

**INTEGRATED BAR OF THE PHILIPPINES
NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEGAL AID**

**LAWYER OF THE DAY INITIATIVE (LODI)
Implementation Guidelines**

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court, pursuant to its constitutional mandate under Article VIII, Section 5(5) of the 1987 Constitution, has promulgated A.M. No. 22-11-01-SC, known as the Rules on Unified Legal Aid Service (ULAS Rules), which seeks to establish a uniform, mandatory, and effective framework for the delivery of *pro bono* legal services by Covered Lawyers to Qualified Beneficiaries;

WHEREAS, the ULAS Rules provide that all Covered Lawyers shall render not less than sixty (60) hours of *Pro Bono* Legal Aid Services within the 36-month Compliance Period, with such services to include representation in courts or quasi-judicial bodies, legal consultation, counseling, assistance in legal documentation, and participation in accredited legal outreach missions;

WHEREAS, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), through the National Center for Legal Aid (NCLA), is tasked with the implementation, oversight, and coordination of legal aid initiatives across all IBP Chapters, in line with the ULAS Rules and Section 55, Article VIII of the IBP By-Laws;

WHEREAS, the NCLA Operations Manual emphasizes the duty of every IBP Chapter to establish and maintain a functional Legal Aid Office that ensures legal assistance is accessible to the marginalized, the indigent, and underserved members of the community, and highlights both traditional and developmental legal aid services;

WHEREAS, the effective administration of legal aid requires both structure and regularity, and the institution of a Lawyer of the Day Initiative, hereby referred to as “LODI”, provides a practical and uniform mechanism to facilitate daily access to *pro bono* legal assistance in all IBP Chapters nationwide;

WHEREAS, it is imperative to clearly outline the duties, responsibilities, and accountability of Lawyers of the Day (LOD) to ensure faithful compliance with the objectives of ULAS and uphold the ethical standards of the legal profession;

WHEREAS, effective implementation requires clear procedural, documentary, and supervisory protocols to ensure that all services rendered under the Initiative are adequately monitored, documented, and credited for purposes of ULAS compliance;

WHEREAS, a Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of the NCLA and representatives of several IBP Chapters of various sizes was created and tasked to refine and finalize these Guidelines by gathering insight into best practices, experiences and operational concerns.

WHEREAS, the TWG is composed of the following members:

NCLA National Director:	Atty. Pitero M. Reig
NCLA Over-all Deputy Director:	Atty. Manuel Joseph B. Ibañez III
NCLA Deputy Director for ULAS:	Atty. Vincent Patrick R. Cruz
Members:	Atty. Alma T. Okko <i>IBP Baguio – Benguet Chapter</i>
	Atty. Darwin A. Delatado <i>IBP Bataan Chapter</i>
	Atty. John Eric S. Lim <i>IBP Bohol Chapter</i>
	Atty. Rosario R. Bautista Atty. Alain O. Pascual <i>IBP Bulacan Chapter</i>
	Atty. Fe Rosario P. Pejo-Buelva <i>IBP Camarines Sur Chapter</i>
	Atty. Benedict D. Ontal <i>IBP Davao Chapter</i>
	Atty. Nikki Joy F. Barroga <i>IBP Ilocos Norte Chapter</i>
	Atty. Gertrude Joy D. Gammonac <i>IBP Kalinga Chapter</i>
	Atty. Abdulrahman A. Rasad <i>IBP Lanao Del Sur Chapter</i>

Atty. Alfred Ramon Jose Ma. X.B. Nolasco
IBP Makati Chapter

Atty. Nelson H. Manalili
IBP Manila IV Chapter

Atty. Noriel D. Diaz
IBP Northern Samar Chapter

Atty. Arlyn R. Retardo
Atty. John Edward M. Garcia
IBP Marinduque Chapter

Atty. Kristine Keith N. Colle
IBP Pampanga Chapter

Atty. Marie Cielo E. Ceñidoza
IBP Quezon City Chapter

Atty. Dan Joseph L. Cruz
IBP RSM Rizal Chapter

Secretariat:

Mr. Aivan Ray D.C Argel
Mr. Kurt Irvin C. Bermejo
Mr. Edmar C. Cuntapay
National Center for Legal Aid

Volunteers:

Ms. Sophia Angelica M. Bongon
Ms. Bianca Rosario J. Maniquis
Ms. Michelle Ann D. Mendoza
Mr. Jesus Venancio Y. Viray
Villanueva Gabionza & Dy Law Offices

WHEREAS, considering the day-to-day and recurring nature of the LODI, the NCLA shall apply for continuing accreditation with the ULAS Interim Board pursuant to ULAS Advisory No. 2, S. 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, these Guidelines are hereby adopted by the IBP through its National Center for Legal Aid (NCLA), for uniform implementation by all IBP Chapters nationwide

Article I

PURPOSE

Section 1. *Statement of Policy.* – The IBP adopts the Lawyer of the Day Initiative (LODI) as a nationwide program to promote and institutionalize meaningful, efficient, and accountable delivery of *pro bono* legal services through the NCLA and its Chapters pursuant to the ULAS Rules (A.M. No. 22-11-01-SC), the IBP Manual, and the NCLA Operations Manual.

Section 2. *Objectives.* – The LODI aims:

1. To ensure strict adherence to the mandatory *pro bono* legal aid service requirement under the ULAS Rules by providing a consistent and monitored platform for service delivery;
2. To institutionalize a standard, accessible, and functional legal aid desk system in the NCLA and across all IBP Chapters, anchored on accountability, service availability, and coordination;
3. To promote meaningful and immediate access to quality legal assistance, especially to the indigent, marginalized, and vulnerable sectors of society;
4. To foster a culture of volunteerism and ethical lawyering consistent with the legal profession’s duty to advance justice and human dignity;
5. To provide a mechanism for efficient scheduling, supervision, and compliance verification of *pro bono* work.

Section 3. *Covered Lawyer.* – For the purpose of these guidelines, a “Covered Lawyer” shall refer to refer to the following members of the Philippine Bar:

- (i) whose membership status with the IBP is not terminated,
- (ii) who are not retired in accordance with the IBP By-Laws, and
- (iii) who are not excluded under Section 5 of the ULAS Rules.

Additionally, a Covered Lawyer must likewise be a member in good standing of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) and must have complied with the latest MCLE (Mandatory Continuing Legal Education) requirement pursuant to B.M. No. 850 and subsequent issuances. The NCLA or the IBP Chapter concerned shall verify the lawyer’s good standing and MCLE compliance prior to confirming any LOD assignment.

All Covered Lawyers may volunteer or be assigned to render service under the LODI through a rotation-based appointment system maintained by the NCLA and the Chapters.

Article II

LEGAL AID DESK

Section 1. *Legal Aid Desk/s.* – The NCLA and the IBP Chapters shall maintain at least one (1) legal aid desk subject to the schedule of operations under Section 2 hereof.

The NCLA shall establish its legal aid desk/s at the NCLA Office while the IBP Chapters may establish their respective legal aid desk/s either at their Chapter Offices or Legal Aid Offices or at any suitable venue for the purpose.

Section 2. *Schedule of Operations.* –

(a) The NCLA, Mega and Large Chapters shall operate the legal aid desk/s on a full-day schedule from Monday to Friday, divided into the following three (3) shifts:

SHIFT #1	8:00 AM to 11:00 AM
SHIFT #2	11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
SHIFT #3	2:00 PM to 5:00 PM

(b) Small, Medium and Micro Chapters may adopt alternate or reduced shift schedules, subject to the approval of the NCLA, based on their operational capacity and needs.

(c) The NCLA and the IBP Chapters may establish legal aid desk/s on weekends and/or holidays depending on their operational capacity and needs.

Section 3. *Staffing and Supervision.* – The legal aid desk/s shall be staffed by a LOD during all operational hours. The Chapter Legal Aid Committee shall exercise direct supervision over the IBP Chapter’s legal aid desk/s and ensure that it is adequately supported with necessary office supplies, furniture, and signage for public visibility.

Section 4. *Specialized Legal Aid Desks.* – The NCLA and IBP Chapters may set up specialized legal aid help desk/s covering sectors such as but not limited labor, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), migrant workers, women and gender, citizens’ complaints, among others, both inside and/or outside the NCLA Office, IBP Chapter or Legal Aid Offices in partnership with local government units (LGU), government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs), Clinical Legal Education Programs (CLEP), and other organizations which render legal aid or cater to public service in general; *Provided*, that these Guidelines shall be followed and implemented in the same manner as the regular legal aid desk/s.

Section 5. *Public Information and Monthly Legal Aid Schedule.* – Public Information Materials/Advertisements informing the public of the legal services available under the ULAS and legal aid desk schedules shall be posted in the following platforms:

- (a) NCLA, Chapter or partners’ bulletin boards and/or other conspicuous places; and
- (b) Official websites and social media accounts.

Article III APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

Section 1. *Shifts.* – Assignment of shifts should be made equitably, taking into account the lawyer’s availability, previous compliance, area of expertise, and preferences where practicable.

Section 2. *Scheduling.* – The NCLA and IBP Chapters may allow scheduling of shifts *via*:

- (a) Physical sign-up roster at the NCLA or IBP Chapter office;
- (b) Google Forms or other digital scheduling tool;
- (c) The MyIBP App or the IBP *Pro Bono* Portal, if integrated; or
- (d) Any other mode subject to the approval of the NCLA.

Section 3. *Frequency of Assignment.* – A Covered Lawyer may volunteer to serve as a LOD for a maximum of one (1) shift per month. Exceptions may be granted upon written justification submitted to the NCLA or the Chapter Legal Aid Committee and approved by the NCLA National Director or Chapter President, respectively, provided that such approval is secured at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the scheduled assignment.

Section 4. *Reassignments and Cancellations.* – Requests for reassignment or cancellation must be formally communicated to the NCLA or Chapter Legal Aid Committee no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the assigned duty. In cases of emergency or unavoidable circumstances, the assigned lawyer shall notify the NCLA or Chapter Legal Aid Committee as soon as practicable and submit a written explanation thereafter.

Article IV DUTIES OF THE LAWYER OF THE DAY

Section 1. *General Responsibility.* – The LOD shall render *Pro Bono* Legal Aid Services in accordance with the ULAS Rules and Manual, the IBP-NCLA Operations Manual, and applicable provisions of the Code of Professional Responsibility and Accountability (CPRA).

Section 2. *Authorized Functions.* – During his or her assigned shift, the LOD shall conduct legal activities consistent with legal aid missions such as but not limited to:

- (a) Providing free legal consultations;

- (b) Drafting of simple legal documents; and
- (c) Notarization services in accordance with Rule 4 of the ULAS Manual.

Section 3. *Walk-In Client Procedure.* – All walk-in clients must accomplish an Interview Form in accordance with the NCLA Manual and Guidelines prior to consultation or rendering of services. Being an accredited legal aid mission as defined by the ULAS Manual, the execution and submission of a Qualified Beneficiary Declaration and Covered Lawyer’s Certification shall be dispensed with. However, should the LOD decide to take on the case for himself or herself, he or she should ensure or cause the execution of the same prior to handling the case for purposes of his or her own compliance.

Section 4. *Prohibited Acts.* – While on duty, LODs are strictly prohibited from:

- (a) Soliciting or accepting any form of compensation, gift, or remuneration for legal services rendered;
- (b) Engaging in private legal services or referral-based arrangements that involve a fee or personal interest;
- (c) Representing conflicting interests or providing legal advice beyond the scope of their competence or authority.

Article V ULAS COMPLIANCE

Section 1. *Crediting of Hours.* – Hours rendered under the LODI shall be reported as part of the Covered Lawyer’s compliance with the sixty (60) hour minimum ULAS requirement per 36-month Compliance Period.

Duty hours shall be credited even if no client is served, provided that the lawyer was present and available during the shift. A Covered Lawyer may be credited excess hours over and above his shift should his or her rendering of legal aid services, *e.g.* interview of walk-in client, spills over his or her end of shift.

The NCLA or IBP Chapter shall maintain a compliance spreadsheet for audit and cross-reference with ULAS Reports and MCLE credit applications.

Section 2. *Individual Reporting* – The LOD shall indicate the corresponding certificate of accredited activity (CAA) number in his individual compliance report pursuant to ULAS Advisory No. 2, S - 2025.

Section 3. *Conditions for Credit* – For actual duty hours to be credited under ULAS, the LOD must:

- (a) Be physically present for the entire duration of the assigned shift;
- (b) Sign the official attendance logbook indicating time of arrival and be certified as present by any NCLA Officer in the case of the NCLA or Chapter President, Chapter Legal Aid Committee Chairperson, or Authorized Officer of the Chapter Legal Aid Committee in the case of IBP Chapters, respectively; and
- (c) Submit a duly accomplished and signed Duty Report summarizing the nature of services rendered during the shift.

The Duty Report shall be in the form prescribed in **Annex “A”** of these Guidelines.

Section 4. *Monthly Report.* –The IBP Chapters shall accomplish and submit a Monthly Report to the NCLA duly signed by the Legal Aid Committee Chairperson and/or Chapter President and/or Authorized Officer/Representative of the Chapter Legal Aid Committee, indicating the attendance of the LODs for their respective shifts and summarizing the nature and number of clients assisted, the legal issues involved, and the actions taken consistent with existing reportorial requirements of the NCLA.

The NCLA shall likewise accomplish its own Monthly Report for monitoring and reportorial purposes.

The Monthly Report shall be in the form prescribed in **Annex “B”** of these Guidelines.

Section 5. *Honorarium for Continued Service Beyond ULAS Compliance.* – A Covered Lawyer who continues to render service under the LODI even after having completed the mandatory sixty (60) hours of Pro Bono Legal Aid Services required under the ULAS Rules may be granted an honorarium or allowance, subject to the availability of funds and approval by the IBP Board of Governors.

Such honorarium shall be considered a token of recognition for exemplary volunteerism and sustained participation in the Lawyer of the Day Initiative. It shall not, however, be deemed or construed as compensation for legal services rendered, which shall remain pro bono in nature and consistent with the ethical standards of the legal profession.

The grant, rate, and manner of release of the honorarium shall be determined in accordance with existing IBP financial policies and budgetary guidelines.

Article VI

ACCOUNTABILITY

Section 1. *Individual Accountability of a LOD.* – A LOD who fails to report for his or her assigned shift without justifiable cause may be subject to the following:

- (a) Temporary disqualification from future legal aid assignments; and
- (b) Forfeiture of ULAS creditable hours for the missed shift.

In the event of repeated or willful failure to report for his or her assigned shift without justifiable cause, the erring LOD may be subject to the following:

- (a) Temporary or permanent disqualification from future legal aid assignments;
- (b) Forfeiture of ULAS creditable hours for the missed shift; and
- (c) Referral to the IBP Board of Governors for disciplinary action.

Section 2. *Accountability of NCLA Officer, Legal Aid Committee Chairperson, Chapter President, Authorized Officer/Representative of the Chapter Legal Aid Committee and Legal Aid Clerk/s* – Any NCLA Officer, Legal Aid Committee Chairperson, Chapter President, Authorized Officer/Representative of the Chapter Legal Aid Committee and/or Legal Aid Clerk/s who repeatedly fails to submit a Monthly Report or deliberately or intently submits a Monthly Report with false information such as but not limited to:

- (a) Falsely certifying the appearance of a LOD despite actual non-attendance during the assigned shift;
- (b) Crediting the full shift hours to an LOD despite late arrival, leaving in the middle of the shift, early departure, or any failure to render the full duration of the assigned duty;
- (c) Intentionally providing false or inaccurate information regarding the number of walk-in clients assisted during the shift.
- (d) Committing any other act of misrepresentation or omission that undermines the integrity, accuracy, or accountability of ULAS compliance records, may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action under CPRA, and such other sanctions as may be imposed by the ULASO or the IBP.

Section 3. *Spontaneous Audit and Compliance Checks.* – To ensure strict adherence to the obligations under these Guidelines, the ULASO or the NCLA may conduct spontaneous audit and compliance checks on any IBP Chapter or LOD without prior notice. These may include physical inspections of the legal aid desk/s, random verification of duty logs, and interviews with court personnel or requesting parties.

The objective of such unannounced audits shall be to determine whether:

- (a) The assigned LOD is physically present and performing their duties;
- (b) The legal aid desk/s is functional, accessible, and in regular operation; and
- (c) The IBP Chapter maintains accurate and updated records of LOD assignments and appearances.

Article VII
EFFECTIVITY

Section 1. *Effectivity.* – These Guidelines shall take effect upon approval by the Board of Governors, and any previous resolution, policy or order inconsistent herewith shall be deemed modified or amended accordingly.

Section 2. *Amendment and/or Modification.* – The NCLA may, at any time, amend and/or modify the provisions of these Guidelines subject to the approval of the IBP Board of Governors, unless otherwise provided under the ULAS Rules or by subsequent issuances of the Supreme Court or the Unified Legal Aid Service Office (ULASO).