**
(Includes 2022 annual LRIS registration and membership on up to three specialty panels)
- Individual Annual Membership:.....\$200.00**
(Includes annual LRIS registration and unlimited specialty panel membership)
- Law Firm Annual Membership:.....\$500.00**
(Unlimited number of partners and associates; unlimited panel memberships)

0.03 \$200 shall be added to the annual registration fee for attorneys/law firms who are not current members of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association.

0.04 No fee is required for placement on a modest means or pro bono panel. For rules pertaining to the modest means and pro bono panel see Section 6.1.

3.4. Panel Qualifications. Attached hereto is a list of approved panels as of the date these rules were adopted. The Committee has the authority to make additions, deletions or other changes to this list on an annual basis.

0.01 Each attorney seeking to be placed on a panel must, in addition to meeting the general membership qualifications set forth in Section 3.1 of these Rules, be found qualified for the panel by the Director and the Committee. Generally, each Panel Member must have a minimum of two years experience handling matters falling within the scope of the subject panel. The Committee has the discretion to allow an attorney to participate on a panel with less than two years experience upon a finding by the Committee that the attorney has sufficient knowledge and expertise to competently and effectively handle



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matters within the scope of the panel and/or the attorney has established a means of supervision or mentoring that provides sufficient oversight of the attorney's work. Also, the Committee has the discretion to require more than the minimum of two years experience, where it finds that the nature and extent of the attorney's experience is insufficient to assure the Committee that the attorney has the knowledge and expertise to handle matters within the scope of the panel competently and effectively.

- 0.02 Each applicant's written application and qualifications statement shall be initially reviewed by the Director to determine prima facie compliance with all general eligibility rules and qualifications for the particular panel(s) to which the applicant has applied for membership.
- 0.03 The Committee may require the applicant to furnish additional information, either orally and/or in writing, relevant to the applicant's qualifications for a particular panel, and may further require substantiation of any response by the applicant. The Committee is authorized to obtain independent verification of any of applicant's responses, including contacting persons with knowledge of the matters disclosed in the application materials.
- 0.04 Any applicant who has been found not to qualify for a particular panel or panels and who has otherwise complied with these Rules and all requests made hereunder, shall have the right to appeal such finding to the Committee by written notice given within twenty (20) days of her/his being notified of her/his failure to qualify.
- 0.05 Decisions of the Committee may be appealed to the Board of Directors of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association. Action of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Board of Directors shall be conclusive.

3.5 Reporting Procedure

- 0.01 Each time a Client is referred to a Panel Member for either a telephonic or office consultation, LRIS will forward an appointment confirmation form to the Panel Member. The appointment confirmation form will include a section to be marked by the Panel Member indicating whether or not the Client retained the services of the Panel Member. This completed appointment confirmation form must be faxed back to LRIS within seven (7) days following the initial consultation. Thereafter, LRIS may request from time to time a Client status update from each Panel Member.
- 0.02 The failure to timely complete and return the status report, and the failure to conform to any other reporting requirements of LRIS is grounds for suspension pursuant to Section VII of these Rules.



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0.03 If a Client referred by LRIS engages in a “consultation only” first appointment, but returns to the same attorney on the same matter within a one year period, the matter will still be considered an LRIS referral, subject to all reporting and fee sharing requirements under these Rules.

3.6 Fee Disputes

0.01 Each Panel Member shall submit any fee dispute arising between that Panel Member and a Client referred by LRIS, if the Client so elects, to binding arbitration through a Mandatory Fee Arbitration Program as designated by the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association. The disposition of all other complaints shall be determined by the Committee.

0.02 Any disputes between a Panel Member and LRIS regarding the payment of fees shall be governed by the provisions of Section 4.4 of these Rules.

3.7 Each Panel Member shall receive copies of and agree to abide by the State Bar of California’s Minimum Standards for a Lawyer Referral Service in California and by the Rules of Operation of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Lawyer Referral and Information Service. Each Panel Member shall be guided, governed, and bound by the following: (a) Canons of Legal Ethics of the State Bar of California; (b) The Minimum Standards for Lawyer Referral Services in California, as amended from time to time and adopted by the State Bar; and (c) the Rules of Operation of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Lawyer Referral and Information Service, as amended from time to time and adopted by the LRIS Committee.

3.8 With the exception of the requirement to pay fees as set forth in Section 3.3, above, an attorney submitting an application to participate on a pro bono or modest means panel, or an attorney who is on such a panel, must comply with all of the provisions of Section III of these Rules of Operation.

IV. FEES

4.1 Administrative Fee

0.01 The LRIS Administrative fee of \$50 is due and payable to LRIS by the Client when an appointment has been scheduled with the Panel Member and confirmed with the Client. The administrative fee may be waived in the discretion of the LRIS Director and/or the Committee on a case by case basis, including but not



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limited to facts evidencing financial hardship. Each Client referred shall be obligated to pay the administrative fee of \$50 to LRIS prior to the initial consultation, unless otherwise excused. No fee shall be required which is in conflict with any statutory or other legal provisions for attorney fees.

- 0.02 Initial Consultation. The Panel Member agrees not to charge the Client a fee for legal services rendered during the first half hour of the initial consultation. If the Panel Member intends to charge the Client a fee for legal services rendered beyond the first half hour of the initial consultation, the attorney shall inform the Client of his/her intention prior to the conclusion of the first half hour of the initial consultation and must obtain the Client's written agreement thereto. Initial consultations in potential contingent fee cases shall be free.

4.2 Percentage Fees - Hourly, Statutory, Flat, Contingent

- 0.01 Percentage Fee in Hourly, Statutory, or Flat Fee Matters. The Panel Member shall pay to LRIS a percentage fee, or 10% of all hourly, statutory, or flat fees generated in a matter that has been referred. Payment is due thirty (30) days following the attorney's receipt of fees. In the event the Panel Member has received a retainer, payment of the referral fee shall be due thirty (30) days following payment of fees to the attorney from the attorney's client trust account.
- 0.02 Percentage Fee in Contingent Fee Matters. The Panel Member shall to LRIS a percentage fee, or 15% of any contingent fee received by the attorney on a referred matter. The fee shall be paid within thirty (30) days of the Panel Member receiving the fee. In addition, the rules set forth by the State Bar of California require each Panel Member to forward an itemized accounting of the case settlement and attorney's fees collected to the Service within thirty (30) days of receipt of any monies.
- 0.03 Due to requirements prohibiting Workers' Compensation referral fees, an administrative fee, in lieu of the referral fee, will be charged. Twelve percent (12%) of fees collected at the conclusion of the case will be forwarded to LRIS.

4.3 Reporting Fee Arrangement and Additional Information to LRIS upon Request By LRIS.

- 0.01 Reporting Fee Arrangement to LRIS. Within ten (10) days of the Panel Member's consultation with the Client, the Panel Member shall notify LRIS of the status of the referral, including the fee arrangement, if any, that has been agreed upon with the Client. The information provided to LRIS by the Panel Member shall be included in a written retainer agreement between the Client and the Panel Member and shall include



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a statement of whether the fee is hourly, flat, or contingent; the amount of the fee; the circumstance(s) under which the fee(s) will become due and owing, the billing arrangement and all other facts material to an understanding of the fee arrangement. If no fee arrangement is agreed upon between the Client and the Panel Member within ten (10) days following the initial consultation, the Panel Member shall advise LRIS of that fact in writing. If, however, the Panel Member thereafter enters into a fee arrangement with the Client based upon the initial consultation, the Panel Member shall notify LRIS of the fee arrangement and provide a copy of the written fee agreement within ten (10) days of its consummation.

- 0.02 Providing Additional Information to LRIS Upon Request. LRIS may, in its sole discretion, request additional information regarding the fee arrangement, including a copy of the written attorney-client fee agreement, a copy of billing statements and a copy of attorney-client correspondence pertaining to fees. The Panel Member shall provide the requested information to LRIS within ten (10) days of such request.

4.4 Failure to Pay Percentage Fees

- 0.01 Failure to Pay Referral Fees. The failure of a Panel Member to timely pay to LRIS percentage fees shall be grounds for suspension pursuant to Section VII of these Rules. In addition, in the discretion of the Committee, LRIS is authorized to pursue any legal remedies available under the law to collect unpaid fees. Should any collection efforts be commenced between LRIS and the Panel Member, LRIS shall be entitled to recover, in addition to such other relief as may be obtained, all reasonable attorney's fees and costs

4.5 Right to Lien

- 0.01 Attorney acknowledges and agrees that LRIS has the right to file a lien in any court or administrative filing to secure the payment of its fees as set forth herein.

V. REFERRALS

- 5.1 Any person, regardless of place of residence, may contact LRIS and request a referral to a panel attorney. However, LRIS shall be under no obligation to refer any person to more than three (3) attorneys on any one subject matter.
- 5.2 The Committee shall establish procedures assuring that each referral is made by LRIS in a fair and impartial manner to a member of the appropriate panel pursuant to the purposes of LRIS stated herein above.



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- 5.3 Referrals shall be made on a rotational basis. A separate rotation system shall be maintained for each subject matter panel. Notwithstanding this requirement for a rotational system, in assigning cases to a Panel Member consideration will be given to all circumstances of the Client, including but not limited to, the specific type and difficulty of the legal problem presented, the Client's geographical location preference, and language limitations. Panel Members are not guaranteed a minimum number of referrals. The Committee will periodically review the system and the case assignments to assess the fairness and impartiality of the assignment system.
- 5.4 Referral Process to an LRIS Panel Member Who Maintains an "Individual Membership" Pursuant to the Rules and Regulations Stated Herein: All prospective Clients will be referred by LRIS on a rotational basis within each panel to individual Panel Members, rather than the Panel Member's office. Each Panel Member to whom the potential Client is referred is individually responsible for providing an initial consultation with the Panel Member. Further, services may be administered in conjunction with another attorney in the office pursuant to normal office procedures. Each Panel Member is expected to treat Clients referred by LRIS with the same courtesy and diligence as non-referred clients.
- 5.5 Referral Process to Members of a Law Firm Who Collectively Maintain their LRIS Panel Membership Under a Single Law Firm Membership ("the law firm"): Pursuant to the rules and regulations herein, the law firm shall, for purposes of panel rotation, be considered and treated as a single entity. The law firm shall be afforded a single presence in the rotation process of each panel of which it is a member, the same as an individual Panel Member. Under this section, for purposes of all LRIS referrals, the law firm shall appoint a single contact person, who, according to the law firm's protocol, shall assign the referred matter to an attorney who maintains his/her LRIS membership under the law firm's LRIS Law Firm Membership. The assigned attorney shall abide by all other rules and regulations stated herein pertaining to referrals to individual Panel Members.
- 5.6 Pursuant to the Rules and Regulations of the State Bar of California Pertaining to Lawyer Referral Services, no referral shall be made on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual preference, handicap or any other class that is protected under applicable law.
- 5.7 Subject to applicable rules of professional responsibility, should any referral give rise to a conflict of interest, the Panel Member shall refer the Client back to LRIS and shall also notify LRIS that a conflict has been identified and that the Client has been referred back to LRIS. Nothing in these rules shall obligate the Panel Member to do anything that is not in compliance with the applicable rules of professional responsibility.



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- 5.8 Nothing in these Rules shall be construed to obligate a Panel Member to either accept an initial consultation or accept employment beyond the initial consultation. Panel Members are required to refer individuals back to LRIS when not accepting a referral as a Client.
- 5.9 Each Panel Member who is retained to handle a matter referred by LRIS shall maintain sole responsibility for and control of such matter. A Panel Member shall not transfer responsibility of control of any matter referred by LRIS without the knowledge and written permission of LRIS, unless required by law or court order. However, the foregoing shall not prevent a Panel Member who is associated with a firm or group from having aspects of the matter handled by another attorney in the firm or group under the Panel Member's supervision, provided that the Panel Member retains responsibility and control.
- 5.10 When LRIS makes a referral, the Panel Member may not recommend or refer the Client to another attorney and thereby relinquish the Panel Member's obligation for any percentage fees owed to LRIS. A Panel Member who transfers, in whole or in part, responsibility of any matter referred by LRIS to another attorney or attorneys, remains contractually liable for any percentage fees owed to LRIS, and remains liable for collection and/or payment of any fees owed LRIS. A Panel Member shall pay LRIS the applicable percentage fee of the total legal fee(s) received by any/all attorney(s) involved. Generally, Panel Members are required to refer individuals back to LRIS when not accepting a referral as a Client, unless to do so would be to the detriment of the Client. In any such case, the Panel Member shall immediately notify LRIS and shall take all steps necessary to insure the rights of LRIS regarding its compensation for the referral.

VI. OPTIONAL PANELS

- 6.1 Pro Bono Panel/Modest Means Panel. LRIS shall work to maintain a panel of attorneys who are willing to accept representation on a pro bono basis. Attorneys who are willing to be included on such a panel shall meet the membership requirements set forth in Section III of these Rules, except that pro bono panel attorneys are exempt from all fee requirements. Pro bono panel attorneys shall be referred cases based on their demonstrated areas of expertise. A pro bono panel attorney shall have no obligation to accept representation of a pro bono matter and all such referrals shall be on a case by case basis. Alternatively, certain matters and/or certain Clients may qualify for a reduced fee arrangement where modest means are indicated. These shall be handled on a case by case basis in the discretion of the referred attorney and concurrence of the LRIS committee. Referral fees in such matters shall be established based on agreement



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between the panel attorney and the LRIS committee. In such modest means cases, the Director and/or the LRIS committee has the power to waive the entire referral fee.

- 6.2 Limited Scope Panel. The limited scope panel shall consist of attorneys willing and qualified to accept referrals in matters that are not for all purposes, but rather are for discreet tasks, or sets of tasks, in the context of a larger matter. Attorneys who are willing to be included on such a panel shall meet the membership requirements set forth in Section III of these Rules, except that the attorneys shall have either received training in a program approved by the LRIS Committee, or shall have demonstrated experience in handling limited scope matters suitable to the LRIS Committee.

VII. PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENDING PANEL MEMBER-REMOVAL GROUNDS

- 7.1 At the sole discretion of the Committee, a Panel Member may be investigated, suspended and/or removed from serving on one or all of the panel(s) for which the Panel Member is registered, for any reason, including, but not limited to those reasons listed below. The term “suspended” refers to an action that results in a provisional restriction of panel privileges, and may include conditions. The term “removal” refers to an indefinite unconditional removal from a panel or panels. Once removed, in order for a Panel Member to be reinstated the Panel Member must reapply for membership and satisfy the requirements of membership, and be approved by the Committee.
- 0.01 Failure to timely and completely pay any fee required by LRIS.
 - 0.02 Retaliation against a Client who returns a Client survey that is either favorable or unfavorable.
 - 0.03 Disproportionate reports of dissatisfaction by referred Clients.
 - 0.04 Charging unreasonable or excessive fees for services rendered to referred Clients.
 - 0.05 Falsification of any statement, account or report to LRIS.
 - 0.06 Willful failure to return any report or otherwise abide by the Rules of LRIS.
 - 0.07 Signing a certificate which is untrue in any material respect.
 - 0.08 Evidence of unethical or unprofessional conduct.
 - 0.09 Evidence of lack of qualifications to accept representation on a subject for which Panel Member has been included on a panel.



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- 0.10 Failure to maintain the minimum requirements for panel membership, as set forth in Section III. The failure to maintain insurance, the failure to remain in good standing with the State Bar, and involvement in unlawful activity related to the Panel Member's law practice may result in immediate suspension without prior notice.
- 0.11 Failure to perform services for which the Panel Member has been paid.
- 0.12 Failure to provide the standard of care intended by LRIS as determined in the sole discretion of the LRIS Committee.
- 7.2 Suspension/Removal Following 20-day Notice. In the event that circumstances indicate a need to suspend or remove a Panel Member from a panel or panels, absent circumstances justifying suspension or removal without prior notice as provided in Section 7.3, the Panel Member shall receive written notice as provided in this Section 7.2. At the direction of the LRIS Committee, the LRIS Director will send a written Notice of Intent to Suspend or Remove to said Panel Member at his/her last known address not less than twenty (20) calendar days prior to the effective date of the described action. The notice will include specific reference to the nature of the violation, the date of the intended suspension or removal, and notice that failure to cure the violation to the satisfaction of LRIS within the time period stated will result in suspension or removal. The notice shall also state the panel, or panels, from which the Panel Member will be suspended or removed. During the 20-day period stated in the notice, the Panel Member shall not receive referrals from LRIS. Absent receipt of an objection from the Panel Member within the 20-day period specified in the notice, the proposed action against the Panel Member, as stated in the notice, shall automatically become effective. However, if during the 20-day period the Panel Member submits to LRIS a written objection to the proposed action, the Panel Member then shall have the right to appear before the LRIS Committee and present information and argument supporting the objection. The LRIS Committee shall convene to hear the Panel Member's objection as soon as is feasible. Unless directed otherwise by the LRIS Committee, the temporary suspension of referrals to the Panel Member shall remain in effect until a hearing takes place. Following the hearing, the LRIS Committee shall decide whether the suspension shall remain in effect, and if so, the terms and conditions of the suspension or removal. The decision of the LRIS Committee may be appealed to the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Board of Directors by delivering written notice to LRIS within twenty (20) calendar days of the LRIS Committee's decision.
- 7.3 Suspension/Removal without Prior Notice. The LRIS Committee reserves the right to suspend or remove a Panel Member without prior notice for any of the following reasons: 1) failure to maintain adequate insurance, 2) failure to remain in good standing



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with the State Bar, 2) involvement in unlawful activity related to the Panel Member's law practice, or 4) any other reason involving exigent circumstances that in the discretion of the LRIS Committee requires immediate suspension or removal without prior notice. Upon a determination that grounds exist for suspension or removal of the Panel Member without prior notice, the LRIS Committee shall direct a written notice to the Panel Member describing the specific nature of the violation and the panel or panels from which the Panel Member has been suspended or removed, except that the failure to maintain insurance and the failure to remain in good standing with the State Bar shall result in automatic suspension, and will be effective even without notice. A Panel Member who has received a notice of suspension or removal has the right to file an objection within twenty (20) calendar days and thereafter to appear before the LRIS Committee and present information and evidence pertinent to the alleged grounds for suspension or removal. A decision of the Committee to suspend or remove a Panel Member may be appealed to the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Board of Directors.

- 7.4 As an alternative to suspension or removal from one or all of the panel(s) following a complaint or complaints received from referred Clients, at its sole discretion, the Committee may initiate contact with the Panel Member to rectify specific problems identified in one or more complaints received from Client(s) referred to the Panel Member. A Remedial Action Plan ("Plan") may be developed by the Committee and imposed as a requirement for continued panel membership. If the specific area complained of is not improved within the time period specified by the Committee in its Plan, the Committee may, at its sole discretion, suspend or remove the Panel Member pursuant to the procedures set forth in Sections 7.2 and 7.3 above.
- 7.5 Should any litigation be commenced between LRIS and a Panel Member regarding the rights and obligations of either party, the prevailing party in such litigation shall be entitled, in addition to such other relief as may be granted, to a reasonable sum for attorney's fees and court costs.

VIII. CLIENT RELATIONS AND CONTACT

- 8.1 LRIS reserves the right to communicate directly with and obtain documentation from all persons who have sought a referral through LRIS, whether actually referred to a Panel Member or not, and if referred, whether the referral was accepted, or not. LRIS may communicate with and obtain documentation (including but not limited to any and all billing statements) from such persons for any lawful purpose, including, but not limited to the purpose of determining the following:



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- 0.01 The Client's satisfaction with the Panel Member's handling of the case and whether the Client felt the fee charged was reasonable.
 - 0.02 The nature and status of the fee being charged by the Panel Member to whom the Client was referred.
 - 0.03 The nature and quality of legal services provided by the Panel Member to whom the Client was referred.
 - 0.04 The Panel Member's qualification for membership as set forth in Section III of these rules.
- 8.2 LRIS shall advise Clients referred to Panel Members that unresolved complaints must be submitted to the State Bar of California Lawyer Referral Service Certification Program, c/o State Bar of California, 180 Howard Street, San Francisco, California 94105-1639, (415) 538-2100.

IX. RULE CHANGES

9.1 Adoption and Amendment of Rules

- 0.01 Adoption of Rules. These Rules shall be effective subject to the following conditions:
 - 0.01.1 Approved by the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Board of Directors and the LRIS Governing Committee.
 - 0.01.2 A copy of said Rules shall be forwarded to the State Bar for their records and review.
- 0.02 Amendment of Rules. These Rules may be amended by the LRIS Committee, subject to the approval of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association Board of Directors, for the purpose of complying with law and/or rules promulgated by the State Bar or for the purpose of improving the quality of the operations and services of the LRIS.