



## CLEAN SLATE DECLARATION INTERVIEW OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

- Explain again who you are and how you hope to help them, including any additional explanation of the need for a declaration if the client as needed.  
Stress the confidential nature of your communications
- If you haven't already, confirm the client's contact information, whether they prefer phone or email (if they have it), and whether they can use Zoom. They will need to see copies of their declaration and other materials. Find out if they can open those from email. If not, we will need to mail them.
- Set a time frame. 30-45 minutes should do it for today, but we will need to have a follow-up conversation to go over the declaration
- Explain the client's remedies and the filing process using Client Summary.
  - i. Timing: Once the declarations are complete, a Legal Services attorney will contact them to review their entire file and explain the court process to them. Because the courts are operating with minimal staff, we can't give an estimate of when the petitions will be considered.
  - ii. Get in touch with us for any questions you can't answer. It's ok to say that you volunteered to help with the declaration only, and that you may need to go back to the experts for answers about remedies and court procedures.
- Give an overview of interview, i.e. "I will be asking you questions about what was happening in your life at the time of your convictions, what has changed since then, and how having a criminal record has affected you."
- You may want to forewarn them that the questions may seem repetitive, but that it really helpful to capture as much information as possible.



## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do you want to clean up your record?  
(Examples: for a fresh start, to expand your job opportunities, help with housing, for personal reasons?)
2. What was happening in your life when you were arrested/convicted? Were there circumstances that made your life especially difficult at that time?
3. Were there any circumstances in your life growing up that might have had an impact on your actions as an adult?  
(Examples: only use if the client asks you to explain the question: household abuse, lack of family support, exposure to substance use at an early age, a challenging community environment?)
4. How did your actions hurt you, or those around you? How do you feel about them now?  
(If they do not use language indicating regret, ask directly: Do you take full responsibility for your criminal convictions? Or, do you regret your actions? If they don't or if they claim innocence, move on.)
5. What have you done to turn your life around since your convictions?  
(Examples: attended a rehabilitation program, started supporting a family, got your children back, got a job, vocational training or furthered your education).
6. What would be different in your life if you had a clean slate? Or, what opportunities could you take advantage of if your criminal record was expunged?  
(Examples: expanded job opportunities, housing, ability to obtain a professional license, the chance to put the past behind you?).
7. What does the court need to know about who you are today? Why is granting this relief the right thing to do for you, your family and your community?  
(Examples: any social or religious affiliations, volunteer or advocacy work, support groups, hobbies or any activities that enrich your life, or just a personal statement of who you are today, and how those around you view you)
8. Is there anyone in your life would support your application by writing a letter of support?  
(Examples: clergy, family members, a supervisor, sponsor, volunteer organization, or other community member).



9. Do you have any documents you want to provide to support your petition? (examples: certificates of completion of job training, employee appreciation or other awards, school transcripts, completion of a recovery program, or others).
  
10. Catch-all: Is there anything else you would like to tell the judge about why you deserve a second chance?



### **WRAPPING UP THE INTERVIEW**

- Explain that they will need to gather letters of support and any documents that will aid their petitions and bring to their appointment with LSNC. If they are able to e-mail them to you beforehand so that you can specifically reference them in the declaration, that is ideal.
- Confirm the best way to contact them, and that their contact information (e-mail, phone, address) is all current.
- Explain you will e-mail (or mail if preferable for them) a draft of their declaration for their review and edits as needed, and will text them when you send the e-mail so they know to look for it. Example of follow-up e-mail or letter here.
- Explain that the courts are closed and not processing petitions, but that when business is back to normal someone from LSNC will be in touch to schedule an appointment to complete and file their petitions.