

SBLC Law Day Clinic for LLC Formation

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Soon, an exciting event will bring together the Lewis & Clark Law School Small Business Legal Clinic (SBLC) and volunteers from the YLS. On Thursday, April 30, to commemorate Law Day, the SBLC and the YLS will hold an LLC formation clinic at the SBLC in downtown Portland.

Law Day, a national day promoted by the American Bar Association, highlights the pivotal role of law in our society. Traditionally, the YLS Service to the Public Committee has organized events on or around Law Day that are inspired by that year's Law Day theme. This year's Law Day theme is "Your Vote, Your Voice, Our Democracy: The 19th Amendment at 100." In order to celebrate and foster women's empowerment, event planners will focus on serving low-income women entrepreneurs.

The event, named the SBLC Law Day Clinic for LLC Formation, will be a dynamic version of the SBLC's well-established Pro Bono Project. Like numerous clients who are served through the Pro Bono Project on a regular basis, many clients served through the event will also be immigrants and people of color.

The SBLC will collaborate with organizations like Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon (MESO), Livelihood NW, and the Portland Mercado/Hacienda CDC to recruit over two dozen clients for the event. The SBLC will screen potential clients to determine if they have a strong interest in LLC formation, and will emphasize that volunteer attorneys are only expected to handle basic LLC formation tasks. Meanwhile, the YLS will recruit over two dozen volunteer attorneys and otherwise facilitate the event.

Clients and volunteer attorneys will meet for 55-minute sessions on Thursday, April 30 from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the SBLC in downtown Portland. Students from Lewis & Clark Law School will have the opportunity to gain valuable insights into attorney-client interactions by shadowing some of these sessions.

Each volunteer attorney will assist each client with one to four basic LLC formation tasks. These tasks will be: (1) ensuring that an LLC is the right business entity for the client; (2) filing Articles of Organization with the Oregon Secretary of State; (3) drafting and explaining an operating agreement; and (4) filing for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) with the IRS.

Some of these tasks, such as drafting and explaining an operating agreement, may need to be handled after the initial 55-minute session. However, any remaining work may be completed at a later date, to be decided by volunteer attorneys and clients. The estimated time commitment is around four to ten hours, depending on the experience of the volunteer attorney, the number of LLC members and the complexity of the operating agreement.

The SBLC will provide volunteer attorneys with a standard representation agreement used in the SBLC's Pro Bono Project. Volunteer attorneys may use this agreement or their own. Regardless of which agreement is used, the agreement should clarify that the volunteer attorney is only responsible for the LLC formation matter that they choose to undertake during the initial 55-minute session.

The SBLC will also provide volunteer attorneys with ample resources on LLC formation, so no prior experience with LLC formation is required. Each of the four LLC formation tasks mentioned above will be described in a clear, step-by-step guide or summary. Volunteer attorneys with little to no LLC formation experience may also attend an SBLC training on LLC Formation, presented by Susan Felstiner, SBLC Clinical Professor, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 23. This CLE seminar is free and only available to attorneys who plan to volunteer at the April 30 event.

Aside from being licensed to practice law in Oregon, volunteer attorneys need only be courteous, punctual, and enthusiastic about pro bono work. Volunteer attorneys who lack their own PLF coverage are automatically covered by the PLF Pro Bono Coverage because the SBLC's Pro Bono Project is an OSB Certified Pro Bono Program. To volunteer at the April 30 event and to attend the optional April 23 LLC Formation training, contact Ryan Mosier at ryan@mbabar.org.