



# National Lawyers Guild

San Francisco Bay Area Chapter  
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<http://www.nlgsf.org/>

## **Working with the NLG to Plan Legal Support for Demonstrations**

### **What is the National Lawyers Guild?**

The NLG was formed in 1937 and aims to unite lawyers, law students, and legal workers "in the service of the people, to the end that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests." We support law students to become radical lawyers, and we are active on a wide range of issues including support for military resisters, immigrants' rights, stopping U.S. torture, developing Know Your Rights trainings and materials for the transgender community, Muslim communities, and other targeted populations, supporting labor struggles, litigating against corporate globalization, and more.

### **What is the Demonstrations Committee?**

The San Francisco Bay Area Demonstrations Committee started in 1984 in order to organize legal support for protests against the Democratic Convention, and has supported most Bay Area progressive demonstrations and actions ever since. In 2003, we worked with Direct Action to Stop the War to coordinate legal defense of 3,000 people arrested in antiwar protests, and got virtually all the San Francisco charges dismissed, and since then, thousands more. We have helped overhaul both San Francisco and Oakland police crowd control policy.

Within our capacity, the Demonstrations Committee will provide legal support for any local progressive group that opposes racism, sexism, classism and heterosexism. In addition to San Francisco and Oakland, we've supported actions in Contra Costa County, and occasionally in more distant locations such as Davis, Sacramento and Livermore. It is important to keep in mind that NLGSF has only two paid staff to support all of its work, and the Demonstrations Committee is composed of volunteer activists.

## What is the role of legal support?

### The NLG generally CAN do the following:

#### **Before the Demo:**

- Provide the legal component of direct action training;
- Meet with organizers to answer legal questions regarding planned actions, assess legal needs, and discuss what you will need to do to plan legal support for your action;
- Train members of your group as legal observers;
- Train members of your group in other legal support roles for the day of the action, including staffing the legal hotline and doing "jail outtake" to gather arrestees' information.

#### **During the Demo:**

- Provide legal observers to monitor the police, document arrests and police misconduct, and help communicate with off-scene legal support regarding arrests;
- Line up lawyers who will be "on call" to deal with arrests, jail release, and immediate court hearings. If arrestees are booked in jail, joint coordination from NLG and organizers is essential through release and initial court date;
- If arranged in advance, provide a legal hotline number in the Guild office, 285-1011, and help staff this number in conjunction with demonstration organizers.

#### **After the Demo:**

- NLG will find lawyers to meet with and defend arrestees on criminal charges. We can usually find lawyers willing to work for free, at least through pre-trial proceedings in misdemeanor cases (see "Is it Free?" below.)
- After a large mass arrest, NLG will help organize a follow up legal meeting with arrestees, if necessary;
- NLG follows up on police misconduct issues through media and policy work, dialogue with the police and other agencies, complaints with civilian review agencies where appropriate, and on occasion, pursues civil action in the courts.

#### **The NLG and NLG legal observers generally do NOT:**

- Communicate with the police on behalf of the demonstrators, except in an emergency or some particular situation where this has been agreed beforehand. We ask the organizing group to designate your own police liaisons or spokespeople;
- Help secure permits. You can do this yourself. NLG and/or ACLU may help where permits are denied;
- Collect arrestees' names and information – we expect organizers to gather information beforehand and to do jail outtake. (See "What Do We Want From You?" below.)
- Handle jail support logistics such as picking people up when they are released, contacting employers etc. - we expect organizers to do this (See "What Do We Want From You?" below.)
- We cannot provide bail or bonds.
- We cannot guarantee finding a free lawyer in every criminal case, particularly where charges are serious, through jury trial.
- We do not generally make individual civil referrals. Bay Area PoliceWatch is set up as a police misconduct lawyer referral service. The Demonstrations Committee's first priority is immediate response, criminal defense, and addressing egregious systemic abuses.

#### **Is it free?**

NLG lawyers will handle an initial court appearance (arraignment) free and if the charges are minor we've usually been able to find lawyers to work pro bono (free), at least up until trial. But we cannot guarantee a free lawyer through motions and trial in every case. When the arrestees are low income and qualify for appointed counsel, we generally try to arrange for Guild lawyers to be court appointed (paid by the court) and/or to work with sympathetic lawyers from the Public Defender's office and the conflicts panel.

## What do we expect from you?

- The organizing group should notify the NLG of planned actions as far in advance as possible by:  
Calling 415-285-5067, emailing [contact@nlgsf.org](mailto:contact@nlgsf.org),  
Or by filling out this form: <http://www.nlgsf.org/resources/legalsupport.php>
- We can't guarantee legal support with less than a week's notice (although if it is an emergency mobilization, we will try.)
- If you anticipate arrests, work with the Demonstrations Committee and Guild staff to plan for a legal support team. We will ask you to either set up your own legal hotline or to help staff the Guild's legal hotline (**415-285-1011**) until everyone is out of jail (sometimes, several days.) We will provide training. The legal support team answering the hotline provides a central information point and coordinates between the NLG lawyers, legal observers, and support people. The team tracks everyone in custody until they are all released, so that no one falls through the cracks. The legal phone number must be able to receive collect calls from jail and cannot be a cell phone, although the hotline can be "call-forwarded" to a cell phone.
- For planned actions, gather a list of people risking arrest in advance, with complete legal names and dates of birth. Gather information to anticipate special problems such as medical needs, immigration problems, juveniles, out of state ID, ID in a different gender, warrants, etc. You should have a contact person at the demo, preferably with a cell phone, who has this list and will be in touch with the on-call lawyers and the legal support team / NLG office. We suggest using the "INTAKE" form attached as an appendix to this pamphlet.
- Train people considering risking arrest so they know what to expect. The NLG can provide a legal portion to a direct-action training.
- If your group is considering using solidarity tactics in jail, discuss these in advance and communicate with the NLG about your legal support needs in relation to solidarity.
- Make sure that people who plan to risk arrest have support people who are planning to avoid arrest, who are prepared to deal with the arrestees' children, pets, jobs, transportation from jail, and other logistical needs. In some situations support people may also be able to help arrestees obtain release without bail by gathering community references.
- **If arrests occur, it is crucial that we quickly obtain a complete list of the arrestees with complete legal names, contact info, citation numbers, and court dates. Action organizers should station support people outside the jail or police station to have arrestees fill out the "JAIL OUTTAKE" form, attached to this document. This applies when arrestees are released the same day with a citation, as is typical in the Bay Area.**
- Following the arrests, set up an email list and otherwise facilitate communication between NLG lawyers and arrestees. It's important for this to happen as soon as possible after the action so that we can give the arrestees important information.
- Finally, please pass the hat for the National Lawyers Guild at your pre- or post-action meeting; we are volunteer lawyers, law students and legal workers and rely on donations from arrestees to help fund overhead costs for this important work.

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**ARRESTEE INTAKE FORM**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ am [ ] pm [ ]

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>PERSONAL INFORMATION</u>	<u>ARREST INFORMATION</u>
First name: _____	Date Arrested: _____
Legal last name: _____	Time of Arrest: _____ AM [ ] PM [ ]
Preferred name: _____	Incident Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____	Location: _____
Gender ID: _____	Charge(s): _____
Phone 1: ( ) ____ - ____ (cell? Y[ ] N [ ])	Arresting Officer: _____
Phone 2: ( ) ____ - ____ (cell? Y[ ] N [ ])	Agency/Badge #: _____
Email: _____ @ _____	Incident ID #: _____
Street address: _____	Citation #: _____
City, State, Zip: _____	Witness Name: _____
	Witness Phone: _____

<u>MEDICAL INFORMATION</u>	<u>JAIL INFORMATION</u>
Medical Condition(s): _____	Facility Name: _____
_____	Booking Number: _____
Meds/Dosage Instructions: _____	Exact Location: _____
_____	
Doctor Name: _____	<u>COURT INFO:</u>
Doctor Phone: ( ) _____	Date Scheduled: _____ Time: _____
Notes: _____	Location: _____

<u>OUTSIDE SUPPORT</u>	<u>LAWYER</u>
Affinity Group (if applicable): _____	Lawyer Name: _____
Support Contact #1: _____ ( ) _____	Lawyer Agency: _____
Support Contact #2: _____ ( ) _____	Phone #1: _____
	Phone #2 (or fax): _____

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**ARRESTEE OUTAKE FORM**

This information is being collected in anticipation of litigation. Filling out this form will assist the legal working group in helping arrestees to organize their legal defense. Any field may be left blank, but the more information we have, the better prepared the legal team can be. Items with (\*) are most valuable. This information will be held in strict confidence.

<u><b>PERSONAL INFORMATION:</b></u>	
(*) Legal Name:	_____
(*) Preferred Name:	_____
(*) Phone #1: ( ) _____ - _____	Extension: (_____) _____
Phone #2 (cell?): ( ) _____ - _____	Extension: (_____) _____
Fax: ( ) _____ - _____	
(*) Email:	_____@_____
Street Address:	_____ [ &/or POBox ] _____
City, State, Zip:	_____, _____ - _____
(*) Date of Birth: (m: xx) _____ (d: xx) _____ (y: xxxx) _____	
Is arrestee a U.S. Citizen?:	YES [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] NO [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]
Is arrestee a minor?:	YES [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] NO [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]
<u><b>ARREST INFORMATION:</b></u>	
Time of Arrest:	_____ AM [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] PM [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]
Location of Arrest (address/cross streets):	_____ at/near _____
City Where Arrested:	_____
(*) Charge(s) [PC#]:	_____
Arresting Officer Name: (from citation)	_____
Arresting Officer Badge #: (from citation)	_____
Incident ID#:	_____
(*) Citation #:	_____
Jail Facility:	_____
(*) Court Date: (m-d-y)	_____
Felony? YES: [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]	NO: [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]
Was Arrestee Injured? YES: [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]	NO: [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]