MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE

What is MVLS' Special Education Program?

The Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS) is pleased to share that it will be launching its Special Education Program this fall. MVLS is currently accepting panel member applications for advocates, consultants, and attorneys. Panel members must have a significant amount of experience working on special education matters. Once an application is received, it will be reviewed to determine if the individual has sufficient special education experience to join the panel. All applicants will be contacted to confirm if they have been added to panel, if additional information is needed, or if they do not have the requisite experience.

Once an individual is added to the panel, they will be eligible to match with income-qualifying clients who are seeking assistance in IEP and school discipline matters. Panel members will receive up to $200 per hour for work provided to the MVLS client. More details regarding the placement, payment limitations, and other program details will be shared during the application acceptance process.

The funding for this project is from the passage of HB 903, Education – Access to Attorneys, Advocates, and Consultants for Special Education Program and Fund – Established.

One of the following criteria must be met to make a child potentially eligible for assistance through the 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.

To access the Program's Frequently Asked Questions, go to https://mvlslaw.org/volunteer/special-education-resources/.

To apply to join the Special Education Program panel, complete an application at https://mvlslaw.org/special-education-project-panel-member/. MVLS staff will review your application and notify you of next steps. For questions about the Special Education Program, contact Payton Aldridge, Special Education Staff Attorney at paldridge@mvlslaw.org or 443-451-4063 or D'Khyra McFadden, Special Education Program Advocate, at dmcfadden@mvlslaw.org or 443-451-4096.