

PLA Checklist on Mandatory File Maintenance

Mandatory contents of client files

- Client intake record from Prime, including intake notes and eligibility.
- Citizen Attestation or appropriate documentation of eligible immigrant status.
- PLA retainer (for cases with court/administrative hearing).
- Documentation and summary of every contact with a client (including meetings, all telephone calls, including missed calls and voice mails), with annotation of date.
- Documentation and summary of every contact about the case with someone else (adverse party, opposing counsel, social worker, doctor, etc.), of every step of handling the file, and of all advice given, with annotation of date.
- All correspondence about the case, whether by letter or email.
- Copies of all documents collected for the representation.
- If any case information is released to public for advocacy, press, or PLA fundraising, an authorization for release of information.
- Closing letter.
- Closing Prime intake form and eligibility sheet, including notes in Prime describing outcome of case and appropriate closing codes.

Note!

- ★ Files must be up-to-date and orderly, so another advocate could pick them up with no advance notice.
- ★ Files generally should be maintained in chronological order.
- ★ Filings must be *in* the client file.
- ★ Case histories/notes may be maintained in Prime in lieu of the paper file.
- ★ For larger files, use accordion (expandable brown files), divided by manila files for different categories of documents.

Circumstances in which communications with clients must be confirmed in writing (absent extraordinary circumstances)

- Confirmation of name and telephone number of advocate and scope of representation.
- Instructions to client.

- Court dates (confirm date in advance of court and summarize outcome and next court date after court).
- If possible, settlement strategies and offers.
- Results of the case.
- Closing letter (unless advice only at intake).

Note!

- ★ Advocate must try to make correspondence understandable to client (in length, literacy, and language).
- ★ Advocate may wish to have standard letters that can be modified to suit individual cases.

What other case-related recordkeeping is mandatory?

- Tickler system for deadlines (calendar, Outlook, etc.)