MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE

Special Education Program Panel FAQs

Who can join the panel?

Experienced special education advocates, consultants, and attorneys.

How do I join the panel?

Complete the application at https://mvlslaw.org/volunteer/volunteer-sign-up/. Once MVLS has reviewed your application, you will be notified if you have been added to the panel, or if there are additional steps you need to take.

How do I get paid for my services?

MVLS pays panel members on a quarterly basis. To be paid, a panel member must timely provide an invoice (a template will be provided to panel members). The required information must be completed. If the invoice is complete, MVLS will pay at the next quarter via check or direct deposit.

How much funds are available?

When a child qualifies for services, up to $5,000 will be set aside for provided services. While each child is capped at $20,000 during their K-12 education, Special Education Funds are limited. If the child needs additional panel member services above $5,000, they will have to reapply for additional funding, however there is no guarantee additional funds will be available.

What rate may I charge?

Advocates, consultants, and attorneys may charge their normal rate up to $200. No work provided will be paid at a rate higher than $200.

How do I match with a Special Education Program client?

Once you have been added to the panel, your contact information will be added to a referral list. When a client is found eligible for services, they will be provided the list. It is up to the client to contact those on the referral list to find a match. Once you and the client have matched, the client must contact us, and we will confirm placement with you before we assign the matter. No services provided prior to officially notifying MVLS will be eligible for payment.

What services are available through the special education program?

Generally, the program is intended to support families with IEP proceedings and other advocacy. One of the following circumstances must exist for a family to be able to participate in the Special Education Program.

- The school is proposing a more or less restrictive placement and the family disagrees
- The school is proposing a reduction in instructional or related services and the family disagrees
- The school has suspended or otherwise removed the child from school for more than 10 days
- The school has requested a due process hearing
- The school has restrained the child or placed them in seclusion more than 10 times
- The school has proposed to enroll the child in an alternative education program and the family disagrees
- The family's native language is not English and they would like assistance with navigating the special education needs for the child.

What if I need some assistance or questions answered through this process?

MVLS offers training videos and documents that will help with this process. We also offer mentors that can answer any questions and provide guidance along the way. You may also reach out to our Special Education Project Manager or Advocate.