



Women's Legal Service (SA) Inc Volunteer Information Kit

What is the Women's Legal Service SA Inc?

The Women's Legal Service SA Inc (WLSSA) receives funding from the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department to provide legal advice and representation for women in areas of unmet need, to deliver appropriate community legal education and to participate in law reform activities.

WLSSA is a community based organisation run by a Management Committee with a small paid staff team and many volunteers.

The following concepts characterise WLSSA:

- WLSSA is a specialist community legal centre with a focus on women.
- WLSSA operates on a state wide basis.
- WLSSA positions itself within a feminist political framework.
- WLSSA is committed to a proactive approach in its work.
- WLSSA strives for structural change as an essential outcome of its work.

What we do at the Women's Legal Service

1) Direct legal services with women

- face to face and telephone legal advice & information
- minor legal assistance
- legal representation

2) Community Legal Education

- question and answer sessions with groups of women
- education sessions about legal issues relevant to women
- discussion groups about the law and how it affects women

3) Social Advocacy

- make submissions to government and other policy makers regarding laws and legal issues that affect women
- provide comment on proposals for legal reform
- help women tell their stories to decision-makers, so as to effect positive changes
- work in collaboration with other organisations to increase women's access to justice, and to promote law reforms that benefit women

Where we use volunteers

We use volunteers in a variety of ways. The Women's Legal Service management committee is made up of volunteers and all the initial lobbying to government to fund the service was done by volunteers. There are several ways that women can volunteer with us:

1. Administration work including reception, typing and data entry
2. Provision of legal advice and information
3. Project work
4. Management
5. Other work depending on the needs of the service and the skills possessed by individual volunteers.

Insurance

WLSSA has two kinds of insurance which are relevant to volunteers:-

1. **Professional Indemnity Insurance** which covers staff and volunteers. Volunteer lawyers do not need to have their own insurance to work here. All staff and volunteers are required to familiarise themselves with the National Risk Management Guide.
2. **Public Liability Insurance** covers staff and volunteers if they have accidents while working here for some loss of income and for some out of pocket expenses. Limits do apply and volunteers are encouraged to read the policy guide

Out of pocket expenses

Volunteers incur costs like transport, meals and more when they work. We will pay volunteers \$15 per shift to cover these costs.

Membership

It is our policy to encourage all volunteers to become members of the Women's Legal Service. Volunteer members must join as individual women and cannot represent another organisation or private firm in their work with us.

Benefits of Volunteering

Benefits to the Service

- Utilisation of the skills and energy of volunteers;
- Enhances the WLSSA community base; &
- Increases the amount and diversity of work WLSSA can accomplish.

Benefits to volunteers

- Learn more about the law and legal system;
- Improve the understanding of legal issues within the community;
- Make a difference by assisting disadvantaged women to understand and enforce their legal rights; &
- Enable legal information/advice to be more accessible to the community.

Legal Volunteer Job Description (Information and Advice Services)

Position Title: Legal Information/Advice Help Line Volunteer

Criteria for volunteer work

1. Have well developed interpersonal & communication skills;
2. Ability to contribute positively as a team member;
3. Ability to provide accurate legal advice and / or information to women;
4. An interest in providing free legal services to women and in applying feminist principles of practice; &
5. A commitment to the aims and objectives of the Women's Legal Service.

Duties

1. To provide accurate legal advice and/or information to women on the phone, face to face or both clearly and sensitively;
2. Ensure that all required statistical information is recorded on the appropriate form;
3. Seek supervision or clarification as required;
4. To participate in training and appraisal programs as required;
5. A minimum time commitment of either:
 - One shift per week for day volunteers
 - Once a fortnight or monthly on Tuesday between 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm for evening volunteers.
 - Or as negotiated with Director;
6. Any other duties as requested by the Director from time to time.

Specific information for volunteer advisers with the joint after hours WIS / WLSSA phone advice program

- Volunteers in this program must hold an unrestricted practicing certificate.
- All statistical data needs to reach us by the Friday following your shift.

Applying to volunteer with WLSSA

Upon applying for a volunteer position, applicants are required to:

- Submit an application form, resume and any other supporting documentation
- Attend an interview to discuss the mutual benefits that may be achieved
- When commencing, sign the confidentiality agreement and WLSSA Principles of Practice;
- Attend a general training session with other volunteers as required.
- Spend time observing practices and being orientated to the office according to the requirements of the position (volunteers will be advised of the time required in their interview).

Forward the Volunteer Application Form, with your resume to:

The Director
Women's Legal Service (SA) Inc
151 Franklin Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Email: wls@wlssa.org.au

If you require more information about volunteering before completing your application form or prior to the interview, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Principles of Practice - Women's Legal Service SA

VISION

The Women's Legal Service aims to achieve justice for women at an individual, community and political level.

To this end we have developed the following principles of practice. These guide our practice in all areas and ensure that we deal with the structural causes of women's inequality and increase access to justice for all women.

1. As a feminist service the WLSSA will work towards ending women's disadvantaged position in society and in the legal system. We will strive to change the structures which deny women equal access to the legal system and to social justice and address the myth that women are to blame for their legal problems.
2. Meaningful social change begins with a strong community base made up of individual women. We recognise every woman as an agent for change both in her own life and in society generally.
3. Women need a safe place to seek legal help and information. We will create and maintain a safe, respectful, participatory and just environment which values all women's differences and shared experiences.
4. Legal needs are only one part of women's lives and needs. We will provide a holistic service that recognises women have many facets to their lives.
5. We will listen and allow our clients to tell their whole story in their own way.
6. Women are the experts in their own situations and we will respect their decisions with sensitivity to women's unique cultural backgrounds and social experiences.
7. Management by women is essential to ensure the service is sensitive to the specific needs of women.
8. Women's participation in the law and in the WLSSA will increase their knowledge and their power in society.
9. We will create and maintain a safe, respectful, participative and just environment for all staff who work for the Women's Legal Service whether paid or unpaid.
10. We will aim to act as a focal point for social advocacy and expertise in the law as it affects women.
11. The Women's Legal Service is part of the broader women's movement and we value the contribution other services can make to our development.