

 **EVICTI**
 **LEGAL**
 **HELPLINE**



Volunteer Manual

Vol. 2: Intake Procedures For Non-Attorney Helpline Volunteers

Draft v. 5, 8/31/22

Acknowledgments

The procedural and policy content of this manual draws liberally on manuals and reference materials produced by other hotline/helpline programs, including Bay Area Legal Aid (Legal Advice Line: Overview of a Legal Advice Line, Rev. 2011), AARP Foundation Technical Support for Legal Hotlines Project (Legal Hotlines: A How To Manual, 2nd Edition, 2001), Center for Elder Law & Justice (Back to the Beginning: Building a Legal Services Helpline from the Ground Up, 2018).

Almost all of the substantive legal content of this manual was initially adapted from materials created by Martin Wegbreit of the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society. Many thanks to Marty for his (apparently inexhaustible) generosity in providing guidance and responding to questions about the law and practice of eviction defense in Virginia.

Photo of furniture on the curb: wolfpeterson
(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/wolfpeterson/15313662683/>), Creative Commons license.

Please share comments, corrections, and suggestions with Phil Storey, phil@vplc.org.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction to Intake Procedure

DESCRIPTION OF A COMPLETED INTAKE

The intake procedures in this manual are designed to create a case record in the Eviction Legal Helpline's case management system (CMS) that is ready for a volunteer attorney to review before an advice callback to the client. There are several different tasks, which are detailed in the chapters below, required to complete a case intake and get all the necessary information into the case record for attorney review.

Here are the types of information included in a Helpline case record that has been through the intake process.

1. Information about the people in the case.
 - a. Identity of the tenant/caller.
 - b. Identity of the landlord and other adults involved in the case.
 - c. VPLC conflicts screening.
 - d. Demographic information about the tenant and household.
2. Information about the situation.
 - a. Description from the incoming Helpline message.
 - b. Tenant's description of the situation from the intake interview.
 - c. Information about current and previous court cases between the landlord and the tenant.
 - d. Documents and notices sent from the client.
3. Administrative information.
 - a. Client's acknowledgment of the Helpline's scope of services.
 - b. Client's confirmation that they have not already received attorney advice about this case (from legal aid, etc.).

SAMPLE CASE RECORD

Home
Cases
Reports
Contacts

Click the 'Accept' button to assign the case to you and remove it from the queue.

Until you make yourself the Case Owner by clicking the Accept button, other users can see the case in the queue and might start working on it at the same time. After making yourself the Case Owner you can return the case to the queue by clicking the Assign To Queue button.

Check Conflict

Assign To Queue

Case
||| English

+ Follow
Accept
Edit
Printable View

Status	Case Number
Pre-Intake	00003505

<p>Case Number 00003505</p> <p>Status Pre-Intake</p> <p>Contact Agrees to Scope <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>▼ PARTIES</p> <p>Contact Name</p> <p>Contact Phone</p> <p>Contact Email</p> <p>> PROPERTY</p> <p>Street Address</p> <p>City</p> <p>Zip Code</p> <p>Legal Jurisdiction</p> <p>▼ DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>Date of Birth</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Veteran <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disability <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Limited English Proficient Contact <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Contact's Preferred Language English</p> <p>Other Preferred Language</p> <p>Contact's Race</p> <p>Contact is Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>▼ INITIAL DESCRIPTION</p> <p>Subject English</p> <p>Application Service Type</p> <p>Client Application #</p> <p>Description</p>	<p>Case Owner Pre-Intake & Intake</p> <p>Date of 1st Message to ELH</p> <p>No Legal Aid Involvement <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Landlord Name</p> <p>Property Mgr. Name</p> <p>Other Tenant Name</p> <p>Housing Type</p> <p>Housing Subsidy</p> <p>Landlord Type</p> <p># Household Members Under 18 y.o.</p> <p># Household Members 18-59 y.o.</p> <p># Household Members 60+ y.o.</p> <p>Monthly Rent Amount (\$)</p> <p>Amount Owed to Landlord (\$)</p> <p>Household's Gross Monthly Income</p> <p>RRP Income Eligibility</p> <p>RRP Rent Eligibility</p> <p>RRP Income Loss</p>
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Conflict Checks (0)

Files (0)

Upload Files

Or drop files

Emails (1)

Iris McFlower dummy intake

From Addr... eviction@vplc.org

To Address: elh@vplc.org

Message D... 1/26/2022, 2:15 PM

View All

Case History (2)

Date:	1/26/2022, 2:15 PM
Field:	Created.
User:	Phillip Storey
Original Va...:	
New Value:	
Date:	1/26/2022, 2:15 PM
Field:	Subject
User:	Phillip Storey
Original Va...:	Iris McFlower dummy intake
New Value:	English

View All

▼ FACTS	
Urgency	Date Court Records Checked ¹
Facts from Intake Interview ¹	Past Eviction Cases w/Landlord ¹
Legal &/or RRP	Current Court Case Number
Important Upcoming Date	Landlord Attorney
Imp. Upcoming Date Type	Date of Judgment for Possession
Other Imp. Date Type ¹	Date Writ of Eviction Issued
Reason for Potential Eviction	Date/Time of 1st Intake Call Attempt
Legal Info Read to Client ¹	Date/Time of 2nd Intake Call Attempt
Issues of Interest ¹	Date/Time of 3rd Intake Call Attempt
Date Client Will Provide Documents ¹	Notes on Intake Call Attempts
	Date Intake Complete ¹
▼ ADVICE	
Advice Call Notes	Date/Time of 1st Advice Call Attempt
Topics Explained to Client ¹	Date/Time of 2nd Advice Call Attempt
Name of Advising Attorney ¹	Date/Time of 3rd Advice Call Attempt
Date of Advice Call	Notes on Advice Call Attempts
Date/Time of Prelim. Advice Email	VPLC Follow Up Needed
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Instructions for VPLC Follow Up
▼ FOLLOW UP	
Case Follow Up Notes	Legal Aid Referral
Name of Staff Who Followed Up	Other Legal Aid Referral
Compelling Story	Date of Legal Referral
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Legal Service Referral
Media-Friendly Contact	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date Follow Up Complete
▼ CLOSING	
Services Provided	Date Case Reviewed
Reasons For Closing	VPLC Reviewer
	Other VPLC Reviewer
	Date/Time Closed
▼ System Information	
Created By	Last Modified By
Phillip Storey, 1/26/2022, 2:15 PM	Phillip Storey, 1/26/2022, 2:15 PM

IDENTIFYING CASES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE HELPLINE

The Eviction Legal Helpline can provide information and legal advice from an attorney to tenants who are facing potential eviction in Virginia. Because eviction is just a small part of what can go wrong with someone's rental housing, sometimes people will call the Helpline to ask for assistance with other landlord-tenant situations. We rely on our intake volunteers to identify when cases are out of scope for the Helpline and to inform the caller/tenant that we cannot advise them about these other issues.

These situations are all outside the scope of the Helpline:

- A tenant who lives outside of Virginia. (We've received calls from all over the U.S.)
- Someone who wants to evict another person, like a landlord or even a tenant who is subletting to someone they want to force out.
- A tenant who has other disputes with their landlord, such as poor living conditions, harassment, discrimination, lease or rent negotiations, etc., but who is not facing potential eviction.
- A tenant who has already been physically evicted from their housing.
 - **EXCEPTION:** If the landlord did not go through the legal process in the courts and with the sheriff's office to evict the person, but has simply locked the person out or cut off utilities to force them out *within the past 24 hours*, we can advise them.

If you end up talking with a caller/tenant whose case is not within the scope of the Helpline, see the scripts in chapter 3 of this manual, in the section **Ensuring Client Eligibility for Our Services**.

INTAKE INTERVIEW NARROWING QUESTIONS

Below are key facts we want to get from the tenant during the intake interview, which you will note so the attorney can review before calling back to advise the client. You do not need to go through each question explicitly. Usually asking the caller to explain their situation and dispute with the landlord will lead them to tell you this without much additional prompting.

We do not need to get the entire story from the tenant about the history of their disputes with the landlord or their financial or other problems. If they dispute the landlord's allegations, we don't even need to know the tenant's argument in detail—just whether or not they dispute it. In the advice call the attorney will ask follow-up questions where they are legally relevant.

ALL CASES: BASIC FACTS

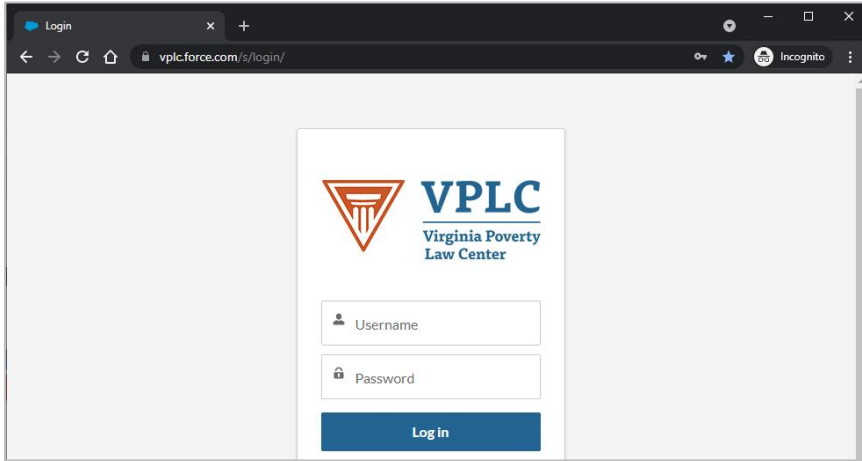
1. If the tenant is seeking legal advice about a potential eviction case, what is the reason the landlord has given for seeking to evict the tenant?
 - a. Unpaid rent?
 - b. Violation of other lease provisions? (Disturbing neighbors, unauthorized housemates or other residents not on the lease, unauthorized pets, criminal activity, etc.)
 - c. Non-renewal of lease at expiration?
2. Does the tenant dispute the landlord's allegation?
3. When did the tenant's lease begin and when does it end or renew?
4. Can the tenant send the Helpline (by fax or email) any court papers (a "summons for unlawful detainer") or notices they received from the landlord about the case (a termination notice, notice to vacate, 14-day 'pay or quit,' etc.)?

UNPAID RENT CASES

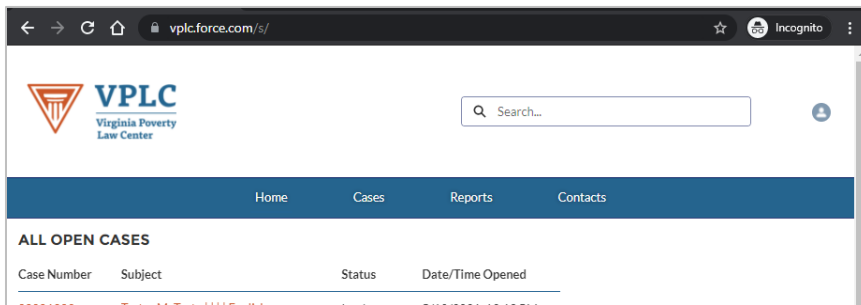
5. Does the tenant admit they are behind on rent, even if they disagree on the amount?
 - a. If the tenant disagrees on the amount owed, can they send the Helpline a copy of their 'tenant ledger' (account history with charges & payments) that they can get from their landlord?
6. Has the tenant applied for assistance from the Virginia Rent Relief Program?
 - a. If so, when did they first apply?
 - b. If they have begun an application, has their landlord been helpful in submitting required documents for the application?
 - c. Have they heard back from the RRP service center about an existing application they filed?
7. If the tenant withheld rent because the landlord failed to make repairs to keep the home safe and livable...
 - a. Does the tenant have a copy of written notice of the need for the repairs that they gave to the landlord before the landlord filed an Unlawful Detainer against them?
 - b. Does the tenant have the money to pay all overdue rent into the court if needed?

STARTING A SHIFT AND NAVIGATING SALESFORCE

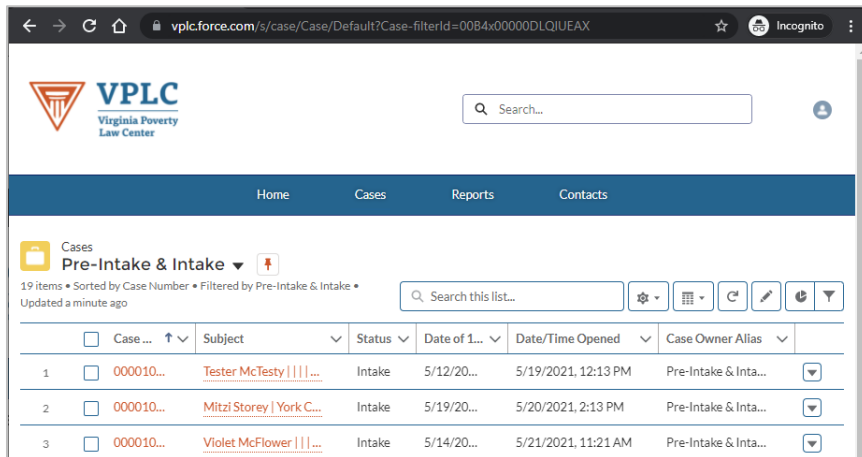
1. Open a browser and log into the case management system:
<https://vplc.force.com/s/login/>



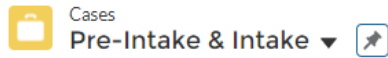
2. From the homepage that opens, click **CASES** on the blue menu bar.



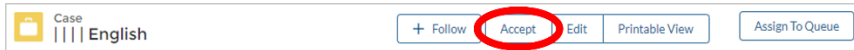
3. This will open a page that lists cases in the case management system.

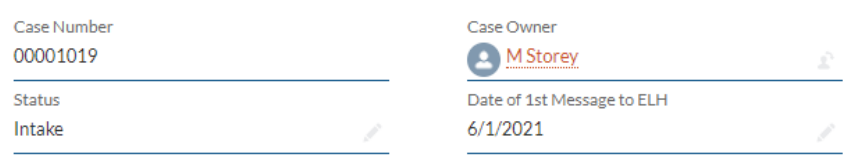


4. Select the **Pre-Intake & Intake** list from the dropdown menu.



- a. Once you've selected the **Pre-Intake & Intake** list, click the pushpin icon next to the down arrow to “pin” it as your default.
5. The **Pre-Intake & Intake** case view shows you:
 - a. Cases in the **Pre-Intake Status**
 - i. These are new cases generated automatically by voicemails or emails to the Helpline, including emails sent by the request for services form on our website. These cases will be blank, except for the attached voicemail audio file and a transcription of the email text or contents of the request for services form in the **Initial Description** field.
 - b. Cases in the **Intake Status**
 - i. These are cases that have been prepared for an Intake Callback by entering any information from the initial voicemail, email, or web form into the case, including **Contact Name** and **Date of 1st Message to ELH**, and running the initial **Conflict Check**.
 - ii. Some may be cases that have come through the call center, where an agent has already talked with the caller, created a case for them, and completed a partial intake.
6. Always **Accept** a case before reviewing or making any edits to the case record. This makes you the owner of the case and removes it from the **Pre-Intake & Intake** queue so another user does not open the case at the same time to work on it.



- a. Click the **Accept** button at the top of the case record and you should appear as the **Case Owner** at the top-right hand field of the case record.
A screenshot of a case record form. It is divided into two columns. The left column has 'Case Number' with the value '00001019' and 'Status' with the value 'Intake'. The right column has 'Case Owner' with a profile icon and the name 'M Storey', and 'Date of 1st Message to ELH' with the value '6/1/2021'. Each field has a horizontal line below it and a small edit icon to the right.
 - b. Once you are finished working on a case, click the **Assign To Queue** button to remove yourself as case owner and put the case back in the list.
7. We recommend refreshing the **Pre-Intake and Intake** queue regularly as you work so you see the most current list of available cases.

8. If a case you worked on disappears from the **Pre-Intake and Intake** queue, it is likely because the status of the case has changed, which moves it out of the queue. Besides **Pre-Intake and Intake**, there are a few other statuses a case can be in, all with their own corresponding queues that are not visible to non-attorney volunteers.

- a. **Conflict Check:** During the initial intake process, we must run a conflict screening check (explained below) to ensure we can serve the client without creating a conflict of interest. If the screening process identifies a possible or actual conflict, the case status can change to **Conflict Check**, where it stays until a Helpline supervisor resolves the potential conflict.
- b. **Advice:** Once all pre-intake and intake steps have been completed, including entering the **Date Intake Complete**, the case status changes to **Advice**, which means it is ready for attorney review.
- c. **Case Closing:** When the third intake attempt is completed and a date is entered for **Date/Time of 3rd Intake Call**, the status changes to **Case Closing**, and puts it in a list for staff to review and close.
- d. **Closed:** If a case has been reviewed and closed by Helpline staff, the status will show as **Closed**.

If you need to view or edit a case that has moved out of the **Pre-Intake and Intake** queue, it should still be visible in your **Recently Viewed** case list, or you can enter the tenant's name into the **Search** bar at the top right of the page to search for the case.



NOTE: Be careful when viewing and handling cases in the **Recently Viewed** list. Remember these may not be cases that require intake. When choosing which cases to work on, always work from the **Pre-Intake & Intake** queue. If you ever feel you need to edit to a **Closed** case, please email ELHSupervisor@gmail.com for further guidance.

ENDING AN INTAKE SHIFT

1. **Delete any files downloaded to your computer** (for example, files you uploaded to the case, or downloaded to view).
2. **Complete a Post-Shift Report** telling us which Helpline client records you worked on and which tasks you completed for each record. If you run out of space on the form, submit it and open a second form to send the rest of the information. (Tip: Open the Report at the start of your shift and enter your work as you go.)
 - a. Access the **Post-Shift Report** here:
<https://form.jotform.com/92656087025158>
 - b. You can also find a link to the form and many other Helpline volunteer resources at our website: <https://evictionhelpline.org/existing-volunteers/>.

Chapter 2: Pre-Intake Procedure: Incoming Messages

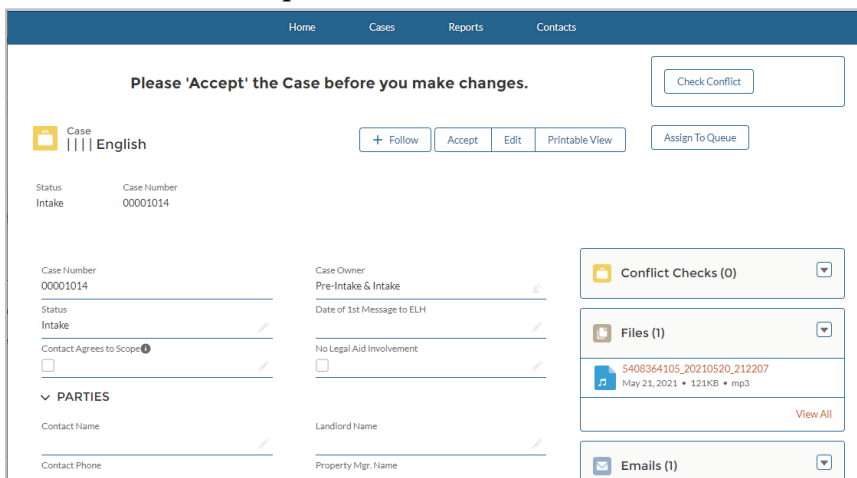
STEP 1: SELECT AND OPEN A CASE

1. From the list of cases in the **Pre-Intake and Intake** queue, select a case in Pre-Intake.
 - a. The Subject for calls in Pre-Intake status will usually be “| | | **English**” and the Status column in the case list should say **Pre-Intake**.
 - b. Sort the list by the **Case Number** column (from lowest to highest with the little arrow pointing up) so that you see the cases in order from oldest to newest.
 - c. Whenever possible, select the oldest case to work on.

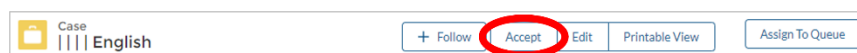


	Case Number ↑	Subject	Status	Date/Time Opened
1	00001010	Mitzi Storey York County May 31, 2021 Lockout < 24 Hrs w/o Sheriff E...	Intake	5/20/2021, 2:13 PM
2	00003448	English	Pre-Intake	1/18/2022, 5:25 PM
3	00003449	English	Pre-Intake	1/18/2022, 5:25 PM

2. Click on either the **Case Number** or the **Subject** for the case to open the record.
3. The case record will open with almost all fields blank.

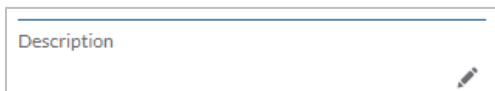


4. Before you begin working on the case, click the **Accept** button to make yourself the case owner.



STEP 2: REVIEW THE CLIENT'S MESSAGE

1. Scroll down to the **INITIAL DESCRIPTION** section of the case and find the field titled **Description** to view the message left by the potential client.
 - a. If the client reached out by email, this field will contain the text of their email. Move on to **Step 3: Enter Parties into the Case Record**.
 - b. If the client called and left a message, it will contain a rough transcription of their voicemail. These are often full of errors, so it's important that you listen to the voicemail and make any necessary corrections to the transcription in the **Description** field.
2. To listen to the voicemail, find the audio of the original voicemail in the **Files** section of the right sidebar on the case record screen (right underneath the **Conflict Checks** section).
 - a. Click on the link to the audio file to open and listen to the original voicemail.
 - b. If you cannot open and play (or 'preview') the audio file within your browser and you have to download the file to listen, then download the file to a designated folder on your computer and make sure to delete it at the end of your shift.
3. To edit the contents of the **Description** field and make corrections to the transcription, click on the gray pencil icon to the right of the field title. (Doing this will make all other intake fields on the case record editable as well.)



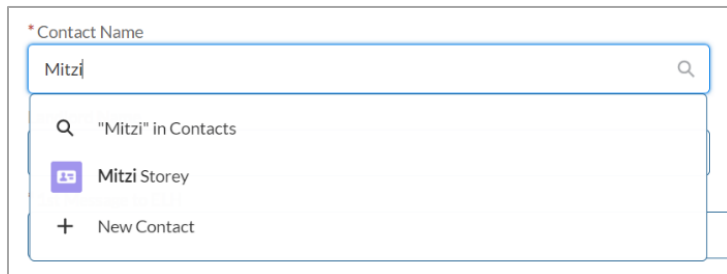
- a. When making edits, keep as much of the original content of the voicemail as you can. You may shorten the transcription by writing [spells] if a tenant spells their name, deleting “uhs” and “ums,” or writing [repeats] if the tenant repeats their email or phone number multiple times. If the voicemail ends suddenly, it's helpful to write [cuts off] at the end of the transcription.
 - b. Watch for misspelled words and other mistakes. For example, the software often transcribes “eviction” incorrectly as “fiction” or “conviction” and gets names of places wrong.
4. Look for signs the case may be **out of scope**.
 - a. For example, does the caller mention being a landlord, realtor, or having a tenant?
 - b. Do they live in another state?
 - c. Do they want help for a non-legal issue, or advice on something besides eviction? (Such as housing or financial assistance, landlord harassment, or poor living conditions.)

- d. Have they already been evicted? (Meaning all legal steps of the process have been completed and the sheriff has already put them out of their home.)
- e. Does the caller not clearly state their first AND last name?

If so, enter the **Date of 1st Message to ELH** and then select the existing contact named “Out of Scope.” If you’re not sure, email elhsupervisor@gmail.com for assistance.

STEP 3: ENTER BASIC INFORMATION INTO THE CASE RECORD

1. Start entering basic information into the case record by putting the date the potential client reached out into the **Date of 1st Message to ELH** at the top right field in the case.
 - a. In many cases, it will be today’s date, but make sure you check the timestamp of the voicemail or email, which is available in the **Description** field or with the audio file of the voicemail in the **Files** object on the right side of the case record.
2. Next, in the **PARTIES** section of the case record, start typing the name of the caller in the **Contact Name** field. (FirstName space LastName.)
 - a. The system will check if there is already a contact with the same name and display potentially matching names in a drop-down window below the field.



- b. If the name of the caller is the same as an existing contact name in the system, **stop doing pre-intake**. Type “**Out of Scope**” in the **Contact Name** field and select the existing contact. Enter a **Date of 1stMessage to ELH** and **Save** the changes. Click **Return to Queue**. Helpline staff will review the case.
- c. If the name of the caller does not appear to be in the system already, click on “+ New Contact” from the drop-down window to create a new contact record for the caller.

3. When creating a new contact for the caller's name, a pop-up window titled New Contact appears. This is the **Contact Record**.

The screenshot shows a 'New Contact' pop-up window. It contains the following fields and sections:

- Contact Details:**
 - *Name: A dropdown menu with '--None--' selected.
 - Salutation: A dropdown menu.
 - Email: A text input field.
 - First Name: A text input field.
 - *Last Name: A text input field.
 - Phone: A text input field.
- Description Information:**
 - Description: A large text area for entering details.

At the bottom right, there are three buttons: 'Cancel', 'Save & New', and 'Save'.

- a. Enter the caller's First Name and Last Name.
- b. Enter the phone number and email address (if they included both in their message).
- c. Then click the blue **Save** button in the bottom right corner of the pop-up window.

TIP: The fields in the **Contact Record** and the text of the client's message cannot be displayed side by side. To easily enter the client's contact information, highlight and copy the text of the email or voicemail transcription and paste it into the **Description** field of the **Contact Record**. Once you've used it to fill out all the other Contact fields, make sure to erase the email or voicemail text from the **Contact Record**.

4. Back in the **PARTIES** section of the case record, enter the tenant's **Landlord Name** if the caller provided it in their message.
 - a. If the landlord is a person, enter their FirstName space LastName in the **Landlord Name** field. If the tenant only provides their landlord's first name, leave the field blank. Entering only a first name will confuse the conflict check in the next step.
 - b. If the landlord is an apartment complex or company, enter the complex name or company name into the **Landlord Name** field.
5. Once you have entered all the relevant information from the caller's voicemail into the fields of the **PARTIES** section, click the blue **Save** button at the bottom of the page.

NOTE: When initially opening a case, Salesforce will not allow you save any changes if you have not entered a **Date of 1st Message** and **Contact** information, so it's important to complete these steps first.

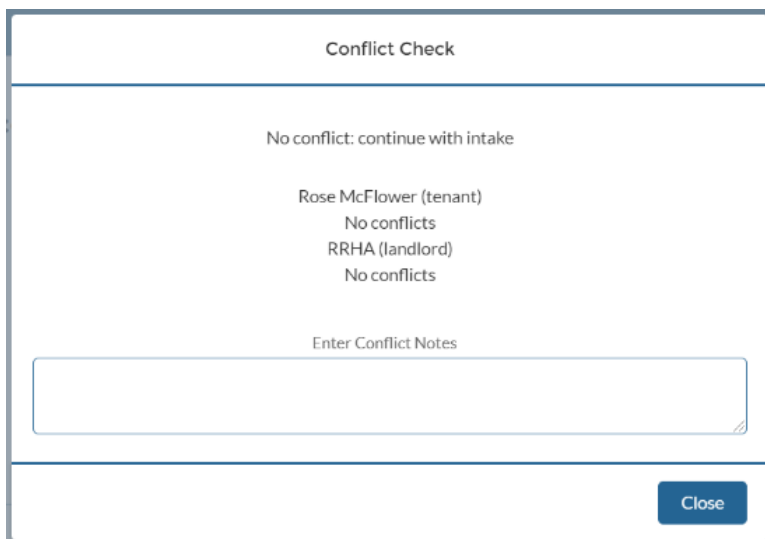
STEP 4: RUN THE INITIAL CONFLICT SCREENING CHECK

NOTE: Only run the conflict screening check when you have entered new or updated information in the fields in the **PARTIES** section of the record. That includes when you first enter the caller's name when working on **Pre-Intake** cases. But after that first conflict screening check, do not run it again unless you edited one of the name fields in the **PARTIES** section.

1. Once you have the names of the caller/contact (and hopefully also the landlord) entered in the **PARTIES** section of the case record, you must run an initial conflict screening.
2. Click the **Check Conflict** button in the top right corner of the case record screen.



3. After a few seconds, a **Conflict Check** window will open showing one of three results:
 - a. “No conflict”
 - b. “Volunteer review”
 - c. “Stop intake”
4. If the **Conflict Check** window says “No conflict” then simply click the **Close** button and move on to **Step 5: Enter Additional Information** below. (The case status will automatically change from **Pre-Intake** to **Intake** once there is a Conflict Check that has been cleared.)

A screenshot of a 'Conflict Check' window. The window has a title bar that says 'Conflict Check'. Below the title bar, the text reads 'No conflict: continue with intake'. Underneath, there are two lines of text: 'Rose McFlower (tenant)' followed by 'No conflicts', and 'RRHA (landlord)' followed by 'No conflicts'. Below this text is a text input field with the placeholder text 'Enter Conflict Notes'. At the bottom right corner of the window, there is a blue button labeled 'Close'.

5. If the **Conflict Check** window says “Volunteer review...” then you will need to look at the possible conflict identified and decide if the near-matching name might plausibly be the same person.

Conflict Check

Volunteer review: before continuing with intake, you must review the potentially conflicting name match(es). If the near-matching names are clearly distinct and very unlikely to be the result of a poor transcription or misspelling, note that in the case record and continue with the intake. If you are not sure if the near-matching names might be the same person, stop intake and send an email to ELHsupervisor@gmail.com so a VPLC supervisor can review the potential conflict.

Rose McFlower (tenant)
No conflicts
Pipper McZippy (landlord)
Zipper McZippy (93%)

Enter Conflict Notes

Possible Conflict for Pipper McZippy

Conflict Cleared Supervisor Review

- a. Compare the near-matching names identified by the software. (In the case illustrated here, Pipper McZippy is very close to Zipper McZippy.)
- b. Ask yourself: How likely is it that both names could represent the same person?
 - i. If it seems unlikely, click the **Conflict Cleared** button and skip ahead to **Step 5: Enter Additional Information**. (The case status will automatically change from **Pre-Intake** to **Intake** once there is a Conflict Check that has been cleared.)
 - For example, while spelled similarly, it is unlikely that someone serving a past client mistook “Mark” for “Mary.”
 - ii. If it seems likely that the two names could be the same person, or if you’re not sure, click the **Supervisor Review** button.
 - Consider if the difference in the names could be due to a misspelling, typo, nickname, or variant of the same name. For example, while Zipper/Pipper is an uncommon name, it’s likely that they could be the same person whose name was misspelled by someone completing an earlier intake.

- If the **Conflict Check** window says “Stop intake...” it means the system has identified an exact match for one of the names which could create a conflict of interest. Click the **Close** button.

- If you clicked **Supervisor Review** or the screening identified an exact match and told you to stop intake, the **Status** of the case will change to “Conflict Review,” which means the case has been removed from the **Pre-Intake & Intake** queue for Helpline staff to review. You should see that toward the top of the screen on the left side, right under the Case Number field.

Case Rose McFlower English	
Status	Case Number
Conflict Review	00001017
Case Number	Case Owner
00001017	Conflict Check
Status	1st Message to ELH
Conflict Review	5/6/2021
Contact Agrees to Scope	No Legal Aid Involvement

- If the **Status** is “Conflict Review” but the **Case Owner** field still lists you as the owner, and not “Conflict Check,” then click the **Assign To Queue** button in the top right corner of the page (just below the **Check Conflict** button). This will make sure Helpline staff see the case in their list of Conflict Review cases.
- Do not proceed to **Step 5** below. Leave the case by clicking on **Home** or **Cases** in the top menu bar.

STEP 5: ENTER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION INTO THE CASE RECORD

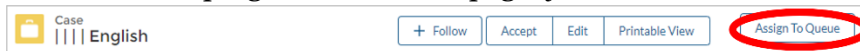
1. After clearing the conflict screening as described above, if the voicemail included any more information corresponding to fields in the **PARTIES**, **PROPERTY**, **DEMOGRAPHICS**, or **FACTS** sections of the case record, enter that information in the appropriate field.
 - a. The client will hopefully have provided the name of the **City** where they live, and ideally also their **Street Address**, which you can enter in the **PROPERTY** section.
 - b. The message may also contain an upcoming date or deadline (e.g., “I have a court date next Friday,” or “A sheriff’s eviction is scheduled for the day after tomorrow”). If so, enter that information in the **Important Upcoming Date** and **Imp. Upcoming Date Type** fields in the **FACTS** section.
 - c. If the voicemail mentions one of the urgency factors (a sheriff’s eviction already scheduled, a court date within the next 7 days, or an apparently illegal lockout in the past 24 hours), select the appropriate value from the **Urgency** pulldown menu in the **FACTS** section.

NOTE: Leave the “Facts from Intake Interview” blank (the user who calls the tenant for intake will fill this out). Also avoid filling out the tenant’s gender or race, unless they explicitly state it in their message.

2. If the client provided their location, do a quick Google search to determine which city or county they live in and fill out the **Jurisdiction** field. Then, follow the instructions in **Chapter 4** to search court records for relevant cases and enter that information into the case record. This step is especially important if the client says they have a court date or sheriff’s eviction coming up.
3. Once you have entered all the relevant information from the caller’s voicemail, click the blue **Save** button at the bottom of the page.

STEP 6: RETURN CASE TO THE QUEUE

1. When you have finished entering the available information from the voicemail into the case record, unless you will continue working on the case by making an intake call to the caller/client, you will return the case to the queue by clicking the **Assign To Queue** button in the top right corner of the page (just below the Check Conflict button).



2. If you are also calling the potential client for intake, don’t return the case to the queue. Instead, move on to the intake procedures following the instructions in the next chapter.

COMMON PRE-INTAKE ISSUES

Some situations will fall outside of the instructions in this chapter. Here's what to do if...

1. The same caller leaves multiple voicemails.
 - a. Consolidate the cases by adding the text and audio of the newer voicemails to the oldest case. First, copy and paste the timestamped transcriptions into the **Description** field of the newest case. Then, download and add the audio files to the oldest case record by dragging and dropping them from your computer folder onto the **Files** object on the right side of the case record, under the **Conflict Checks** object.
 - b. Follow the usual Pre-Intake steps for the oldest case only and leave the remaining cases in the queue for the Helpline Coordinator to remove.
2. The voicemail is blank.
 - a. Leave the case in the queue for the Coordinator to remove.
3. The voicemail or email is in a language other than English.
 - a. Leave the case in the queue for the Coordinator to handle, unless you speak the language of the message fluently. In that case, do Pre-Intake as normal, making sure to note the client's **Preferred Language** under the **DEMOGRAPHICS** section.
4. An existing client in the **Pre-Intake & Intake** queue calls and leaves another message.
 - a. Add the new message and voicemail audio (if any) to the client's existing case in the **Pre-Intake & Intake** queue. (You may have to download the audio file to your computer and then upload it to the **Files** window in the right-hand sidebar of the existing case record.). Then email ELHSupervisor@gmail.com with the subject "New Message, Existing Client" and include both the client's case numbers in the body of the message. Leave the duplicate case for the Coordinator to remove.
5. You need to add or edit information to the **Contact Record** (Name, Email, or Phone).
 - a. Click the **hyperlinked** Contact Name (*not the pencil icon next to it*), which will open the **Contact Record**. From the Contact Record screen, click the pencil icon next to the field you want to edit and hit the "Save" button when you're done editing. Click the "Back" arrow button on your browser to return to the case record on the previous page.

Chapter 3: The Intake Interview

OVERVIEW AND GOALS OF THE INTAKE INTERVIEW

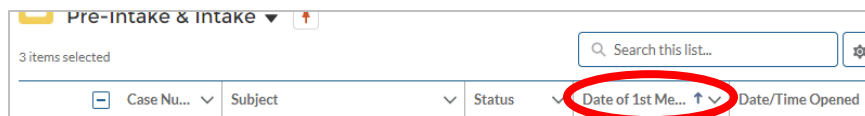
During the intake interview, you will speak with the tenant, get key information from them about their case and the people involved, and get their consent to receive our services.

Here are the critical priorities for the intake interview.

- Obtain the tenant’s consent to the Eviction Legal Helpline’s scope of services.
- Confirm that the tenant is not receiving help or has not received legal advice from legal aid or another attorney about this case. (We cannot assist people who simply want another opinion, who are dissatisfied with their assistance from a local legal aid office, or who are already in the intake process at a legal aid office.)
- Get the names of the people and/or companies involved in the case and run the conflicts screening procedure described in Chapter 3 to ensure that VPLC can serve the client without creating a conflict of interest.
- Collect the tenant’s personal and household information. We need this in order to refer cases to local legal aid offices and we will use aggregated data from all Helpline callers to better understand the eviction crisis in Virginia.
- Get relevant information about the case from the tenant. Refer to **Intake Interview Narrowing Questions** in chapter 1 of this manual.

PREPARING FOR THE INTAKE INTERVIEW CALL

1. In Salesforce, from the **CASES** page, using the **Pre-Intake & Intake** view, sort cases so that you see the oldest cases in Intake Status at the top of the page.
 - a. Click on the column header “Date of 1st Message to ELH” to sort the list of cases by how old they are.
2. Select a case, generally starting with the oldest one and working your way down the list, by clicking on either the **Case Number** or the **Subject**. This will open the case record.



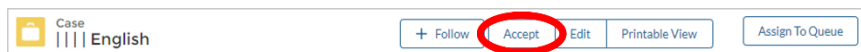
3. Once the case record has opened, review it to see which fields have already been filled in and which still need to be completed.
 - a. Some cases will be mostly blank, with just the information entered that the caller left in their voicemail. Some will have already been through partial or complete intake interview and only need court records checked.
4. Check to see if there is an indication (in the **DEMOGRAPHICS** section of the case record) that the caller will need service in a language other than English. If you are not fluent in Spanish or another language needed to communicate with the tenant, click the Back button in your browser to select a different case.
5. Before calling the tenant, check the case record to see if other intake call attempts have already been made.
 - a. Scroll down to the **FACTS** section of the case record and check the fields toward the bottom of the right-hand column, labeled **Date/Time of 1st (2nd, 3rd) Intake Call Attempt** and the field **Notes on Intake Call Attempts**.

▼ FACTS

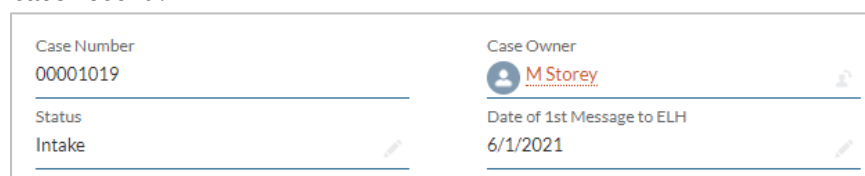
Urgency	Date Court Records Checked ⓘ
Facts from Intake Interview ⓘ	Past Eviction Cases w/Landlord ⓘ
Important Upcoming Date	Current Court Case Number
Imp. Upcoming Date Type	Date of Judgment for Possession
Other Imp. Date Type ⓘ	Date Writ of Eviction Issued
Reason for Potential Eviction	Date/Time of 1st Intake Call Attempt
Legal Info Read to Client ⓘ	Date/Time of 2nd Intake Call Attempt
Issues of Interest ⓘ	Date/Time of 3rd Intake Call Attempt
Date Client Will Provide Documents ⓘ	Notes on Intake Call Attempts

- b. Depending on how many intake calls have already been attempted, you will leave a different voicemail for the tenant if you are unable to reach them now (see scripts in next section).
- c. If you notice that two previous unsuccessful call attempts were both made in the morning hours (for example), consider making a third call attempt in the afternoon instead.

- d. If other intake workers have suggestions for what time or day to call the tenant, it will be found in the **Notes** field.
 - e. If the Date/Time indicates that the Helpline tried to reach them just a couple of hours ago, then unless their situation is extremely urgent (sheriff's eviction scheduled within the next couple of days), click your browser's Back button to return to the list of cases and leave the case for someone else to call back later.
6. Once you open the case and look it over, click the **Accept** button at the top of the case record to make yourself the owner of the case, so other volunteers do not open the case to work on it at the same time.



- a. You should now appear as the **Case Owner** at the top-right hand field of the case record.



CALLING THE CLIENT

1. Once you are ready, call the tenant at the phone number found in the **Contact Phone** field of the **PARTIES** section of the case record.
 - a. **Caller ID Blocking:** If you do not want the tenant to be able to call back to the phone you are using, **dial *67** before dialing their phone number and your incoming call will show on their phone as Anonymous with no return number.
3. If the caller/tenant answers the phone, go to the next section below, **Ensuring Client Eligibility for Our Services**.
4. If the caller/tenant does not answer and you get their voicemail, leave a brief message. Follow the scripts below for the introduction and the body of the message you will leave, depending on how many intake attempts we have already made to reach this person.

INTRO: *Hello, my name is [your first name]. I am a volunteer with the Eviction Legal Helpline. I am calling to follow up on the message you recently left on the Helpline, asking for legal advice about your potential eviction.*

1st ATTEMPT: *We will try calling you back within the next business day or so. We will make two more attempts to reach you. We look forward to talking with you soon.*

2nd ATTEMPT: *I'm sorry we missed you. This is the second callback attempt, and we will try calling you again once more within the next couple of business*

days. If we cannot reach you on our third attempt, we will assume you do not still need our help. We hope to talk with you soon.

***3rd ATTEMPT:** I'm sorry we haven't been able to reach you. Because we have not been able to make contact after three attempts, we will assume you do not still need our help. If you do still want to talk with a Helpline attorney for legal advice, please call the Helpline again and leave another message or email us at eviction@vplc.org, including specific times when you would most likely be able to answer your phone. Thank you.*

5. After leaving a voicemail for a caller/tenant who does not answer, enter the current date and time in the appropriate **Date/Time of ___ Intake Call Attempt** field in the **FACTS** section of the case record. Then click the blue **Save** button at the bottom of the page.
6. After an unsuccessful attempt to call a tenant, return the case to the queue by clicking the **Assign To Queue** button in the top right corner of the case record. Then click on **CASES** in the blue menu bar to return to the list of cases and select another case.

ENSURING CLIENT ELIGIBILITY FOR OUR SERVICES

1. When someone answers the phone, ask to speak with the person whose name is listed as the Contact in the case record.
2. Once you are speaking with the caller/tenant, introduce yourself as an Eviction Legal Helpline volunteer who is not an attorney.

Hello, my name is [your first name]. I am a volunteer with the Eviction Legal Helpline.

I am calling to follow up on the message you recently left on the Helpline, asking for legal advice about your potential eviction. I am not an attorney so I cannot give legal advice. I am calling to do a brief intake with you and collect information that I will pass along to one of the Helpline attorneys and they will contact you for advice.

Do you have a few minutes to do this right now?

3. If they cannot do the intake now, ask when would be best to call them back. Enter that information in the field **Notes on Intake Call Attempts** in the **FACTS** section of the case record and enter the date/time in the appropriate **Date/Time of ___ Intake Call Attempt** field.
4. Explain the scope of the Helpline's services and confirm that they want those services.

First I need to explain the services the Eviction Legal Helpline offers.

We are a free service providing information and legal advice from an attorney to residential tenants facing potential eviction in Virginia. We do not provide financial assistance and our lawyers do not represent tenants either in court or in negotiating with landlords, but we can sometimes refer cases to local legal aid lawyers for possible representation. Is that okay with you?

- a. If they indicate they agree to the scope of our services, then click to mark the checkbox **Client Agrees to Scope** that appears just above the **PARTIES** section head at the top of the case record.
 - i. **ALSO:** At this point, please confirm if the client falls within any **temporary limitations on Helpline scope** for purposes of intake. Depending on the volume of calls the Helpline is receiving and its attorneys' capacity to advise clients, we sometimes restrict intake further. (For example, in February 2022 the Helpline is not providing advice to callers whose landlords have not yet filed an eviction case against them in court.) Check with the Helpline Coordinator if you have question about this.
- b. If they do not agree to the limits on our scope of services, you will stop intake and suggest they try somewhere else to get the services they want.

FOR FINANCIAL OR NON-LEGAL ASSISTANCE: *For other financial assistance and non-legal help, we refer people to 2-1-1 Virginia. You can reach them by dialing 211 on your phone or going to 211virginia.org on the internet. They can connect you with any sources of assistance that may be available in your area.*

FOR OTHER LEGAL HELP: *For representation or legal help with other landlord-tenant issues besides eviction, we suggest tenants get in touch with their local legal aid program by calling 866-534-5243 or going to valegalaid.org on the internet. If you make too much money to qualify for free legal aid, you can try the Virginia Lawyer Referral Program at 800-552-7977.*

FOR HELP WITH A RENT RELIEF APPLICATION: *The Helpline is no longer able help tenants apply to the Virginia Rent Relief Program. Your local legal aid office can help with new or existing applications (866-534-5243) or you can contact the Rent Relief Program directly at 833-736-8735 or by emailing rrp@dhcd.virginia.gov. (Tenants located in the Richmond area can also contact the Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation at 804-231-4449.)*

5. Next, confirm that the caller is the tenant facing potential eviction.

We need to check a couple of things before we start with the intake.

FIRST, are you a tenant facing potential eviction from your home, or are you calling about a friend of family member's situation?

- a. YES, the caller is the tenant facing potential eviction: continue with intake.
- b. NO, they are a 3rd party calling about someone else's situation: stop intake and read the following script.

Unfortunately, the Eviction Legal Helpline needs to talk to the tenant who is facing potential eviction. We do not normally serve tenants through a third-party, unless that person is the tenant's power of attorney or guardian. The tenant you are calling about will need to contact the Helpline directly or you will need to email the Helpline at eviction@vplc.org with a power of attorney designating you that person's agent for this type of matter. Then an Eviction Legal Helpline representative can call you back to do the intake.

- c. NO, they are landlords: stop intake and read the following script.

The Eviction Legal Helpline cannot assist or advise landlords in any way. You can try contacting Virginia Lawyer Referral Service or you can contact the Virginia Rent Relief Program to request financial assistance for delinquent rent. (Both of those can be found with a simple Google search.)

6. Confirm that the tenant has not already received legal advice about this case from a legal aid attorney.

And SECOND, have you already received legal advice from a legal aid attorney about this case?

- a. NO: click to mark the checkbox **No Legal Aid Involvement** that appears just to the right of the **Contact Agrees to Scope** field at the top of the case record and continue with intake.
- b. YES: stop intake and read the following script.

I'm sorry, but if you have already been in contact with a local legal aid office and either have received advice from their attorneys or are in the process of intake or advice with them, the Helpline cannot provide additional services for you. The purpose of the Helpline is to reach tenants who are not served by their local legal aid offices.

CONFIRMING INFORMATION FOR PARTIES

1. Start the actual intake by confirming that we have complete and accurate information in the **PARTIES** section of the case record.

2. Confirm the client's name and contact information by opening the **Contact Record**.
 - a. If you are looking at the case record in Edit Mode, click **SAVE** on the case record to return to View Mode.
 - b. Now click on the [hyperlinked Contact Name](#) to open the **Contact Record** screen.

The screenshot shows a contact record for Iris McFlower. At the top, there is a header with a purple icon and the text 'Contact Iris McFlower'. Below this, there are two rows of contact information: 'Email' with the value 'iris@philstorey.com' and 'Phone' with the value '804-111-2222'. A section titled 'Contact Details' is expanded, showing a table of fields: 'Name' (Iris McFlower), 'Email' (iris@philstorey.com), 'Phone' (804-111-2222), and 'Type' (Client). Each field has a small pencil icon next to it, indicating it is editable.

- c. Click on the little pencil icon next to the **Name** field to edit the Contact Record.

Okay, first I need to make sure we have your name and contact information correct in our system. Can you please spell your first and last name for me?
 - d. After confirming the spelling of the client's name, confirm and correct or enter a **Phone** number for the client and an **Email** address. (Be careful to confirm the exact spelling of the email address.)
 - e. Click the blue **Save** button to save the changes to the contact record.
 - f. Click your browser's **Back** button to return to the case record.
3. In the **PARTIES** section of the case record, make sure there is a name in the **Landlord Name** field and check with the tenant to confirm that it is spelled correctly. (FirstName space LastName for a person, or CompanyName if not a person.)

I need to make sure we also have the name of the landlord correct in our records. Who is your landlord? (Can you spell that for me, please?)

- a. **NOTE:** If the landlord is a person (a private homeowner and not a business entity or large apartment complex) and the tenant does not know their first and last name, they need to get that information and call us back before we can continue intake. You must not continue with intake without the landlord's full name.
4. If there is a property manager whose full name the client knows, get their name and enter it in the **Property Mgr. Name** field. (FirstName space LastName for a person, or CompanyName if not a person. Do not enter just a first name.)

Do you have a property manager whose name you know? Do you know how to spell their name?

5. Enter the name of any adult roommate, partner, or family member living with the tenant and in the same situation with them (not taking the side of the landlord, for example) in the **Other Tenant Name** field.

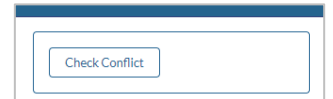
Is there another adult who is also a tenant—maybe a partner or a roommate—who is in the same situation with you? Can you spell their name for me? First name then last name.

6. If you have made any edits or the case record is in edit mode, click the blue **Save** button at the bottom of the page and follow the instructions in the next section, **Conflict Screening Check**.
 - a. If you did not make any edits to the names in the PARTIES section, skip the **Conflict Screening Check** and go to the following section, **Collect Basic Client/Case Information**.

CONFLICT SCREENING CHECK

NOTE: Only run the conflict screening check when you have entered new or updated information in the fields in the **PARTIES** section of the record. Do not run it again unless you edited one of the name fields in the **PARTIES** section.

1. Before continuing, click the **Check Conflict** button in the top right corner of the case record screen.



I need to have the computer run a brief check to make sure there's no conflict of interest and our attorneys can advise you. This should take less than one minute. Thanks for your patience while I do this.

2. After a few seconds, a **Conflict Check** window will open showing one of three results:
 - a. “No conflict”
 - b. “Volunteer review”
 - c. “Stop intake”

3. If the **Conflict Check** window says “**No conflict**” then simply click the **Close** button, read the script immediately below, and then skip ahead to the next section below: **Collect Basic Client/Case Information.**

Conflict Check

No conflict: continue with intake

Rose McFlower (tenant)
No conflicts

RRHA (landlord)
No conflicts

Enter Conflict Notes

Close

Okay, that came back fine, so we’re good to go forward with the intake.

4. If the **Conflict Check** window says “**Volunteer review...**” then you will need to look at the possible conflict identified and decide if the near-matching name might plausibly be the same person.
 - a. Compare the near-matching names identified by the software. (In the case illustrated here, Pipper McZippy is very close to Zipper McZippy.)

Conflict Check

Volunteer review: before continuing with intake, you must review the potentially conflicting name match(es). If the near-matching names are clearly distinct and very unlikely to be the result of a poor transcription or misspelling, note that in the case record and continue with the intake. If you are not sure if the near-matching names might be the same person, stop intake and send an email to ELHsupervisor@gmail.com so a VPLC supervisor can review the potential conflict.

Rose McFlower (tenant)
No conflicts

Pipper McZippy (landlord)
Zipper McZippy (93%)

Enter Conflict Notes

Possible Conflict for Pipper McZippy

Conflict Cleared
Supervisor Review

- b. Ask yourself: How likely is it that both names could represent the same person? (It is unlikely that someone serving a past client mistook “Mark” for “Mary,” for

example, but it IS possible “Zipper” was misspelled as “Pipper” by someone completing an earlier intake.)

- i. If it seems unlikely, then click the **Conflict Cleared** button, read the script immediately below, and then skip ahead to the next section below: **Collect Basic Client/Case Information**.

Okay, that came back fine, so we’re good to go forward with the intake.

- ii. If it seems likely that the two names could be the same person, or if you’re not sure, click the **Supervisor Review** button and **read the script for Step 5** below.

5. If the **Conflict Check** window says “**Stop intake...**” it means the system has identified an exact match for one of the names which could create a conflict of interest. You must stop the intake and read this script to the caller:

I’m sorry but in order to avoid conflicts of interest, one of the Helpline supervising attorneys needs to review this before we can take any more information from you or have an attorney advise you.

A supervising attorney will review this as soon as practical—usually in less than a day—and someone will get back to you with more information or to continue the intake process. Okay?

NOTE: The ONLY exception for this step is if the 100% match is for *only a single name*. For example, running the check on a contact named Mary Jones may produce a 100% match for just “Mary” with no last name listed or “Jones” with no first name listed. If this happens, you may disregard the check result and complete intake, but after the call email ELHSupervisor@gmail.com to notify Helpline staff so we can change the status of the case.

6. Click the **Close** button at the bottom of the pop-up screen.
7. If the system identified a potential conflict and you clicked the **Supervisor Review** button or if it identified an exact match and told you to stop intake, the system should automatically set the **Status** of the case to “Conflict Review.” You should see that toward the top of the screen on the left-hand side, right under the **Case Number** field.

The screenshot shows a case management interface for a case named "Rose McFlower". The status is "Conflict Review" and the case number is "00001017". The case owner is "Conflict Check". The first message to ELH was on 5/6/2021. The contact has agreed to scope, and there is no legal aid involvement.

Case Rose McFlower English	
Status Conflict Review	Case Number 00001017
Case Number 00001017	Case Owner Conflict Check
Status Conflict Review	1st Message to ELH 5/6/2021
Contact Agrees to Scope	No Legal Aid Involvement

8. If the **Status** is “Conflict Review” but the **Case Owner** field still lists you as the owner, and not “Conflict Check,” then click the **Assign To Queue** button in the top right corner of the page (just below the Check Conflict button). By doing this, the supervising attorneys will see the case in their list of cases that need conflict reviews.
9. Leave the case by clicking on **Home** in the top menu bar.

COLLECT BASIC CLIENT/CASE INFORMATION

1. Once the conflict screening process is complete and no conflict is identified, you will get information from the tenant to enter into the **PROPERTY**, **DEMOGRAPHICS**, and **FACTS** sections of the case record.

To open a case and give it to an attorney to help you, we need to collect information about your situation related to the potential eviction, but also about you and your household, including things like your income, your rent amount, type of housing, and that sort of thing. Collecting this extra information helps us better understand the eviction crisis in Virginia and who it is affecting. These questions will only take a few minutes. Okay?

2. The following steps may or may not take place in the order listed here. Some clients will be eager to give you a description of their situation before completing the basic intake data questions. It is fine to take their description early on, and then return to collect the demographic and other data before completing the intake.
3. Starting in the **PROPERTY** section, ask the client the following.

What is your address (where the eviction is possible)?

What is the legal jurisdiction that is located in? (Which court would the landlord file an eviction case in?)

NOTE: Sometimes a tenant is unsure what jurisdiction their home is in. Some Alexandria addresses, for example, are actually located in Fairfax County. So you may need to ask if they are sure of the answer to this question.

What type of home is this? (An apartment? A single-family home? A townhouse or duplex? A mobile home? A motel room? A room in someone’s house?)

Does your household get any government subsidies for rent, like public housing or section 8? (Or do you live in place that gets Low Income Housing Tax Credits and you have to report your income yearly?)

NOTE: You do not have to ask them what type of landlord they have. We can figure that out from the landlord’s name.

4. Next, the **DEMOGRAPHICS** section.

What is your date of birth?

What gender do you identify as?

Is any member of your household a veteran of the US armed services?

a. If any member of their household is a veteran, check the box for **Veteran**.

Does any member of your household have a disability?

b. If any member of their household has a disability, check the box for **Disability**.

If the tenant sounds fluent in English: It sounds like you are fluent in English, is that right?

If in doubt about caller's English fluency: Are you fluent in English or is there another language you would like us to use when working with you?

c. If they would like service in a language other than English, then check the box for **Limited English Proficient Contact** and select their preferred language from the **Other Preferred Language** pulldown menu.

What race do you identify as? (American Indian or Alaska Native? Asian? Black of African American? Pacific Islander? White? Other, unknown, or Multi-Racial?)

Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?

d. If they identify as Hispanic or Latino, check the box for **Contact is Hispanic/Latino**.

Okay, now some questions about your household.

How many children under 18 years old are there in your household?

How many adults between 18 and 59 years old in your household, including yourself?

How many adults 60 or over in your household, including yourself (if applicable)?

What is your household's monthly rent amount?

If you are currently behind on rent, how much do you owe? [If they're not sure, how much does their landlord say they owe?]

What is your household's gross monthly income, roughly? (Income before taxes, from all sources: employment, social security or disability, unemployment benefits, child support, etc.)

COMPLETE THE INTAKE INTERVIEW

1. Now move to the **FACTS** section of the case record. You will ask the client about some of the fields in this section (mostly those in the left-hand column of fields), but other fields (largely the right-hand column) are for information we will look up for them or we use to track our case processing.

Now I'm going to ask you about the legal situation that you called about. First, do you have a deadline coming up soon, like an eviction the sheriff has already scheduled, a court date coming up, or a deadline your landlord gave you in a written notice?

- a. If they have an upcoming deadline or date, enter that date in the field **Important Upcoming Date** and select the type of date from the pull-down menu in the field **Imp. Upcoming Date Type**. If the type of important upcoming date requires further explanation (it usually won't), put a brief description in the field **Other Imp. Date Type**.
 - b. If an upcoming deadline is either of the following, then select that value from the **Urgency** field at the start of the **FACTS** section. This will make sure Helpline staff give the client the priority their situation requires.
 - i. The client got the sheriff's notice scheduling their eviction for a specific date and time.
 - ii. The client has a court hearing on their eviction case scheduled in the next 7 days.
 - iii. The client's landlord has not gone through the full legal process with the court and the sheriff's office, but is threatening to change the locks or cut off essential utilities imminently (like, today or tomorrow) or already did one of those things within the past 24 hours.
2. Next, you can ask the client for information you will enter in the field **Facts from Intake Interview** (toward the top of the **FACTS** section)

Okay, can you briefly tell me the reason your landlord wants to evict you (or may want to)?

- *Is it because you're behind on rent or other costs?*
- *Are they not renewing your lease or terminating a month-to-month lease?*
- *Is it because of discrimination or retaliation against you?*
- *Or another reason?*

Has your landlord given you a written termination notice, notice to vacate, notice of default, or something like that? If so, when does it expire?

3. If the tenant owes rent, also ask the following questions:

Have you or your landlord applied for the Virginia Rent Relief Program?

- *Was the application approved or denied? (Or is it pending?)*
- *When was the application submitted?*
- *Did your landlord file the application on your behalf, or did you apply on your own?*
- ***IF THE TENANT SUBMITTED THE APPLICATION:*** *Has your landlord cooperated with the application requirements by submitting documents and information to the service center?*

4. After the client explains their situation, select the closest match from the **Reason for Potential Eviction** pulldown menu (below the **Important Upcoming Date** fields).
5. After getting the client's description of their situation, ask if they have any notices or documents related to the case that they can send to the Helpline by fax or email.

Do you have documents or notices from the landlord or the court or the sheriff's office related to the potential eviction? If you do, please send those to the Helpline by fax or by email. (Our fax number is 833-744-8315; our email is eviction@vplc.org.) Helpline staff may follow up with you by email requesting specific documents. It's important that we receive all requested documents. Without them, an attorney cannot advise you confidently about your potential defenses to eviction.

- a. Examples of types of documents or notices to send:

- i. Notice to Vacate
- ii. Notice of Termination
- iii. 14-day (or 5-day) Pay or Quit notice, or Notice of Default
- iv. Summons for Unlawful Detainer
- v. Writ of Eviction or Writ of Possession
- vi. Sheriff's eviction notice ("Final Notice" from sheriff)
- vii. Notices of lease violations
- viii. Lease (it would be good to have this, though it's likely to be long)

- b. If they say they will send us documents, ask when we can expect to get those and enter that date in the field **Date Client Will Provide Documents**, at the bottom of the left-hand column in the **FACTS** section.

When can we expect to receive those documents?

6. Review the case record, top to bottom, to see if you have gotten all the information you need from the client.

OFFER LEGAL INFORMATION TO THE CLIENT

1. Because you are not an attorney, you cannot tell a client how the law applies to their specific situation. (See our guidelines on avoiding the unauthorized practice of law, from the first volume of this volunteer manual.) But you can share legal information with callers as appropriate by reading the scripts found on the Helpline website (<https://evictionhelpline.org/legal-information-scripts/>). We have prepared scripts that you can use to share legal information with callers if they are interested and it seems appropriate for their situation.
2. Start by explaining to the client what your role is and what you can offer them.

Because I am not an attorney, I can't tell you how the law applies to your specific situation. The Helpline attorney will have to answer those types of questions when they talk with you.

But I do have some scripts I can read to you that explain some legal rights that tenants have in Virginia generally, which may apply to your situation...

- a. You may ask if the client has been through the eviction legal process before. If they have not, you can offer to explain the steps in that process to them.
- b. If the client is living in a hotel/motel as their primary residence, you can ask if they want you to tell them the basic rights that hotel and motel residents have under Virginia law.
- c. If their landlord is threatening to evict them without going to court and getting the sheriff involved, you can ask if they want you to explain the protections in Virginia law against evictions without court involvement and what tenants can do if their landlord tries it.
- d. If their landlord is trying to evict them only for unpaid rent, you can ask if they want you to tell them about the right under Virginia law for them to pay all they owe and have the case dismissed from court or an eviction cancelled (called the “Right of Redemption”).

CLOSING THE INTAKE INTERVIEW

1. When you have completed the interview with the client, **take a moment to scroll through the case** and make sure you're not missing any information.

TIP: Try entering the **Date Intake Complete** and hitting **Save**. The case will not let you save and prompt you if there's any required field left blank.

2. Tell them that an attorney will call them back with advice after reviewing their case.

I will get this information to the Eviction Legal Helpline attorneys so they can review it and give you a call back.

URGENT CASES (sheriff's evictions scheduled, court in a few days):
Because we understand that this case is very urgent, an attorney will try to call you back as soon as possible to talk with you and provide advice.

NON-URGENT CASES: *Someone will try to call you back within the next few business days to talk with you and help you with your case.*

If they are unable to reach you after trying to call you three times, and you still want help from us, you will need to call the Helpline back and leave another message or email us at eviction@vplc.org. But because we've done the intake already, you won't have to go through intake again. Our attorneys may also reach out to you by email.

Do you have any other questions for me?

3. Go ahead and end the call.
4. If you read the client one or more of the legal information scripts, record that information in the **Legal Info Read to Client** field by selecting the title of the script(s) you read from the field's left-hand column and clicking the right arrow icon to move the title into right-hand column of the field.

Available	Chosen
Unpaid Rent COVI...	
Rent Relief Progra...	
CDC Eviction Mora...	

5. Review the list in left-hand column of the **Issues of Interest** field and select those that seem to be present in the case and move them over to the right-hand column of the field by clicking on the right arrow. (This field is formatted just like the **Legal Info Read to Client** field.)

6. Next, check for Court Records relevant to the case by following the instructions in the next chapter. If you don't find any relevant records, enter a "**Date Court Records Checked**" and leave the rest of those fields blank. (See **Chapter 4** for step by step instructions.)

The image shows a screenshot of a web form with seven input fields. Each field has a horizontal line for text entry and a small pencil icon to its right, indicating that the fields are editable. The fields are labeled as follows from top to bottom: "Date Court Records Checked", "Past Eviction Cases w/Landlord", "Current Court Case Number", "Landlord Attorney", "Date of Judgment for Possession", and "Date Writ of Eviction Issued".

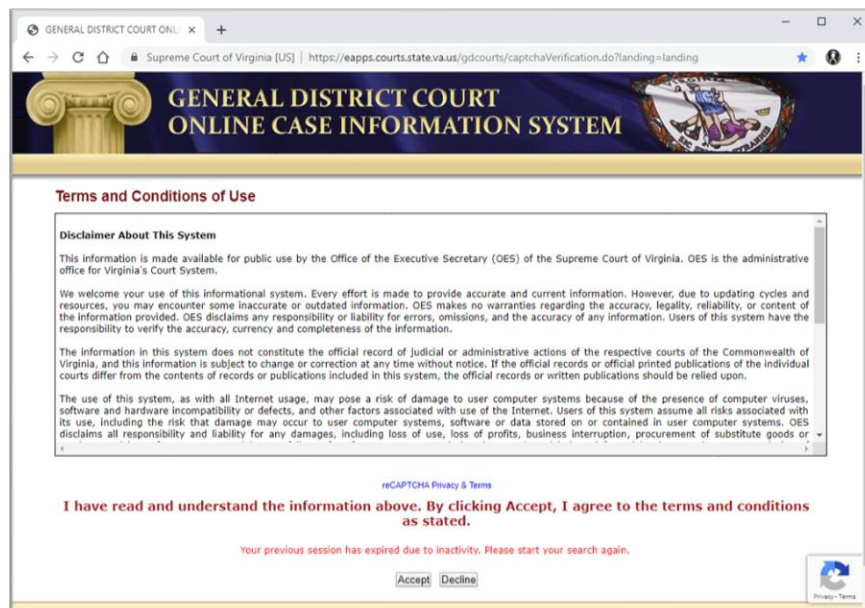
- a. If the client has court coming up or recently went to court and you can't find records in the client's name, email ELHSupervisor@gmail.com for help.
7. Well done, you've completed intake! Enter today's date in the **Date Intake Complete** field and hit **Save**. Then select **Cases** from the blue menu at the top of the page to return to the list of cases.

NOTE: Once **Date Intake Complete** is entered, the case will disappear from the **Pre-Intake & Intake Queue** and be moved into the **Advice Queue** for an attorney to review. If you need to pull the case back up again, enter the client's name in the search bar at the top right of the page, or navigate to the "**Recently Viewed Cases**" list and select the case.

Chapter 4: Checking Online Court Records

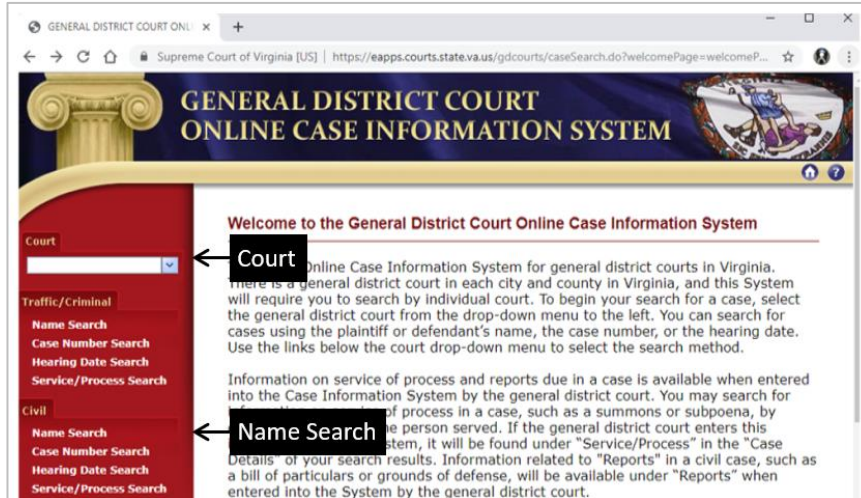
CHECKING THE COURTS' ONLINE CASE INFO SYSTEM

1. Open the General District Court Online Case Information System
 - a. <https://eapps.courts.state.va.us/gdcourts/captchaVerification.do?landing=landing>
 - b. From the landing page, review the Terms and Conditions of Use, then click the Accept button at the bottom of the screen.



FINDING THE RELEVANT CASE RECORD

1. From the Welcome screen, use the **Court** pulldown menu in the left-side navigation column to select the jurisdiction (city or county) the case is in. Then click on **Name Search** from the “Civil” tab in the left-hand navigation column.



2. From the court’s name search screen, enter the tenant’s names in the text input fields. (For easily misspelled names, you may have to enter different variants of the first or last name, or try entering a partial name; for example, Peg Wilk for Peggy Wilkerson.) Then click the **Search** button at the bottom of the page.



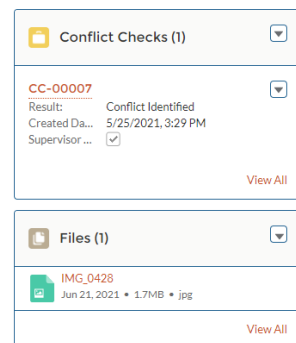
3. From the results page(s), look for the tenant’s name in the **Defendant** column, an upcoming or recent date in the **Hearing Date** column, and Unlawful Detainer in the **Case Type** column.

Case #	Defendant	Hearing Date	Judgment	Case Type
GV08007093-00	SOUTHWOOD CHARLOTTESVILLE LLC	GARCIA, JOSE LUIS	08/14/2008 01:00 PM	Case Dismissed Unlawful Detainer
GV11011474-00	SOUTHWOOD LLC	GARCIA, JOSE LUIS	11/17/2011 01:00 PM	Case Dismissed Unlawful Detainer
GV07006585-01	THE RECTOR AND VISITORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF	GARCIA, JUAN	01/31/2008 02:30 PM	Closed Garnishment
GV12001826-00	COMMONWEALTH OF VA	GARCIA, JUAN	02/29/2012 09:00 AM	Other Administrative License

- a. You may have to click through several screens of results. Even with “Current” **Data Status** for the search, you are likely to get results from the past several years.

4. Look for any **Unlawful Detainer** (UD) cases heard within the past **6 months** with the client as the defendant and their current landlord as the plaintiff. If more than one case was filed, start with the most recent one.
 - a. If there are no Unlawful Detainers from the past 6 months with the client listed as Defendant, enter today's date in **Date Court Records Checked** field and hit **SAVE** without entering any additional information. This indicates that no relevant court records were found.

NOTE: If the tenant confirmed they have court coming up, recently went to court, or have a sheriff's eviction scheduled, but you can't find the corresponding court record, make sure you have the right jurisdiction and confirm that the lease is in the client's name. If you still can't find their court record, email ELHSupervisor@gmail.com for assistance.
 - b. Any cases other than **Unlawful Detainer** will not be relevant. If the tenant's current court case and the reason for their call is not a UD, their case may be out of scope. Email ELHSupervisor@gmail.com to notify Helpline Staff.
5. If the name of the Plaintiff on the case is different than the Landlord Name in the **PARTIES** section of the case record in our case management system, then we will need to resolve that.
 - a. **Is this the case the client called us about?** Sometimes a tenant with the same name as a Helpline client may have a current or recent eviction case in the same court with a different landlord. If it seems like that could be the case for the records you are seeing, do not update the landlord name in the Helpline case record and email the Helpline supervisor at ELHSupervisor@gmail.com so we can review it and see if the client may have given the wrong name for the landlord.
 - b. **Is the name of the plaintiff similar to the landlord name the client gave us?** For example, if the Helpline client identifies their landlord as "Maple Spring" but the plaintiff on the court record is listed as "Maple Springs Apartments LLC," or if they identified their landlord as "James Rutherford" but the plaintiff is listed as "John Rutherford," we should correct the name in our case record to match the one in the court records unless we have other reasons to believe the court record is incorrect.
 - i. **BUT:** Occasionally the courts do enter the plaintiff's name incorrectly. If the names seem curiously different, you can also check to see if the client has sent us any notices or other documents that could help sort it out. You can find and open documents from the client in the **Files** window in the right-hand sidebar of the case record, just under the **Conflict Checks** window.



- c. **If you aren't sure...** Email ELHSupervisor@gmail.com letting us know to check the case and see if we believe the landlord's name needs to be corrected.
6. **IMPORTANT:** If you do correct the landlord's name in the case record, you will need to save the edits (click the blue **Save** button at the bottom of the screen) and then run the Conflict Screening again. Follow the directions in the **Conflict Screening** instructions in **Chapter 3**.

NOTING IMPORTANT CASE DATA

1. The key information from the **Civil Case Details** screen for entry in the case record is the following.

Case Information				
Case Number : GV11033000 -00	Filed Date : 06/06/2019			
Case Type : Unlawful Detainer	Debit Type :			
Plaintiff Information				
Name	DBA/TA	Address	Judgment	Attorney
KRS HOLDINGS INC	GREATER RICHMOND RENTALS	RICHMOND VA 23224	Plaintiff	AGENT/MANAGER
Defendant Information				
Name	DBA/TA	Address	Judgment	Attorney
ROSS, BETSY		RICHMOND VA 23224	Plaintiff	
ROSS, BOB		RICHMOND VA 23224	Plaintiff	
Hearing Information				
Date	Time	Result	Hearing Type	Courtroom
06/17/2019	10:00 AM	Default Judgment		202
Service/Process				
Reports				
Judgment Information				
Judgment : Plaintiff	Costs : \$ 58.00	Attorney Fees : \$ 150.00		
Principal Amount : \$ 750.00	Other Amount :	Interest Award : \$ 0.00 - FROM 06/17/2019		
Possession : Immediate	Writ Issued Date : 08/05/2019	Unexecuted Eviction Writ(s) :		
Is Judgment Satisfied :	Date Satisfaction Filed :	Other Awards :		
Further Case Information :				

2. The data from the courts' online case record is entered into the following fields in the case record's **FACTS** section:

- a. **Current Court Case Number:** this is the Case Number from the top of the courts' online case record.
- b. **Landlord Attorney:** if an attorney is listed in the online court record for the Plaintiff, check to see if that attorney is listed in the picklist for this field. If so, select them. If not, you can leave the field blank.

Date Court Records Checked	
Past Eviction Cases w/Landlord	
Current Court Case Number	
Landlord Attorney	
Date of Judgment for Possession	
Date Writ of Eviction Issued	

- c. **Date of Judgment for Possession:** if the "Possession" field in the courts' online case record says either Immediate or Possession, then this is the "Hearing Date" with the "Result" listed as Default Judgment or simply

Judgment. (Occasionally a case will result in a judgment to the landlord, but for money only and not possession. If that is the case, leave this field blank.)

- d. **Date Writ of Eviction Issued:** this is the “Writ Issued Date” from the courts’ online case record.
3. Especially if researching court records during the **Pre-Intake** process, add the following additional information elsewhere in the case:
 - a. **Other Tenant Name:** If there is another defendant listed in addition to the client, enter that name in the **PARTIES** section of the case and run a new **Conflict Screening** (see Chapter 3).
 - b. **Important Upcoming Date:** If the tenant has an upcoming hearing and the case does not yet have it listed, enter the hearing date into this field. If the hearing is within the next 7 days, select **Court in <7 Days** from the **Urgency** dropdown menu.
 - c. **Other Imp. Date Type:** If the important upcoming date is a court hearing, enter the scheduled time of the hearing in this field (e.g. 1:00PM, 8:30AM).

LOOKING AT RELATED CASES

1. After getting information from the case record for the immediately relevant case, return to the screen with the list of cases and look for other unlawful detainer cases brought by the same landlord against the tenant within the six months.
 - a. Judgments for possession against the tenant within the past 6 months are especially important to note in the case record.
2. For each case, view the **Civil Case Details** screen and, in the client’s case record **Past Eviction Cases w/Landlord** field in the **FACTS** section, make a note of each case that resulted in a judgment for possession. Also note if a writ of possession was issued for each case.
 - a. Example of a note in the **Past Eviction Cases w/Landlord** field: “Unlawful Detainer dismissed 2/12/21 (case GV210000352); UD with judgment for possession 3/29/21 (GV210001872), no writ issued.”

Chapter 5: Completing the Intake Process

INTAKE COMPLETION CHECKLIST

1. Before a case can move from Intake status to Advice status, certain key fields must be complete. After completing the steps in the previous chapters, review the case record to ensure that the record is complete. If a client is in an especially urgent situation (sheriff's eviction within a couple of days, etc.) we can move the case to Advice status even if it's less than complete. Except in such emergency situations or as directed by the Helpline Coordinator, there should be information in the following fields **at a minimum**.

- Date of 1st Message to ELH
- Contact Agrees to Scope
- No Legal Aid Involvement

PARTIES

- Contact Name
- Landlord Name
- Contact Phone *or* Contact Email

PROPERTY

- Address, City, Zip
- Legal Jurisdiction

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Contact's Race
- # Household Members Under 18
- # Household Members 18-59 y.o.
- # Household Members 60+ y.o.
- Monthly Rent Amount
- Amount Owed to Landlord
- Household's Gross Monthly Income

FACTS

- Type of housing
- Facts from Intake Interview
- Reason for Potential Eviction
- Date Court Records Checked

MARKING INTAKE COMPLETE

1. Once you have confirmed that the case record is complete, if you have not already done so enter the day's date in the **Date Intake Complete** field at the bottom of the right-hand column in the **FACTS** section. Then click the blue **Save** button at the bottom of the page.
2. Back at the top of the case record page, click the **Assign To Queue** button to change the case owner to the Advice Queue.
3. Intake is now complete, and you can click on **CASES** in the blue menu bar to leave the case record page.

Appendix: Scripts for Giving Legal Information

USING THE SCRIPTS TO GIVE HELPLINE CALLERS LEGAL INFORMATION

In Volume 1 of this manual, we explain why and how the non-attorney volunteers staffing the Helpline must avoid giving legal advice to callers. In short, giving legal advice means attempting to apply general legal principles (the law) to specific facts (a caller's situation). But non-attorney volunteers may communicate general legal principles, which is considered sharing legal information. Please review the appropriate section from Volume 1 if you have any questions about this distinction.

So that non-attorney volunteers can give useful legal information to tenants who call the Helpline, we have prepared scripts that volunteers can read to callers to explain some of the most useful legal principles and rights for tenants facing potential eviction. If you have questions about any of the information contained in the scripts, feel free to ask the VPLC supervising attorney about it. We will be happy to explain it to you.

When you offer a tenant the legal information contained in the scripts below, the tenant may ask your opinion about how the legal principles apply to their case. They may say something like, "So that means that I have at least a month before I have to find a new place to live, right?" or "So I don't need to do anything yet because I haven't received a written notice?" Even if the answer seems obvious or you have been volunteering with the Helpline long enough to know how the law should apply to a given case, you must not speculate how the law applies to the caller's situation. You should tell the tenant something like the following.

I'm not an attorney, so I can't tell you how the law applies to the facts in your case. A Helpline lawyer will need to tell you that. I just need to get the best information into the case record so that an attorney can advise you about your rights as completely as possible.

If the tenant pushes for you to give your opinion of what it probably means in their case, you can tell them that you could get in real trouble and so could the Eviction Legal Helpline's supervising attorneys if you offered your opinion on how the law applies to a given situation.

LINK TO LATEST LEGAL INFORMATION SCRIPTS

The most up-to-date versions of the legal information scripts are located on the Eviction Legal Helpline's website. <https://evictionhelpline.org/legal-information-scripts/>