



Lackawanna County

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Lackawanna County Public Defenders Office Establishes Free Legal Hotline

Staff attorneys from the Lackawanna County Public Defenders office are providing free legal advice in criminal matters over the phone for an initial consultation only during the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning Wednesday, April 8.

This "round-the-clock" assistance is being staffed by highly experienced staff. This service is being offered regardless of whether the client meets income guidelines, which typically determine eligibility for the office's legal services.

The hotline was initiated to help reduce the stress and anxiety caused by the current health issue, and the closure of the courthouse due to the pandemic.

The service will enable the office's regular client base and new individuals to obtain guidance and assistance over the phone without the necessity of an in person conference.

Lackawanna County Chief Public Defender Atty. Larry Moran, Sr., stresses that this service would be limited to an initial conference. Also, it would not, and could not, extend to representation in court. This scenario would only change if it was determined that the caller qualified financially for a Public Defender. Then, the caller would be instructed to file a formal application.

If a caller needed to engage a private attorney because he/she was deemed ineligible for the office's services, they would be assisted in contacting a private lawyer.

For assistance during the day, evening, weekends and holiday, the number to call is 570/963/6761.