

**WORKING WITH THE NLG**



**TO PLAN LEGAL SUPPORT  
FOR DEMONSTRATIONS**

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

The National Lawyers Guild (NLG) was founded in 1937 as the first racially integrated national bar association, "in the service of the people, to the end that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests." Activists, legal workers (broadly defined), lawyers, law students, and jailhouse lawyers are all now eligible to join the Bay Area NLG Chapter. We are active on a wide range of issues including fighting political repression; immigrants' rights; opposing mass incarceration; supporting military resisters; labor struggles; international human rights; indigenous resistance; and more.

## **What is the Demo 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, from antiwar protests to Occupy, Black Lives Matter, and anti-fascist actions. We have gotten thousands of demo-related criminal cases dismissed and been instrumental in overhauling San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley police crowd control and mass arrest policies and practices.

Within our capacity, the Demonstrations Committee will provide legal support for any local progressive group that opposes racism, sexism, classism, heteropatriarchy and transphobia. In addition to San Francisco and Alameda Counties, we've supported actions in all other Bay Area counties, and occasionally in more distant locations such as Sacramento and Livermore. However, we are simply a group of volunteer activists, not a legal services agency, and cannot always meet all legal needs.

## **Is it free?**

We can usually mobilize NLG volunteer lawyers to handle initial court appearances, and NLG lawyers often continue to defend activists pro bono (free). But we cannot guarantee a free lawyer through motions and trial in every case. We often work with sympathetic lawyers from the Public Defender's office and the county bar conflicts panel, so that the court will pay the cost of defense for those arrestees who are eligible (low income.)

And while we are primarily unpaid activists like you, the NLG is a grassroots membership organization that relies on donations for our overhead. Please pass the hat for the NLG at your pre- or post-action meeting so that we can continue this important work. Donations can also be made at: <http://www.nlgsf.org/contribute> or sent to National Lawyers Guild SF Bay Area Chapter, 558 Capp Street, San Francisco, CA 94110.

## **The New NLG Demo Legal Hotline System, 415-285-1011 and 415-909-4NLG**

The Bay Area NLG Demonstrations committee has a new phone system! After our hotline came under attack by members of the alt-right and fascist movement last fall, we needed to upgrade our security to our phone lines. In September we limited the capacity of our legal support line - 415-285-1011 - to only take calls from local jails. *Other incoming calls will not connect but sound like the caller gets a busy signal.* That will remain the same. But now we have a second line for outside-of-jail calls. That number is 415-909-4NLG (4654). This number has been set up to be *more* capable of withstanding cyber attacks *or a targeted call campaign to block our ability to take calls from the community if that should occur.* If this line was compromised for whatever reason *or if we don't have the hotline staffed when a supporter calls,* the demonstrations committee of the NLG can be reached by emailing [nlgsfhotline@protonmail.com](mailto:nlgsfhotline@protonmail.com).

***Call 415-285-1011 if you are in jail*** after being arrested at a demonstration or action that the NLG is supporting\*. *As before, please* write this number in permanent ink on your body whenever you attend a political action where you could be arrested. This number can ONLY be called from inside of a Bay Area jail. All other numbers have been blocked to ensure that arrestees can reach us in case anyone attempts to flood our lines.

***Call 415-909-4NLG if you are NOT in jail,*** but want to get in touch with the hotline. *Please program this number in your phone contacts.* Circumstances where you might call 415-285-4NLG:

- Your friend or loved one is in jail and you want to find more information on their status.
- You are at an action or demonstration and witnessing an arrest. Please try to get the arrestee's legal name and birthdate.
- You were arrested, but are out of custody or in temporary detention and calling on your cell phone. We ask all arrestees to check back in with us after they are let out so we know your most up-to-date information on your well-being, charges, and next court date so we can attempt to coordinate further support. We also will need the best way to contact you.

Email us at [nlgsfhotline@protonmail.com](mailto:nlgsfhotline@protonmail.com) if you cannot reach us over the phone. We run the hotline on volunteer labor so sometimes we will not have someone answering the phone. Also, the email serves as a fail-safe if for any reason our new phone line is incapacitated. Please note that the email will only be secure *and encrypted end-to-end* if you write us from another protonmail email account. (Protonmail accounts are free.)

## **What the NLG CAN do, if volunteers are available**

### ***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 to help staff our legal hotline or to set up your own legal hotline.

### ***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;
- ◆ Provide a legal hotline in the Guild office. The NLG legal hotline is not automatically available, but must be requested in advance, and NLG volunteers must be available, although sometimes the Demonstrations Committee activates the hotline on our own. (See hotline information above.)

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

- ◆ NLG will find lawyers to meet with and defend arrestees on criminal charges. We can often, but not always, find lawyers willing to work for free - see "Is it Free?" above.
- ◆ NLG follows up on police misconduct issues through media and policy work and advocacy, and on occasion, pursues impact litigation to help bring about systemic reforms.

## **What the NLG and NLG Legal Observers do NOT do**

- ◆ 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 rely on the organizers to gather specific information before and after arrests. See "What We Expect 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.
- ◆ The NLG cannot provide bail or bonds, but the Bay Area Anti-Repression Committee may be able to in certain cases. See <https://antirepressionbayarea.com/>.

## What We Expect From YOU

- Request legal support** as far in advance as possible by filling out this form: <http://www.nlgsf.org/form/legal-support-request>. If you can't fill out the on-line form please call 415-285-5067. Or, indicate on the form that there are secure details you need to share in person. At least a week's notice is preferred, although we do our best to support emergency actions. Please note that the request form and voicemail are not necessarily checked on weekends or after hours.
  
- If you anticipate arrests, work with the Demonstrations Committee and Guild staff to **plan for a legal support team**. For large and multi-day actions we ask you to provide volunteers we can train to help staff the NLG legal hotline. 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. (See page 2 above.)
  
- For planned actions, gather a **list of people risking arrest** in advance, with complete legal names, dates of birth, and any special needs such as medical issues, non-citizens, juveniles, out of state ID, ID in a different gender, warrants, etc. You should have a contact person 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 Arrestee Form attached at the end of this handout. The "Intake Information" can be filled out prior to the action.
  
- 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' prescription medication, 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 arrestees** with complete legal names, contact info, dates of birth, court dates and emails. In the Bay Area *most* demo arrestees are released from custody the same day with a citation, rather than held in jail. This may occur at a temporary processing area (often near the jail) or at a police station. Arrestees can also be cited out from the jail itself. Action organizers should station support people wherever arrestees are being released and have them fill out the **ARRESTEE FORM** attached to this document.
  
- Following the action, please put the arrestee information into a **spreadsheet** format we can import into our secure system – contact us for instructions.

**ARRESTEE FORM**  
**Confidential Attorney-Client Communication for Legal Team Only**

*Intake Information*

Name and date of event: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Name if different: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender identity: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Other phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email (please write clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical condition(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Meds/ dosage instrucs: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dr Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Citizen? Yes No CA ID? Yes No

Support contact #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Support contact #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

*Outtake Information*

Date and time of arrest: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of arrest: \_\_\_\_\_

Charge(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Jail facility: \_\_\_\_\_ PFN \_\_\_\_\_

Was Arrestee injured: \_\_\_\_\_

Court date, time, location: \_\_\_\_\_

Arresting officer, agency, badge # (from citation): \_\_\_\_\_

Incident No. \_\_\_\_\_ Citation No. \_\_\_\_\_

Lawyer: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses, if known, with contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

CONFIDENTIAL

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