

Non-profit center uses Clio Draft to address pandemic problems

Company name: Laura MacInnis, Family Violence Law Center in Oakland

- Location: Oakland, California, USA
- Practice Areas: Non-profit

Clio Draft enables remote client access during emergency requests.

Situation

For Laura MacInnis, who works at a non-profit legal organization in Oakland, CA, getting clients to sign forms was a huge issue. The pandemic only made it worse. Balancing safety requirements with the need for in-person signatures on forms slowed her organization and undermined its mission.

Her center was using a tool called Essential Forms, the California courts' solution for signing documents. Unfortunately, that option requires ink signatures from signees on printed paper. Because the Family Violence Law Center deals with situations that require quick response times—including intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking—they need to work through cases quickly with as few wrinkles as possible. Introducing a barrier to each case by requiring signees to come into the office wasn't cutting it.

Under normal circumstances, pleadings were pulled, printed, and signed by clients; during a pandemic lock-down, that was nearly impossible. The Family Violence Law Center could not fulfill their mission with that in-person requirement.

Solution

After reviewing options for obtaining signatures during the pandemic, Clio Draft became MacInnis' obvious solution. Clio Draft has a federally-compliant electronic signature tool built right in. Since the product is web-based, lawyers simply sign online and then forward prepared documents to clients for their e-signature. This eliminates the need for clients to come into the office to sign printed documents.

With the ability to get electronic signatures, MacInnis could continue her important work despite the pandemic.

*"We need to evolve into what our needs are," she said.
"We couldn't meet with clients individually so we use
the electronic signature feature to get documents
signed quickly."*

Adaptability became a key skill for companies changed by the pandemic. The flexible, cloud-based solutions built into Clio Draft improved the experience for clients of the Family Violence Law Center. With so many filings for emergency orders, FVLC must prioritize quick response times for their clients.

Everyone at FVLC is focused on quickly creating peace in their clients' lives. Any improvement that reduces burdens on clients and speeds up the process is a blessing for FVLC's team, and adopting Clio Draft's court form tool was an easy improvement.

Results

With a clear goal of speed and ease-of-use in mind, MacInnis tested Clio Draft's capacity. What she experienced went beyond her expectations.

Thanks to Clio Draft's court form tool, client signatures are now handled remotely. This reduces a burden on the client with no requirement that clients in crisis learn a cumbersome tool. According to MacInnis, Lawyaw's e-

signature tool is more user-friendly and easy to search than other programs. And it gets better every day.

MacInnis now has access to over 5,000 court forms with more being added all the time.

She also found the organization of documents within Clio Draft to be very helpful. As she manages a high volume of applicants at FVLC, Clio Draft's intuitive structure helps avoid confusing mix-ups while passing information to so many clients. MacInnis also makes heavy use of the client folders feature in Lawyaw. This portal gives clients access to documents that need their input while being easy enough for quick client adoption.

Although MacInnis incorporated Clio Draft's tools in response to the pandemic, she plans to continue using them when things get back to normal.

"I don't think we'll ever go back to anything else," MacInnis said. "We rely on Clio Draft to do a lot of our court pleadings and consolidate everything in client folders. The ability to get our emergency requests signed very quickly has been [the biggest benefit]."

FVLC team found a great remote signature option and gained unexpected benefits as well. MacInnis commented that her Center gets a lot of non-English speaking clients and that Clio Draft has been crucial for bridging any language barrier. Clio Draft's translation to Spanish is very helpful for them. And she likes that she can add exhibits and other documents to client folders. The more MacInnis and FVLC's team dig into Lawyaw, the more they find ways to serve their clients in need.

A pandemic pushed the Family Violence Law Center in Oakland toward online solutions to pressing problems; now they've found a technology partner that will help adapt to whatever unforeseen challenges they'll face in the future.

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To see how Clio can help you manage and grow your firm, [schedule a free demo](#) at clio.com, call 1-888-858-2546, or email sales@clio.com.