

Apple Valley Unified Teachers Association (AVUTA)

Unfortunately, in today's world, teachers and education workers can find themselves in need of legal help, sometimes unexpectedly. It could be a credential issue, an accusation made, Special Ed issues, pay issues or any number of things.

One the automatic benefits of being a member of AVUTA/CTA/NEA is legal help for work related issues. The important thing to remember is that this program is only available to members and if you need help, you cannot become a member after the fact and access this program. If you are not an AVUTA member we encourage you to become one to receive this and the many other benefits of AVUTA membership.

We often receive questions from members and non-members about this program, so we are putting out this Q and A.

- **What is a Group Legal Services (GLS) attorney?**

GLS attorneys are a network of attorneys throughout California with their own law practices who provide legal services to CTA members. GLS attorneys are well-versed in education and labor law and are familiar with issues that arise for teachers, e.g., credential problems, permanent teacher dismissals, RIFs, employment-related criminal charges, and probationary non-reelections.

- **I want to speak with an attorney about an issue—how do I receive a referral?**

First, you should always bring employment-related issues to the attention of your CTA representative; members sometimes must first contact a building representative. Often, he or she can resolve the issue. For example, your issue might be resolved by filing a grievance on your behalf. GLS attorneys do not handle grievances. A grievance would be filed and handled by your chapter or CTA staff person.

Your CTA staff person will determine whether you need to be referred to a Group Legal Services (GLS) attorney. Your CTA staff person handles the referral and does the paperwork so that CTA - not you - will be charged for the initial advice and consultation. As a current CTA member, you may be entitled to receive one free hour of advice and consultation in a civil employment-related matter and a half-hour free advice and consultation in a non-employment matter. Non-members are not entitled to receive GLS services.

- **Are there other requirements in order to be referred to a GLS attorney?**

Yes. You must have been a CTA member at the time of the incident giving rise to the need for legal services and at the time the request for legal services is made. You must also keep your CTA membership current while receiving legal services. In addition, to avoid conflicts of interest, a member who is asserting a claim against CTA or one of its chapters is ineligible for a GLS referral.

- **A family friend is an attorney. Can I see him and expect CTA to pay for it?**

No. CTA will not pay for attorney services if the attorney is not a GLS attorney. CTA will not pay for the services of a GLS attorney if you bypass the CTA representative and contact a GLS attorney directly, i.e. a referral was not done by a CTA staff person. You must go through your CTA staff person for every referral to a GLS attorney.

- **What funding is available to my GLS attorney for services under the GLS program?**

Please refer to the "GLS Member Summary of Benefits" for more information on basic funding. In addition, the CTA Chief Counsel and Legal Director have the authority to authorize additional funding in cases that are significant or precedential.