

Rule 49. Unauthorized Practice of Law.

(a) IN GENERAL. No person may practice law in the District of Columbia or hold out as authorized to do so unless:

- (1) the person is a D.C. Bar Member; or
- (2) the conduct is permitted by one or more of Rules 49(c)(1)-(13).

(b) DEFINITIONS. The following definitions apply to Rule 49:

(1) “Person” means any individual, firm, unincorporated association, partnership, corporation, or other legal or business entity.

(2) “Practice law” means to provide legal services for or on behalf of another person within a client relationship of trust or reliance. A person is presumed to be practicing law when doing the following for or on behalf of another:

(A) preparing any legal document, including a deed, mortgage, assignment, discharge, lease, trust instrument, will, codicil, or contract, except a person is not presumed to be practicing law when preparing a routine agreement incidental to a regular course of business as a non-attorney;

(B) preparing or expressing a legal opinion or giving legal advice;

(C) appearing or acting as an attorney in any tribunal;

(D) preparing any claim, demand, or pleading of any kind, or any written document containing legal argument or interpretation of law, for filing in any government agency, court, or other tribunal;

(E) providing advice or counsel as to how an activity described in Rule 49(b)(2)(A)-(D) might be done, or whether it was done, in accordance with applicable law; or

(F) furnishing an attorney or attorneys, or other persons, to render the services described in Rule 49(b)(2)(A)-(E).

(3) “In the District of Columbia” means at a location within the District of Columbia.

(4) “Hold out as authorized” to practice law in the District of Columbia means to indicate in any manner to any other person that one is competent, authorized, or available to practice law in the District of Columbia. Among the terms that ordinarily give that indication are “esquire,” “lawyer,” “attorney,” “attorney at law,” “counsel,” “counselor,” “counselor at law,” “contract lawyer,” “trial advocate,” “legal representative,” “legal advocate,” “notario,” and “judge.”

(5) “Committee” means the District of Columbia Court of Appeals Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law.

(6) “D.C. Bar Member” means a person who was admitted by the court under Rule 46 or 46-A, and who has taken the oath under Rule 46(l); it does not include persons with inactive, retired,

suspended, or disbarred status, and it does not include special legal consultants as defined in Rule 46.

(7) “Admitted” in a jurisdiction means to be a member in good standing of the legal profession in a state, territory, or foreign country where the members of the profession are admitted to practice as counselors at law or the equivalent, and are subject to effective regulation and discipline by a duly constituted professional body or a public authority; a person is not “admitted” in a jurisdiction if the person was disbarred or suspended for disciplinary reasons, or resigned with charges pending, or if the person has inactive, judicial, or retired status.

(8) “Business document” means any document submitted or made available to any client, third party, the public, or any official entity in connection with a person’s provision of legal or law-related services, and may include letters, e-mails, business cards, website biographies, pleadings, filings, discovery requests and responses, formal documents of all kinds, advertisements, and social media.

(9) “Supervise” means to make reasonable efforts to ensure that another person conforms to the applicable Rules of Professional Conduct.

(10) “Regulate” means to control by rule or other restriction. Examples of the regulation of persons who appear on behalf of another in a legal matter include: establishing minimum requirements to ensure the competent and ethical provision of services, requiring familiarity with and adherence to forum procedures, creating a registry of authorized practitioners, and imposing sanctions or disqualification from future practice for misconduct.

(11) “*Pro bono*” means provided without fee or for a nominal processing fee for one or more individuals with limited means.

(12) “Law firm” means an attorney or attorneys in a law partnership, professional corporation, sole proprietorship, or other association engaged in the business of practicing law, but does not include the legal department of a corporation or other organization, or any government entity.

(13) “Appear” means to submit documents or otherwise seek to be heard in a proceeding before a government agency, court, or other tribunal.

(c) ACTIVITIES THAT PERSONS WHO ARE NOT D.C. BAR MEMBERS MAY PERFORM.

(1) *United States Employee.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services to the United States as an employee of the United States and may hold out as authorized to provide those services.

(2) *Practice Before Certain Government Agencies.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services in or reasonably related to a pending or potential proceeding in any department, agency, or office of the United States or of the District of Columbia, or any tribunal created by an international treaty to which the United States is a party, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, if:

(A) the services are authorized by statute or by a department, agency, office, or tribunal rule

that expressly permits and regulates practice before the department, agency, office, or tribunal; and

(B) the person gives prominent notice in all business documents specifically concerning practice authorized by Rule 49(c)(2) that the person is not a D.C. Bar Member and that the person's practice in the District of Columbia is limited to providing the types of legal services authorized by one or more of Rule 49(c)(2), (3), (5), (6), (7), (9), (10), (11), or (12), and specifying which of those types of services the person provides in the District of Columbia.

(3) *Practice Before Federal Courts.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services in the District of Columbia in or reasonably related to a pending or potential proceeding in any court of the United States, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, if

(A) the person has been or reasonably expects to be admitted to practice in that court; and

(B) if the person has an office in the District of Columbia, the person gives prominent notice in all business documents that the person is not a D.C. Bar Member and that the person's practice is limited to providing the types of legal services authorized by one or more of Rule 49(c)(2), (3), (5), (6), (7), (9), (10), (11), or (12), and specifying which of those types of services the person provides in the District of Columbia.

The District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia are not courts of the United States within the meaning of this Rule 49(c)(3).

(4) *District of Columbia Employee.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services to the District of Columbia as an employee of the District of Columbia, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, during the first 365 days of employment as an attorney for the District of Columbia if the person is admitted in another United States jurisdiction.

(5) *Labor Negotiations and Arbitrations.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services in or reasonably related to negotiation of, or a grievance arising under, a collective bargaining agreement between a labor organization and an employer, including arbitration of a grievance, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, if the recipient of the services does not reasonably expect that the services are being provided by a D.C. Bar Member. This Rule 49(c)(5) does not authorize a person to appear in any court, or in any department, agency, or office of the United States or the District of Columbia.

(6) *In-House Counsel.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services to the person's employer or its organizational affiliates, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, if the employer understands that the person is not a D.C. Bar Member. This Rule 49(c)(6) does not authorize a person to appear in any court, or in any department, agency, or office of the United States or the District of Columbia. A person practicing under Rule 49(c)(6) is subject to the power and jurisdiction of the courts of the District of Columbia and must abide by the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct.

(7) *Pro Hac Vice.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services in or reasonably related to a pending or potential proceeding in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals or the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, if the person has been or reasonably expects to be admitted *pro hac vice*,

in accordance with the requirements in Rule 49(c)(7)(A).

(A) *Requirements for Admission Pro Hac Vice.* A person may be admitted *pro hac vice* in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals or the Superior Court of the District of Columbia only if the person:

(i) is admitted in another United States jurisdiction;

(ii) before applying for *pro hac vice* admission, has arranged to be supervised (as defined by Rule 49(b)(9)) by a D.C. Bar Member;

(iii) before applying for *pro hac vice* admission, has read all of this Rule 49(c)(7) and has read either all the rules of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals or all the rules of the relevant division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, as applicable to the proceeding for which admission is to be sought;

(iv) does not practice law in the District of Columbia or hold out as authorized to do so other than in the matter for which *pro hac vice* admission is to be sought, except to the extent that the person's practice or holding out is authorized by one or more of Rules 49(c)(1)-(6) or (8)-(12); and

(v) has not applied for admission *pro hac vice* in 5 or more proceedings (excluding *pro bono* proceedings) in the courts of the District of Columbia in the prior 365 days, unless the person reasonably believes good cause exists for the court to grant admission in more than 5 proceedings.

(B) *Applying for Admission Pro Hac Vice.* To apply for admission *pro hac vice* in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals or Superior Court of the District of Columbia, a person must:

(i) prepare an application in which the person, under penalty of perjury:

(a) declares that the person meets all of the requirements in Rule 49(c)(7)(A);

(b) identifies all United States states or territories where the applicant is admitted to practice and the applicant's bar number in each of those jurisdictions;

(c) declares that no disciplinary complaints are pending against the applicant, or describes all pending complaints;

(d) declares that the applicant has never been denied admission to the District of Columbia Bar, or describes the circumstances of any denials;

(e) identifies the name, address, and D.C. Bar number of the D.C. Bar Member who has agreed to supervise the person under Rule 49(c)(7)(A)(ii);

(f) if the person practices law in the District of Columbia or holds out as authorized to do so other than in the matter for which *pro hac vice* admission is sought, explains the reasons one or more of Rules 49(c)(1)-(12) authorize all aspects of the person's practice or holding out;

(g) if the person applied for admission *pro hac vice* in 5 or more proceedings (excluding

pro bono proceedings) in the courts of the District of Columbia in the prior 365 days, sets forth grounds constituting good cause for the court to grant admission notwithstanding Rule 49(c)(7)(A)(v);

(h) acknowledges the power and jurisdiction of the courts of the District of Columbia over the applicant's conduct in or concerning the proceeding;

(i) agrees to abide by the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct in the proceeding if the applicant is admitted *pro hac vice*; and

(j) agrees promptly to notify the court if, during the proceeding, the applicant is suspended or disbarred for disciplinary reasons or resigns with charges pending in any jurisdiction or court.

(ii) submit a copy of the application to the Office of Admissions and pay the required application fee to the Clerk of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals (unless the person's client has been authorized to proceed *in forma pauperis* under Rule 24 or Super. Ct. Civ. R. 54-II); and

(iii) file the application, with a receipt for payment if applicable, in the office of the clerk of the court in which *pro hac vice* admission is sought.

(C) *Power of the Court.* The court in which *pro hac vice* admission is sought may grant or deny applications for admission *pro hac vice*, and may revoke an admission, in its discretion.

(D) *Duties of Persons Admitted Pro Hac Vice.* A person admitted *pro hac vice* is subject to the power and jurisdiction of the courts of the District of Columbia, and must abide by the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct, for conduct in or concerning a proceeding in which the person is admitted *pro hac vice*. A person admitted *pro hac vice* must notify the court promptly if, during the proceeding, the person is suspended or disbarred for disciplinary reasons or resigns with charges pending in any jurisdiction or court.

(8) *While Bar Application Is Pending.*

(A) *In General.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services in the District of Columbia, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, for a period not to exceed 365 days from the start of the practice if:

(i) the person's first application to the District of Columbia Bar is pending;

(ii) the person is admitted in another United States jurisdiction;

(iii) the person is supervised by a D.C. Bar Member on each client matter, and the D.C. Bar Member agrees to be jointly responsible for the quality of the work on each client matter; and

(iv) the person gives prominent notice in all business documents that the person's practice is supervised by one or more D.C. Bar Members and that the person is not a D.C. Bar Member.

(B) *Extension of Time.* On request and for good cause, the Director of the Committee on Admissions may extend beyond 365 days the period during which a person is authorized to practice

by Rule 49(c)(8). A request for an extension must be submitted in writing to the Director at least 14 days before the 365-day period expires, except that for good cause the Director can waive the 14-day requirement. An applicant who has submitted a written request at least 14 days before the end of the 365-day period or who has received a waiver of the 14-day requirement from the Director may continue to practice under Rule 49(c)(8) until the Director renders a decision on the request for an extension of the 365-day period. If the request is granted, the Director must inform the person in writing of the length of the extension.

(9) *Pro Bono*.

(A) *Attorneys Working Pro Bono*. A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide *pro bono* legal services, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, if the person is not employed by the Public Defender Service or a non-profit organization that provides *pro bono* legal services and:

(i) is or was admitted in another United States jurisdiction, or previously was a D.C. Bar Member;

(ii) was not disbarred or suspended for disciplinary reasons, and has not resigned with charges pending, in any United States jurisdiction or court;

(iii) is supervised by a D.C. Bar Member on each *pro bono* matter;

(iv) gives prominent notice in all business documents specifically concerning each *pro bono* matter that the person's work on the matter is supervised by a D.C. Bar Member and that the person is not a D.C. Bar Member;

(v) if the matter involves appearance in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals or the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, the person, in the first pleading or other document filed with the court, identifies the supervising D.C. Bar Member by name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, and D.C. Bar number; and

(vi) provides services on each *pro bono* matter in affiliation with either:

(a) a non-profit organization in the District of Columbia that routinely provides *pro bono* legal services; or

(b) the legal *pro bono* program of the person's employer, if the employer is not a law firm.

(B) *Law School Graduates Seeking Admission to a Bar*. A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide *pro bono* legal services and may hold out as authorized to provide *pro bono* legal services for a period of no more than 365 days from the start of such practice if:

(i) the person graduated with a J.D. degree from an American Bar Association-approved law school;

(ii) the person has applied to take the bar examination described in Rule 46(c)(7)(A) or 46(d)

in a United States jurisdiction, and, if the applicant has taken the examination but not earned a passing score, is eligible to re-sit for the examination and timely applies to re-sit for the examination at its next administration during the 365-day period;

(iii) the person is trained and supervised by a D.C. Bar Member who is affiliated with the Public Defender Service or a non-profit organization that provides *pro bono* legal services on each *pro bono* matter; and

(iv) the person gives prominent notice in all business documents specifically concerning each *pro bono* matter that the person's work on the matter is supervised by a D.C. Bar Member and that the person is not admitted to practice law in any United States jurisdiction.

(C) *Applicability of Rules of Professional Conduct.* A person practicing under Rule 49(c)(9) is subject to the power and jurisdiction of the courts of the District of Columbia, and must abide by the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct.

(10) *Authorized Court Programs.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services as part of a program that has been expressly authorized by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals or the Superior Court of the District of Columbia if the person complies with all requirements that the authorizing court has imposed for the program.

(11) *Organizations in Small Claims or Landlord-Tenant Disputes.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member and who is an officer, director, or employee of a corporation, partnership, or similar organization may provide legal services on behalf of the organization in:

(A) an attempt to settle either a landlord-tenant dispute or a dispute that would be within the jurisdiction of the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, except that this Rule 49(c)(11)(A) does not authorize an appearance in court;

(B) an appearance in the Landlord and Tenant Branch of the Civil Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia solely for the purpose of entry of a consent judgment, if the person at the time of appearing files a declaration under penalty of perjury that the person is authorized to bind the organization in settlement; or

(C) a pending or potential proceeding in which the organization is or is to be a defendant (and not a cross-claimant or counter-claimant) in the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch of the Civil Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, if the person at the time of appearing files a declaration under penalty of perjury that the person is authorized to bind the organization in settlement or trial.

(12) *Alternative Dispute Resolution.* A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member may provide legal services in or reasonably related to a pending or potential arbitration, mediation, or other alternative dispute resolution ("ADR") proceeding, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, if the person:

(A) is admitted in another jurisdiction or court;

(B) provides these services in no more than 5 ADR proceedings in the District of Columbia per calendar year (excluding *pro bono* proceedings); and

(C) does not otherwise practice law in the District of Columbia or hold out as authorized to do so except to the extent that the person's practice or holding out is authorized by one or more of Rules 49(c)(1)-(12).

(13) *Incidental and Temporary Practice*. A person who is not a D.C. Bar Member and who does not maintain an office or other systematic and continuous presence in the District of Columbia or use a District of Columbia address for the practice of law may provide legal services on a temporary basis, and may hold out as authorized to provide those services, if the services:

(A) are in or reasonably related to a pending or potential proceeding before a court or other tribunal in another jurisdiction in which the person is admitted or reasonably expects to be authorized by law or order to appear; or

(B) arise out of or are reasonably related to the person's practice in a jurisdiction in which the person is admitted.

(14) *Community Justice Worker Programs*.

(A) Community Justice Workers. Pursuant to a court-approved program as provided in this Rule, persons who are not D.C. Bar members, including nonlawyers, may engage in the limited practice of law under the supervision of a D.C. Bar member who is employed by an eligible organization that provides free or low-cost legal services to residents of the District of Columbia.

(B) Eligible Organizations. An organization may apply to operate a community justice worker ("CJW") program if the organization:

(i) is a non-profit organization that is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code; and

(ii) provides free or low-cost legal services to residents of the District of Columbia.

(C) Court Approval. An eligible organization that seeks to operate a CJW program must submit an application to the Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

(i) Application. The application must contain the following information:

- the eligibility criteria for CJWs;
- the area or areas of practice in which CJWs will work;
- a list of the legal tasks that CJWs will be permitted to perform;
- a description of the training that the organization will provide to CJWs, including substantive training, training on applicable procedures, and training on compliance with the ethical obligations of CJWs (specifically including the obligation to avoid conflicts of interest);

- a description of the manner in which CJWs will be supervised by a D.C. Bar member or members employed by the applicant;
- a description of the applicant's procedures for receiving and addressing any complaints about the performance of a CJW;
- a representation that CJWs will be covered by the applicant's legal malpractice insurance;
- a representation that the applicant will obtain written informed consent, as required by D.C. App. R. 49(c)(14)(K), from clients to be represented by a CJW; and
- a representation that attorneys who supervise CJWs will be informed of their obligation to do so as required by D.C. App. R. 49(c)(14)(L).

(ii) Approval Process. The Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, or a judicial officer designated by the Chief Judge, shall determine whether to approve or deny an application. The court may request additional information from an applicant. If an application is approved, an order shall issue to that effect. Applications that are approved shall be available to the public.

(D) List of Approved CJWs. If an application is approved, the applicant must provide the Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals or a designate with a list of all CJWs that the applicant has approved to serve as a CJW. The applicant shall keep that list current. Such lists shall be available to the public.

(E) Ineligible Persons. An attorney who has been disbarred, resigned while disciplinary charges were pending, or is currently suspended may not serve as a CJW.

(F) Law Students. A law student who intends to serve as a CJW must provide written notice to the student's law school before beginning such service. A law student may not serve as a CJW during a period when the student is authorized to practice under D.C. App. R. 48.

(G) Permissible Tasks for CJWs. To the extent authorized by a court-approved program, a CJW may perform the following tasks:

- (i) assisting clients in understanding and navigating court and administrative proceedings;
- (ii) assisting with written discovery;
- (iii) writing, signing, and filing legal documents on behalf of clients;
- (iv) providing advice about legal rights, remedies, defenses, options, and strategies;
- (v) attending depositions to provide support and assistance;
- (vi) advocating for clients' rights;
- (vii) participating in mediation;

(viii) preparing and executing settlement agreements;

(ix) assisting in preparing for evidentiary hearings and trials;

(x) attending court and administrative proceedings to provide support and assistance; and

(xi) representing clients in court, including making representations on behalf of a client, answering questions from the court on behalf of a client, and making legal arguments on behalf of a client.

(H) Prohibited Tasks. Except as authorized by statute, other rules, or other sections of this Rule, e.g., D.C. App. R. 49(c)(2), a CJW may not take or defend a deposition or conduct an evidentiary hearing or trial on behalf of a client.

(I) Appearances in administrative or judicial proceedings. A CJW who seeks to represent a client in a judicial or administrative proceeding must file a written appearance containing the following information:

(i) the CJW's name and contact information;

(ii) the name and contact information of the organization with whom the CJW is affiliated;

(iii) the name and contact information of the supervising D.C. Bar member;

(iv) a statement that the CJW is not a D.C. Bar member and is providing assistance pursuant to this Rule and under the supervision of a D.C. Bar member or members.

(J) Disclaimer. CJWs may not hold themselves out as authorized to generally engage in the practice of law. In any written documents or materials relating to their work as CJWs, CJWs must give prominent notice that they are not D.C. Bar members and that they are authorized to provide legal assistance solely pursuant to this Rule and under the supervision of a D.C. Bar member.

(K) Informed Consent. Before a CJW may provide legal assistance to a client, the client must sign a written informed-consent agreement that explains that:

(i) the CJW is not a D.C. Bar member (and, where applicable, is not a lawyer);

(ii) the CJW is authorized to provide legal assistance solely pursuant to this Rule and under the supervision of a D.C. Bar member;

(iii) the CJW may not receive compensation from the client; and

(iv) the attorney-client privilege extends to the activities of the CJW.

(L) Supervision. An organization that utilizes CJWs and the attorneys who supervise CJWs must make reasonable efforts to ensure that the CJWs comply with the ethical obligations listed in D.C. App. R. 49(c)(14)(M). *Cf. also* D.C. App. R. 49(b)(9) (defining "Supervise" in context of supervision of attorneys); D.C. R. Prof. Conduct 5.1(b) (supervision of other lawyers), 5.3(b) (supervision of nonlawyer assistants). The name, bar number, and contact information of the

supervising D.C. Bar member shall appear on every pleading submitted on behalf of the client receiving assistance from the CJW.

(M) Ethical Obligations.

(i) A CJW may engage in the practice of law only as permitted under Rule 49(c)(14) or as otherwise authorized by statute or court rule.

(ii) A CJW must exercise care in determining the extent to which a client may be assisted within the scope of the CJW's authority.

(iii) A CJW must provide competent and zealous advice and assistance to clients, act with reasonable diligence, reasonably consult with clients, keep clients reasonably informed, and consult as appropriate with the attorney supervising the CJW's work.

(iv) A CJW, an attorney supervising a CJW, and the organization that utilizes the CJW must preserve and protect the confidences and secrets of clients and prospective clients to the same extent as is required for lawyers under Rules 1.6 and 1.18 of the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct.

(v) A CJW must avoid conflicts of interest pertaining to client matters, as is required for lawyers under Rules 1.7 through 1.10 of the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct.

(vi) A CJW must comply with the requirements of Rule 1.16 of the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Responsibility, which governs declining and terminating representation.

(vii) A CJW owes a duty of candor to courts and administrative agencies, as is required for lawyers under Rule 3.3 of the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct.

(viii) A CJW must comply with the requirements of Rule 4.1 of the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct, which governs truthfulness in statements to others.

(ix) A CJW must not make or sponsor a false or misleading communication about the CJW's qualifications or services.

(x) A CJW may not engage in misconduct that is prohibited for lawyers by Rule 8.4 of the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct.

(N) CJWs are subject to discipline pursuant to the procedures established in Rule XI of the District of Columbia Bar Rules.

(d) THE COMMITTEE ON UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW.

(1) *Membership.* The court will appoint at least 6, but not more than 12, members of the D.C. Bar and one resident of the District of Columbia who is not a D.C. Bar Member to a standing committee known as the Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law. The court must designate the Chair and Vice Chair.

(2) *Member's Term of Service.*

(A) *In General.* The court will appoint members for terms of 3 years.

(B) *Vacancy Before Term Expires.* In case of vacancy caused by death, resignation or otherwise, the court must appoint a successor to serve the unexpired term of the predecessor member.

(C) *Holdover.* After a member's term has expired, the member may continue to serve until the court appoints a successor or reappoints the member. If a member holds over after expiration of a term and is reappointed, the holdover period is part of that member's new term. A successor will serve a full 3-year term from the date of appointment without reference to any holdover.

(D) *Term Limit.* A member cannot serve for more than 2 consecutive, full 3-year terms unless the court makes a special exception.

(3) *Power to Adopt Rules and Regulations.* Subject to the approval of the court, the Committee may adopt rules and regulations that it deems necessary to carry out the provisions of Rule 49.

(4) *Subpoena Power and Process.* When conducting investigations and hearings, the Committee may authorize any member to subpoena, subject to Superior Court Rule of Civil Procedure 45, the respondent, witnesses, and documents.

(5) *Capacity to Appear.* The Committee may appear in its own name in legal proceedings addressing issues relating to the performance of its functions and compliance with Rule 49.

(6) *Compensation and Expenses.* The court may approve compensation and necessary expenses for the Committee members.

(7) *Additional Staff.* A designee of the Director of the Committee on Admissions will provide staff support to the Committee.

(8) *Duties.*

(A) *In General.* The Committee will investigate matters of alleged unauthorized practice of law and alleged violations of court rules governing the unauthorized practice of law, and if warranted, the Committee may take any action that is provided in these rules.

(B) *Law Student Practice.* In addition to the duties described in Rule 49, the Committee must oversee the participation of law students permitted to practice under Rule 48.

(9) *Meetings.* The Chair must call at least 8 meetings each year. The Committee must hold a special meeting if a majority of its members request it by notifying the Executive Secretary.

(A) *Chair or Vice Chair Presides.* The Chair or, in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair will preside at all meetings of the Committee.

(B) *Confidentiality*. Any matter under investigation by the Committee must remain confidential until resolution of the matter under Rule 49(d)(12)(B), (C), or (D), except that formal hearings under Rule 49(d)(11) will be open to the public. To ensure this confidentiality, the Committee must meet in executive session.

(C) *Notice of Absence*. Members who are unable to attend a meeting must notify the Chair or the Executive Secretary at least 2 days in advance of the meeting.

(D) *Order of Business*. The Chair will determine the order of business.

(E) *Quorum*. A quorum consists of 4 members, and all decisions must be made by a majority of those members present and voting.

(F) *Telephone or Electronic Vote*. In appropriate circumstances, as may be determined by the Chair, a telephone or electronic vote of a majority of members polled, numbering no less than 4 Committee members concurring in a decision, constitutes a Committee decision. Any Committee decision between meetings must be recorded in the minutes of the next Committee meeting.

(G) *Minutes*. The Executive Secretary will direct preparation of minutes for all Committee meetings and will furnish copies of the minutes to all members of the Committee and to the Chief Judge of this court or a judge designated by the Chief Judge.

(10) *Investigation*.

(A) *Assignment*. When a complaint is filed with the Committee or the Committee decides to investigate on its own volition, the Chair will assign the matter to a Committee member for preliminary investigation.

(B) *Conduct and Content of Investigation*. The investigation must consist of an analysis of the complaint, a survey of the applicable law, and, if appropriate, discussions with witnesses and the respondent. It will not be deemed a breach of the confidentiality required of an assigned matter for the Committee or one of its members to reveal facts and identities during the investigation of the matter.

(C) *Report*. At the next regular meeting of the Committee, the investigating member will provide a report for the purpose of determining what action, if any, should be taken by the Committee. Complaints must be investigated and reported on within 6 weeks. The Executive Secretary must notify the Chair about any delays in the investigation of and reporting on complaints.

(11) *Formal Hearings*. The Committee may take sworn testimony of witnesses and the respondent in formal hearings open to the public.

(A) *Written Notice to Respondent*. Before conducting a formal hearing, the Committee must give the respondent written notice informing the respondent of the nature of the conduct which the Committee believes may constitute the unauthorized practice of law. The notice must be accompanied by a copy of Rule 49. The notice may be served by:

(i) delivering it in person;

(ii) mailing it by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the respondent's last known business or residence address;

(iii) delivering it to a commercial carrier for delivery to the respondent's last known business or residence address; or

(iv) other means such as e-mail or facsimile, reasonably calculated to reach the respondent, including any method described in Superior Court Rule of Civil Procedure 4.

(B) *Certificate of Service*. The Committee or its designee must prepare a certificate of service stating how the respondent was served.

(C) *Time to Respond*. The respondent must be given 30 days to provide a written response to the notice.

(D) *Appointing Attorneys*. The Chair (or the Vice Chair if the Chair is to be appointed) may appoint one or more attorney members of the Committee or outside counsel to present, at the formal hearing, evidence of conduct which may constitute the unauthorized practice of law. If a Committee member is appointed, the member may not participate further in the Committee's consideration of actions to dispose of the matter under Rule 49(d)(12), but may participate in any proceedings under Rule 49(e).

(E) *Conduct of Hearing*. The respondent may be accompanied by counsel at the hearing. Formal rules of evidence do not apply. The respondent may present documentary evidence, testify, present testimonial evidence from witnesses, and cross-examine witnesses, all subject to any rules and regulations adopted by the Committee and any reasonable limitations that are imposed by the Committee.

(F) *Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law*. Following a formal hearing, the Committee may prepare written findings of fact and conclusions of law in support of its final disposition of the matter under Rule 49(d)(12).

(12) *Actions by the Committee*. The Committee may dispose of any matter pending before it by any of the following methods:

(A) If no evidence of unauthorized practice is found, the matter must be closed and the complainant notified.

(B) If the respondent agrees to cease and desist from actions that may constitute the unauthorized practice of law, the matter may be closed by formal agreement, with notification of the action given to the complainant. A formal agreement may require restitution to the clients of fees obtained by the respondent, payment to the D.C. Bar, or another remedy that the Committee considers appropriate. The Committee may file a formal agreement with the court with a proposed consent order memorializing the agreement's terms. A proposed consent order is effective when signed by a judge of the District of Columbia designated by the Chief Judge of this court.

(C) If, following a formal hearing under Rule 49(d)(11), the Committee finds by a preponderance of the evidence a violation of this rule or of an injunction or consent order issued pursuant to proceedings under this rule, then the Committee may initiate proceedings under Rule 49(e).

(D) The Committee may also refer cases to the Office of the United States Attorney or the Attorney General for the District of Columbia for investigation and possible prosecution or to other appropriate authorities.

(13) *Closed Files*. When the Committee closes a file, the file must be retained in the records of this court.

(14) *Opinions*. On the request of a person or organization or when the Committee believes that an opinion will aid the public's understanding of Rule 49, the Committee may by approval of a majority of its members present in quorum provide opinions as to what constitutes the unauthorized practice of law.

(A) *Publication*. The Committee's opinions must be published in the same manner as opinions rendered under the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct.

(B) *Reliance on Opinion*. Conduct of a person, which was undertaken in good faith, in conformity with, and in reliance on the Committee's written interpretation or opinion requested by that person, constitutes a prima facie showing of compliance with Rule 49 in any investigation or proceeding before the Committee or this court.

(e) PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COURT.

(1) *Contempt*. Violations of Rule 49, or of any injunction or consent order issued pursuant to proceedings under Rule 49, are punishable by this court as contempt.

(2) *Injunction and Equitable Relief*. The court may issue a permanent injunction to restrain violations of Rule 49, together with ancillary equitable remedies to afford complete relief, including but not limited to equitable monetary relief in the form of disgorgement, restitution, or reimbursement of those harmed by the conduct.

(3) *Original Proceeding*. The Committee may initiate an original proceeding before this court for violation of Rule 49, or for violation of an injunction or consent order issued pursuant to proceedings under Rule 49.

(A) *By Petition*. The proceeding must be initiated by a petition served on the respondent or his designated counsel.

(B) *Special Counsel*. The court may, on motion of the Committee or on its own initiative, appoint a special counsel to represent the Committee and to present the Committee's proof and argument in the proceeding.

(C) *Conduct of Proceedings*. An original proceeding must be conducted before a judge of the District of Columbia designated by the Chief Judge of this court under the D.C. Code, and is governed by the Superior Court Rules of Civil Procedure.

(D) *Notice of Appeal*. Decisions of the designated judge are final and effective determinations which are subject to review in the normal course, by the filing of a notice of appeal by any party with the Clerk of the Court of Appeals within 30 days from the entry of the judgment by the designated judge.

COMMENTARY

The following Commentary provides guidance for interpreting and complying with Rule 49, but in proceedings before the court or the Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law, the text of Rule 49 will govern.

Commentary to Rule 49(a):

Rule 49 is applied first by determining whether the conduct in question falls within the definitions of practicing law or holding out in the District of Columbia. If the conduct falls within those definitions, then the conduct by a person who is not a D.C. Bar Member is a violation of Rule 49, unless one or more of Rules 49(c)(1)-(13) authorizes the conduct. (Notwithstanding the prohibitions of Rule 49, a person licensed to practice as a Special Legal Consultant may render legal services in the District of Columbia, and may hold as authorized to do so, to the extent permitted by, and subject to the conditions in, Rule 46.)

While one has a right to represent oneself, one has no right to represent or advise another as an attorney. Authority to provide legal services to others is a privilege granted only to those who have the education, competence, and fitness to practice law. When a person is formally recognized to possess those qualifications by membership in the District of Columbia Bar, one is authorized to practice law.

Rule 49 prohibits both the implicit representation of authority or competence by engaging in the practice of law and the express holding out of oneself as authorized or qualified to practice law in the District of Columbia, unless a person is a D.C. Bar Member or otherwise authorized to practice law.

The rule against unauthorized practice of law has four general purposes:

(1) to protect members of the public from persons who are not qualified by education, competence, and fitness to provide professional legal advice or other legal services;

(2) to ensure that those who practice law in the District of Columbia or hold out as authorized to do so are subject to the disciplinary system of the District of Columbia Bar;

(3) to maintain the efficacy and integrity of the administration of justice and the system of regulation of practicing attorneys; and

(4) to ensure that the activities of the District of Columbia Bar are appropriately supported financially by those exercising the privilege of law practice in the District of Columbia.

Education, competence, and fitness to practice law are safeguarded by the examination and character screening requirements of the admissions process, and by the disciplinary system. The District of Columbia Bar further protects the interests of members of the public by maintaining a clients' security fund through membership dues.

Commentary to Rule 49(b)(2):

The definition of “practice law” in Rule 49(b)(2) is designed to focus on the two essential elements of the practice of law: (1) the provision of legal services and (2) a client relationship of trust or reliance. A person who provides legal services to another within a client relationship of trust or reliance implicitly represents that the person is authorized and competent to provide them—just as one who provides any services requiring special skill gives an implied warranty that they are provided in a good and workmanlike manner. *See, e.g., Ehrenhaft v. Malcolm Price, Inc.*, 483 A.2d 1192, 1200 (D.C. 1984); *Carey v. Crane Serv. Co.*, 457 A.2d 1102, 1107 (D.C. 1983).

Recognizing that the definition of “practice law” may not anticipate every relevant circumstance, the Court has provided three other tools to assist in defining the phrase: (1) an enumerated list of the most common activities that are rebuttably presumed to be the practice of law; (2) this commentary; and (3) where further questions of interpretation may arise, opinions of the Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law, as provided in Rule 49(d)(14).

The definition of “practice law,” the list of activities, this commentary, and opinions of the Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law are to be considered and applied in light of the purposes of Rule 49, as set forth in the commentary to Rule 49(a).

The presumption that a person engaged in an activity enumerated in Rule 49(b) is practicing law may be rebutted by showing that the activity does not involve a client relationship of trust or reliance, that the person has made no explicit or implicit representation of authority or competence to practice law, or that neither condition is present.

While Rule 49 is meant to embrace every client relationship in which legal services are rendered, or one holds oneself out as authorized or competent to provide legal services, Rule 49 is not intended to cover conduct that lacks the essential features of an attorney-client relationship.

For example, a law professor instructing a class in the application of law to a particular, real situation is not engaged in the practice of law because the professor is not undertaking to provide advice or services for one or more clients as to their legal interests. An experienced industrial relations supervisor is not engaged in the practice of law when advising the person’s employer what the firm must do to comply with state or federal labor laws, because the employer does not reasonably expect it is receiving a professional legal opinion. Law clerks, paralegals and summer associates are not practicing law if they do not advise clients or otherwise hold themselves out to the public as having authority or competence to practice law. Tax accountants, real estate agents, title company personnel, financial advisors, pension consultants, claims adjusters, social workers, and the like who do not indicate they are providing legal services based on education, competence, and authority to practice law, are not engaged in the practice of law, because their relationship with the customer is not based on the reasonable expectation that learned and authorized professional legal services are being given. Nor is it the practice of law under Rule 49 for a person to draft an agreement or resolve a controversy in a business context, where no reasonable expectation exists that the person is acting as a qualified or authorized attorney. Consistent with the holding of *Merrick v. American Securities & Trust Co.*, Rule 49 recognizes that one is not presumed to be practicing law when preparing a routine legal document incidental to a regular course of business as a non-attorney. *See* 107 F.2d 271, 274 (D.C. Cir. 1939) (drawing a distinction between “drafting legal papers *as a business* and drafting legal papers *pertinent to other business* which the [organization] was authorized to carry on”) (emphasis added).

Rule 49 is not intended to forbid a person from acting as a mediator, arbitrator, or other alternative dispute resolution provider. This intent is expressed in the first sentence of the definition of “practice law,” which requires the presence of two essential factors: The provision of legal services and a client relationship of trust or reliance. Mediators and arbitrators ordinarily do not form a client relationship of trust or reliance, and it is common for providers of mediation and arbitration services to advise participants that they are not providing the services of legal counsel.

Rule 49 is not meant to preclude persons who are not D.C. Bar Members from lobbying legislative or executive branch officials or agencies—including through preparing or expressing legal opinions, written or oral advocacy, preparation of position papers, or strategic advice—so long as the activities are intended to influence legislative lawmaking functions, as opposed to investigative, enforcement, or adjudicative functions. Permissible lobbying activities are not provided based on a reasonable expectation that learned and authorized professional legal services are being given in an attorney-client relationship. Some activities that have a relationship with legislative actions may constitute the practice of law. For example, advising a client about how testimony before Congress might affect pending or prospective criminal or civil litigation may constitute the practice of law. *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 19-07.

Neither is Rule 49 intended to forbid a person from counseling or representing another person without compensation in proceedings or before bodies that are purely internal to an organization and that do not result in decisions directly appealable to a court, such as disciplinary or similar proceedings internal to a university, labor union, fraternity or sorority, religious organization, club, or membership organization.

Regarding discovery service companies and document reviewers, terms like “document review” and “the discovery process” encompass numerous discrete tasks, some of which involve the application of legal judgment, and some of which do not. These companies and persons do not violate Rule 49 when performing work that does not involve the application of legal knowledge, training, or judgment, and when the person is not held out or billed as an attorney. *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 21-12. When a person is hired and billed as an attorney, the person is generally engaged in the practice of law, and is certainly being held out as authorized to practice law. Clients would reasonably assume that a person held out as a “contract lawyer” or “contract attorney,” for example, performs functions that are different in degree, if not in kind, from those performed by paralegals or law clerks, and the cost of services performed by contract attorneys reflects the legal training and judgment that they bring to the work they perform. In addition, if a contract attorney is supervised not as a paralegal or law clerk but as a subordinate attorney would be supervised, the contract attorney is engaged in the practice of law. D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 16-05.

While payment of a fee is often a strong indication of an attorney-client relationship, it is neither essential nor dispositive.

Ordinarily, a person who provides or offers to provide legal services to clients in the District of Columbia implicitly represents to the consumer that the person has the education, competence, and authority to practice law in the District of Columbia. It is not sufficient for a person who is not a D.C. Bar Member merely to give notice that the person is not an attorney while engaging in conduct that is likely to mislead others into believing that the person is authorized to practice law. Where consumers continue to seek services after this notice, the provider must take special care to

assure that they understand that the person they are consulting does not have the authority and competence to provide legal services in the District of Columbia. *See In re Banks*, 561 A.2d 158 (D.C. 1987).

Rule 49 also confines the practice of law to provision of legal services for another. People who represent themselves are not required to be admitted to the District of Columbia Bar.

Regarding “furnishing” attorneys, individual attorneys and non-attorneys commonly refer or recommend attorneys in a wide variety of circumstances without violating Rule 49. The term ‘furnishing’ within the meaning of Rule 49(b)(2)(F) involves more than simply recommending a particular attorney. Rule 49(b)(2)(F) is generally addressed to the business of providing attorneys, or systematically referring attorneys, in response to requests from non-attorney members of the public for representation in a specific, pending legal matters. This activity is included in the definition of the ‘practice of law,’ because, properly made, attorney referrals generally involve the exercise of the trained judgment of an attorney. *See D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 6-99*. The basic concern behind Rule 49(b)(2)(F) is that a non-attorney member of the public seeking an attorney for a particular matter will rely inappropriately on the judgment of non-attorneys who are regularly engaged in referring attorneys for similar matters.

Temporary attorney placement services lawfully may provide names of attorneys to law firms or legal departments, provided, however, that an attorney at the law firm or law department, possessing an attorney-client relationship with the client, selects the temporary attorney. In these circumstances, temporary attorney services do not exercise, or purport to exercise, professional legal judgment, as they leave the selection of candidates to the judgment of the attorneys responsible for the matter or matters requiring temporary professional assistance. *See D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 6-99*. Furthermore, discovery services companies do not run afoul of Rule 49 by handling the administrative aspects of hiring and supervising a document review attorney. This could include interviewing individuals to create a roster of attorneys available to assist with document review projects, providing the attorney’s working space and equipment, ensuring that the person works a regular day and works at an acceptable pace, providing salary and benefits, and similar supervisory activities that do not require the application of professional legal judgment. *See D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 21-12*.

As another example, advocacy organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People would not engage in unauthorized practice of law by systematically referring attorneys to potential clients, *provided a D.C. Bar Member within the organization was responsible for the referral judgment*. *See D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 4-98* (discussing the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). In that circumstance, only qualified attorneys subject to the regulatory and disciplinary system of the District of Columbia will be making professional judgments on the appropriate attorneys to which specific clients should be referred for representation in specific matters.

A non-lawyer’s mere request for a continuance from a government agency, court, or other tribunal on behalf of another for no fee does not, in and of itself, constitute law practice. *See, e.g., Superior Court Rule of Civil Procedure 101(a); Superior Court Rule of Procedure for the Landlord and Tenant Branch 9(a); Superior Court Rule of Procedure for the Small Claims and Conciliation*

Branch 9(a).

Commentary to Rule 49(b)(3):

Rule 49(b)(3) clarifies the geographic extent of Rule 49.

Rule 49 is intended to regulate all practice of law within the boundaries of the District of Columbia. The fact that an attorney is associated with a law firm that maintains an office in the District of Columbia does not, of itself, establish that that attorney is maintaining an office in the District of Columbia or holding out as authorized to practice in the District of Columbia.

The practice of law subject to Rule 49 is not confined to matters subject to District of Columbia law. Rule 49 applies to the practice of all substantive areas of the law and requires admission to the District of Columbia Bar where the practice is carried on in the District of Columbia and is not authorized by any of Rules 49(c)(1)-(13). It applies to legal services in the District of Columbia even if those legal services pertain to a matter involving federal law, foreign law, or the law of a state or territory.

A person is engaged in the practice of law in the District of Columbia when the person provides legal services from an office or location within the District. That is true if the person practices in a residence or in a commercial building; if all of the person's clients are located in other jurisdictions; if the person provides legal services only by telephone, letter, e-mail, or other means; if the person provides legal services only concerning the laws of jurisdictions other than the District of Columbia; or if the person informs the client that the person is not authorized to practice law in the District of Columbia and does not provide advice about District of Columbia law. An attorney in the District of Columbia who advises clients or otherwise provides legal services in another jurisdiction also may be subject to the rules of that jurisdiction concerning unauthorized practice of law.

The prohibition on unauthorized practice applies only if an attorney is physically present in the District of Columbia at least once during the course of a matter. Even if a matter involves a client, and a dispute or transaction, in the District, the prohibition on unauthorized practice does not apply if an attorney located outside the District advises a client in-person only when the client visits the attorney in the attorney's office, or if the attorney advises the client only by telephone, regular mail, or e-mail. However, if an attorney is physically present in the District even once during the course of a matter, the attorney may be engaged in the District of Columbia in the practice of law with respect to the entire matter, even if the attorney otherwise operates only from a location outside the District.

The definition of "in the District of Columbia" is intended to cover the practice of law within the District under the supervision of, or in association with, a D.C. Bar Member. Persons who provide legal services to one or more clients from a location in the District of Columbia, with or without bar memberships elsewhere, are practicing law in the District and are in violation of Rule 49, unless their practice is authorized by one or more of Rules 49(c)(1)-(13).

For a discussion of telecommuting/teleworking/working from home, see the Commentary to Rule 49(c)(13) ("Incidental and Temporary Practice").

For a discussion of the geographic reach of Rule 49 as applied to discovery services companies, *see* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 21-12.

Commentary to Rule 49(b)(4):

Persons who are not D.C. Bar Members must avoid giving the impression that they are qualified legal professionals subject to the ethical standards and discipline of the District of Columbia Bar.

The listing of terms that normally indicate one is holding oneself out as authorized or qualified to practice law is not intended to be exhaustive. Experience has shown that the listed terms are often used to misleadingly represent that an individual is authorized to provide legal services. The definition of “hold out” is intended to cover any conduct that gives the impression that one is qualified or authorized to practice. *See In re Banks*, 561 A.2d 158 (D.C. 1987). The terms “associate” or “counsel,” when used in a legal context, convey to members of the public that an individual is authorized to practice law. *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 22-17.

To avoid improper holding out, lobbyists practicing with a District of Columbia law firm who are not D.C. Bar Members must make clear that they are not and that their practice is limited to lobbying matters that do not constitute the practice of law. *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 19-07.

A non-attorney who holds himself or herself out as the functional equivalent of an attorney may violate Rule 49 and may be liable under the District of Columbia’s consumer-protection statutes even if the recipient of the services knows that the services are not being provided by a D.C. Bar Member or other attorney. *See Banks v. District of Columbia Dep’t of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs*, 634 A.2d 433 (D.C. 1993).

Although Rule 49’s prohibition on unauthorized practice is limited to conduct within the District of Columbia, a person located outside of the District of Columbia may still violate Rule 49 by holding out as authorized to practice law in the District of Columbia, such as by associating himself or herself with an address or post office box in the District of Columbia in connection with law-related communications.

Commentary to Rule 49(b)(9):

Rule 49 employs the supervision standard of Rule 5.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct. That Rule requires the supervising attorney to make reasonable efforts to ensure conformity with, among other Rules, Rule 1.1 requiring competent representation and Rule 1.3 requiring zealous and diligent representation within the bounds of the law. Whether reasonable supervision requires the supervising attorney to attend personally with the supervised attorney a trial, hearing, or meeting depends on the circumstances. That is true in both litigation and non-litigation matters. The supervising attorney should consider all factors relevant to the appropriate degree and manner of supervision, including the experience and skill of the supervised attorney and the nature of the matter. Thus, in deciding whether to be present for a trial, hearing, or conference before a court or other tribunal, the supervising attorney should consider, among other factors, the experience and skill of the supervised attorney, the nature of the case, and the type of proceeding. For example, whether the supervising attorney should be present at a jury trial depends in part on the nature and extent of the supervised attorney’s prior jury trial experience, and in-person supervision may not

be necessary if the supervised attorney has extensive experience trying similar cases in other jurisdictions where the person is licensed or has been admitted *pro hac vice*. In some situations, a responsible supervisor ought to be present in court with the supervised attorney, but in others, the supervisor may reasonably decide that the supervisor does not need to be present.

Whether or not the supervising attorney is physically present when the supervised attorney provides legal services, the supervising attorney remains accountable under Rule 5.1(b) if the supervising attorney fails to make reasonable efforts to ensure that the other attorney conforms to the Rules of Professional Conduct.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(1):

Departments, agencies, and courts of the federal government are entitled to advice and representation from their employees as part of their official duties. This advice and representation includes both internal consultation and external representation in contact with the public and the courts.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(2):

Rule 49(c)(2) provides a limited exception to the requirement for admission to the District of Columbia Bar for persons who practice before federal and District of Columbia agencies in certain circumstances.

The United States Supreme Court has held that states may not limit practice before a federal government agency, or conduct incidental to that practice, where the agency maintains a registry of practitioners and regulates standards of practice with sanctions of suspension or disbarment. *Sperry v. Florida*, 373 U.S. 379 (1963).

As the seat of the national government, the District of Columbia is naturally the place where people locate to provide representation of persons or entities petitioning federal departments or agencies for relief. Inasmuch as this activity would often constitute the practice of law, the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, case law, and comity between the District and federal governments counsel deference to federal departments and agencies that determine to allow persons not admitted to the Bar to practice before them. At the same time, experience under this rule has shown that some persons have abused the deference set forth in the original rule by engaging in misleading holding out or practicing law in proceedings other than those of the authorizing federal fora.

With respect to persons who hold out and purport to provide legal representation before federal fora from locations outside the District of Columbia, Rule 49 does not apply because the activity, even if the practice of law, is not carried on “in the District of Columbia.” See Rule 49(b)(3) and commentary thereto.

Rule 49(c)(2) is designed to permit persons to practice before a government department or agency without becoming members of the Bar where the practice is authorized by law or agency rule, where the agency has a rule to regulate the practice, and where the public is adequately informed of the limited nature of the person’s authority to practice.

In many instances, persons seeking representation involving jurisdiction of federal departments and agencies also have rights to plead their claims before the courts. Advising persons whether they have rights to pursue their claims beyond federal agencies into the courts, or representing entities in challenges to or review of federal agency action in federal courts, would, without more, not require that the advisor be a D.C. Bar Member, because this advice is reasonably ancillary to representation before the agency and is subject to the jurisdiction of the federal courts. *See* Rule 49(c)(3). Rule 49(c)(2) does not, however, otherwise authorize advice to or representation of persons in the courts.

Rule 49(c)(2) also authorizes practice before certain District of Columbia fora. This provision was added in recognition that some of the foregoing considerations support allowing persons not admitted as attorneys to represent members of the public before some District of Columbia fora. In addition, some client matters may warrant a practitioner taking simultaneous or coordinated actions in federal and District of Columbia fora.

To be clear, neither Rule 49(c)(2) nor anything else in Rule 49 authorizes persons who are not D.C. Bar Members to provide legal services to another person merely because those legal services concern federal law. *See Kennedy v. Bar Ass’n of Montgomery County, Inc.*, 561 A.2d 200, 208–09 (Md. Ct. App. 1989) (“[A]dvising clients by applying legal principles to the client’s problem is practicing law. . . . This is so whether the legal principles [applied are] established by the law of Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, some other state of the United States, the United States of America, or a foreign nation.”); *Bluestein v. State Bar*, 13 Cal. 3d 162, 173–74 (1974) (holding that “law,” as used in the California statute barring unauthorized practice, includes foreign law); *In re Roel*, 144 N.E.2d 24, 26 (N.Y. 1957) (“Whether a person gives advice as to New York law, Federal law, the law of a sister State, or the law of a foreign country, he is giving legal advice.”). Rule 49 includes no “federal law” exception to its general prohibition on the practice of law by persons who are not D.C. Bar Members.

Persons could satisfy the notice requirement of Rule 49(c)(2)(B) with prominent written statements that, for example, the person is “not admitted to the D.C. Bar; practice limited to matters before the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office” or “Admitted only in Virginia; practice limited to matters before federal courts, federal agencies, and District of Columbia agencies.” *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 5-98.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(3):

Practice before the courts of the United States is a matter committed to the jurisdiction and discretion of those entities. If a practitioner has an office in the District of Columbia and is admitted to practice before a federal court in the District of Columbia but is not a D.C. Bar Member, the practitioner may use the District of Columbia office to engage in the practice of law before that federal court, but only if the practitioner provides clear notice in all business documents, including advertisements and social media, that the practitioner is not a D.C. Bar Member and that the practice is limited to matters before that federal court (or to other matters authorized by Rule 49(c)(2), (c)(3), (c)(6), (c)(9), (c)(10), or (c)(12)). Rule 49(c)(3) applies only if a person’s entire practice in the District of Columbia is authorized by one or more of Rules 49(c)(2), (c)(3), (c)(6), (c)(9), (c)(10), or (c)(12); if any part of the person’s law practice is not so authorized, Rule 49 requires a practitioner with an office in the District of Columbia to be a D.C. Bar Member. The

rules of federal courts in the District of Columbia may or may not authorize admission, on a regular or *pro hac vice* basis, of an attorney with an office in the District of Columbia if the attorney is not a D.C. Bar Member.

Again, to be clear, neither Rule 49(c)(3) nor anything else in Rule 49 authorizes persons who are not D.C. Bar Members to provide legal services to another merely because those legal services concern federal law.

Persons could satisfy the notice requirement of Rule 49(c)(3) with prominent written statements that, for example, the person is “not admitted to the D.C. Bar; practice limited to U.S. courts” or “Admitted only in Maryland; practice limited to matters before federal courts, federal agencies, and District of Columbia agencies.” *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 5-98.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(4):

Permission for District of Columbia employees to practice in the District is more limited than permission for United States employees. Departments, agencies, and courts of the District of Columbia are entitled to legal services from their employees as part of their official duties under the circumstances set forth in Rule 49(c)(4). These legal services include both internal consultation and external representation in contact with the public and the courts.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(5):

In keeping with federal labor policy, many disputes arising under a collective bargaining agreement between a labor organization or worker, on the one hand, and an employer, on the other hand, are resolved through labor arbitration. While attorneys are involved in some matters of this nature, it is common for the parties to be represented by non-attorneys (whether a union representative or a labor relations officer of the employer). At the early stages of the grievance-resolution process, which can include informal hearings that are necessary steps before arbitration, the use of attorneys is even more rare. Some states have addressed this issue through specific rules which expressly permit non-attorney representation in labor arbitration. *See* Cal. Code of Civil Procedure § 1282.4(h); Washington Rules of Court, General Rule 24(b)(5). The Supreme Court has written:

The right of [union] members to consult with each other in a fraternal organization necessarily includes the right to select a spokesman from their number who could be expected to give the wisest counsel. . . . [A State] undoubtedly has broad powers to regulate the practice of law within its borders, but we . . . recognize that in regulating the practice of law a State cannot ignore the rights of individuals secured by the Constitution. . . . [F]or them to associate together to help one another to preserve and enforce rights granted them under federal laws cannot be condemned as a threat to legal ethics.

Bhd. of RR Trainmen v. Va. ex rel. Va. State Bar, 377 U.S. 1, 6-7 (1964); *see also* *UMWA v. Ill. State Bar Ass’n*, 389 U.S. 217, 222 (1967) (“That the States have broad power to regulate the practice of law is . . . beyond question. . . . But it is equally apparent that broad rules framed to protect the public and to preserve respect for the administration of justice can in their actual operation significantly impair the value of associational freedoms.”).

Rule 49(c)(5) recognizes the federal policy to facilitate the inexpensive and informal protection of workers' and employers' rights protected by federal labor law, and it recognizes the practical reality that non-attorneys for decades have played important representational functions in the context of negotiations, grievances, and arbitrations connected to collective bargaining agreements.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(6):

Rule 49(c)(6) addresses in-house attorneys and others who are employed to provide legal services to their employer or its organizational affiliates, i.e., entities that control, are controlled by, or are under common control with the employer. The provision of legal services by in-house counsel or advisors generally serves the interests of the employer and does not create an unreasonable risk to the client and others because the employer is well situated to assess the employee's qualifications and the quality of the employee's work. A person practicing under this exception may hold out as authorized to provide these services by, for example, using titles such as "General Counsel" or "Corporate Counsel" on business cards and website profiles in a manner that makes clear that the person is affiliated with the organization and providing legal services solely to that organization.

There may be other instances of persons employed to provide legal services to their employer who would fall within Rule 49(c)(6). For example, an internal personnel manager advising her employer on the requirements of equal employment opportunity law, or a purchasing manager who drafts contracts, fall within Rule 49(c)(6), as they do not give the employer a reasonable expectation that it is being served by a D.C. Bar Member. Similarly, an employee on the staff of a trade association who drafts leases or other documents would be covered by Rule 49(c)(6) if, in fact, the employee does not give the employer reason to believe that the employee is a D.C. Bar Member.

Rule 49(c)(6) provides a limited exception arising from the position of the employee, the confinement of the employee's professional services to activities internal to the employer, and the absence of conduct creating a reasonable expectation that the employer is receiving the services of a D.C. Bar Member. However, anyone practicing law under this exception is subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of the District of Columbia and must abide by the D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct.

Rule 49(c)(6) does not authorize employees to provide legal services to or otherwise represent other individual employees of their employer or its affiliates.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(7):

The District of Columbia courts are open to attorneys from other jurisdictions. As the Court of Appeals has observed, however:

[A]pppearance *pro hac vice* is meant to be an exception to the general prohibition against practicing law in the District without benefit of membership in the District of Columbia Bar. As an exception, it is equally clear[] that it is designed as a privilege for an out-of-state attorney who may, from time to time, be involved in a particular case that requires

appearance before a court in the District.

Brookens v. Comm. on Unauthorized Practice of Law, 538 A.2d 1120, 1124 (D.C. 1988).

The fact that an attorney is associated with a law firm that maintains an office in the District of Columbia does not, of itself, establish that that attorney is maintaining an office in the District of Columbia.

The *pro hac vice* exception has occasionally been abused to allow persons who regularly operate from a location within the District of Columbia or its surrounding jurisdictions to engage regularly in litigation practice before the District of Columbia courts. Accordingly, a person generally may not apply for admission *pro hac vice* in more than five cases pending in District of Columbia courts per calendar year.

The scope of services that are covered by Rule 49(c)(7) includes legal services that are rendered both “in” a court proceeding and also those that are “reasonably related” to the proceeding. The court “proceeding”—to which the legal services must be related—is defined broadly. Specifically, the court proceeding need not be “pending” when legal services are rendered for the services to be covered; services that are reasonably related to a “potential proceeding” in a D.C. court also qualify. Thus, for example, legal services provided to a respondent in an attorney-discipline proceeding may be within the scope of the *pro hac vice* exception because they are reasonably related to potential proceedings in the D.C. Court of Appeals. *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 23-18. As another example, legal services provided to an applicant to the District of Columbia Bar in connection with a formal hearing before the Committee on Admissions or provided to a respondent in connection with a formal hearing before the Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law are within the scope of the *pro hac vice* exception if the requirements of Rule 49(c)(7) are met.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(8):

Rule 49(c)(8) is designed to provide a one-time grace period within which attorneys admitted in other jurisdictions who wish to practice law in the District of Columbia may do so under the supervision of one or more D.C. Bar Members, while they promptly pursue admission to the District of Columbia Bar.

Regarding the notice requirement, persons could satisfy it with prominent written statements that, for example, the person is “not admitted to the D.C. Bar; practice supervised by D.C. Bar Members” or “Admitted only in Maryland; practice supervised by D.C. Bar Members.” *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 5-98. The term “admission pending” may not be used. That term is likely to be misleading because it implies that the grant of a pending application for admission to the D.C. Bar is a formality. Even if an individual meets some of the requirements for applying for admission to the D.C. Bar, admission to the D.C. Bar is not automatic. *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 20-08. The term “application pending” may raise similar concerns, depending on context. *See id.*

A person practicing under Rule 49(c)(8) need not apply for admission *pro hac vice* to appear in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia or the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. This represents a departure from a prior version of Rule 49(c)(8), and Opinion 18-06 of the Committee is no longer applicable.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(9):

Rule 49(c)(9) is intended to increase access to justice in the District of Columbia for those unable to afford an attorney by providing an exception to the requirement of admission to the District of Columbia Bar for attorneys formerly admitted in the District of Columbia or currently or formerly admitted in other United States jurisdictions (or, for a period of not more than 365 days, law school graduates who have applied to take the bar examination described in Rule 46(c)(7)(A) or 46(d) in a United States jurisdiction) so that they may provide *pro bono* representation where the requirements of the exception are met. However, the exception in Rule 49(c)(9)(A) does not apply to persons who are employees of the Public Defender Service or a non-profit organization that provides *pro bono* legal services.

Regarding the notice requirement in Rule 49(c)(9)(C), persons could satisfy it with prominent written statements that, for example, the person is “not admitted to the D.C. Bar; practice supervised by D.C. Bar Members” or “Admitted only in Maryland; practice supervised by D.C. Bar Members.” *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 5-98.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(10):

Rule 49(c)(10) is intended to give a rule-based authorization to the number of individual- and group-assistance programs, services, and projects that the courts of the District of Columbia have approved or in the future may approve.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(11):

Landlord-tenant disputes and small claims matters may not, as a general matter, warrant the expense of hiring an attorney. Rule 49(c)(11) therefore creates an exception to the general prohibition on law practice by persons who are not D.C. Bar Members for the three situations referenced in Rule 49(c)(11).

Rule 49(c)(11) does not authorize a person who is not a D.C. Bar Member to appear in a representative capacity in an action that has been filed in the Landlord and Tenant Branch of the Civil Division of the Superior Court, except for the purpose of entering a consent judgment. Nor does it authorize a person who is not a D.C. Bar Member to appear on behalf of a plaintiff, cross-claimant, or counterclaimant in the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch of the Civil Division of the Superior Court, or to appear on behalf of any party if a case is certified to the Civil Actions Branch.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(12):

Rule 49(c)(12) furthers the efficient and expeditious resolution of disputes outside the judicial process, to the extent consistent with the broader public interest. This provision gives clients who agree to resolve their disputes through mediation or arbitration or other dispute resolution proceedings in the District of Columbia the option to retain attorneys not admitted in the District of Columbia. This rule is intended to be analogous to the *pro hac vice* exception in Rule 49(c)(7).

Rule 49(c)(12) allows attorneys to represent clients in mediation, arbitration, or other

alternative dispute resolution proceedings that require more than incidental or temporary presence in the District. Separate from the authority granted by Rule 49(c)(12), an attorney may represent parties in mediation, arbitration, or other alternative dispute resolution proceedings under Rule 49(c)(13) if the attorney's presence in the District is incidental and temporary.

As explained in the Commentary to Rule 49(b)(2), attorneys who serve as arbitrators, mediators, or other kinds of neutrals are not engaged in the practice of law.

Commentary to Rule 49(c)(13):

There are occasions in which an attorney admitted in another jurisdiction may provide legal services on a temporary basis in the District of Columbia under circumstances that do not create an unreasonable risk to the interests of their clients, the public, or the courts. Rule 49(c)(13) authorizes law practice in two circumstances.

There is no single test to determine whether an attorney's services are provided on a "temporary" basis in the District, and may therefore be permissible under Rule 49(c)(13). Services may be "temporary" even though the attorney provides services in the District on a recurring basis, or for an extended period of time, as when the attorney is representing a client in a single lengthy negotiation or litigation. For example, an attorney who spends several weeks or even months in the District in connection with a case that does not involve the District and that is pending in a court outside the District may be only temporarily in the District for purposes of Rule 49(c)(13). If an attorney's principal place of business is in the District, the attorney is not practicing law in the District on a temporary basis.

Rule 49(c)(13) provides that an attorney rendering services in the District on a temporary basis does not violate Rule 49 when the attorney engages in conduct in anticipation of a proceeding or hearing in a jurisdiction in which the attorney is admitted or in which the attorney reasonably expects to be admitted *pro hac vice*. Examples of permissible conduct include meetings with the client, interviews of potential witnesses, and the review of documents. Similarly, an attorney admitted only in another jurisdiction may engage in conduct temporarily in the District in connection with pending litigation in another jurisdiction in which the attorney is or reasonably expects to be authorized to appear, including taking depositions in the District.

An attorney rendering services in the District on a temporary basis does not violate Rule 49 when the services arise out of or are reasonably related to the attorney's practice in a jurisdiction in which the attorney is admitted. Several factors may be relevant to whether the services provided in the District of Columbia arise out of or are reasonably related to an attorney's practice in a jurisdiction in which the lawyer is admitted. The attorney's client may have been previously represented by the attorney, or may be resident in or have substantial contacts with the jurisdiction in which the attorney is admitted. The matter, although involving other jurisdictions, may have a significant connection with the jurisdiction in which the attorney is admitted. In other cases, significant aspects of the attorney's work might be conducted in that jurisdiction or a significant aspect of the matter may involve the law of that jurisdiction. The necessary relationship might arise when the client's activities or the legal issues involve multiple jurisdictions, such as when the officers of a multinational corporation survey potential business sites and seek the services of their attorney in assessing the relative merits of each. In addition, the services may draw on the attorney's

recognized expertise developed through the regular practice of law on behalf of clients in matters involving a particular body of federal, nationally uniform, foreign, or international law. Another relevant factor is whether the attorney not admitted to the District of Columbia Bar is the only attorney for a party, or whether the attorney is co-counsel or the attorney's role is limited to one aspect of a transaction with respect to which a D.C. Bar Member is lead counsel. For example, where a transaction concerns real estate located in the District of Columbia, an attorney based outside the District who comes to the city to provide legal services to a client located inside or outside the District relating only to the federal tax aspects of the transaction may qualify under Rule 49(c)(13). However, an attorney based outside the District who comes to the city to be primary counsel to a District-based client with respect to all aspects of the real estate transaction may not qualify under Rule 49(c)(13). Whether the attorney who is not admitted to the District of Columbia Bar and whose principal office is outside the District is associated with or supervised by a D.C. Bar Member is a relevant, but not controlling, factor in determining whether the attorney's practice in the District is authorized by Rule 49(c)(13).

Legal services provided in connection with a matter pending in a government agency, court, or other tribunal in the District of Columbia generally are not authorized by Rule 49(c)(13). Legal services provided in connection with a matter pending before a congressional committee often are.

Rule 49(c)(13) permits a person authorized to practice law in another country to practice law in the District on an incidental and temporary basis, subject to the specified conditions. Those conditions, including the requirements that a foreign attorney be authorized to practice law in a foreign country and not be disbarred or suspended in any jurisdiction, are consistent with the requirements in Rule 46(f) concerning special legal consultants that the foreign attorney be in good standing as an attorney or counselor at law (or the equivalent of either) in the country where the person is authorized to practice law.

A person who occasionally practices law from the person's residence in the District of Columbia, either by telecommuting or working from home, or who practices temporarily from a hotel or short-term rental accommodation while on vacation in the District of Columbia, does not violate Rule 49, provided the person: (1) maintains a law office in a jurisdiction where the attorney is admitted to practice; (2) avoids using a District of Columbia address in any business document or otherwise holding out as authorized to practice law in the District of Columbia; and (3) does not regularly conduct in-person meetings with clients or third parties in the District of Columbia.

A contract attorney who regularly takes short-term assignments in the District of Columbia is not engaged in temporary practice here, even if each assignment, considered in isolation, might constitute temporary practice. *See* D.C. UPL Comm. Op. 16-05. Regular work exceeds what Rule 49(c)(13) authorizes.

Commentary to Rule 49(d):

Rule 49(d) sets forth the mandate, powers, and procedures of the Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law. The United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has observed:

The Committee members' work is functionally comparable to the work of

judges. . . . They serve as an arm of the court and perform a function which traditionally belongs to the judiciary. . . . [T]he Committee acts as a surrogate for those who sit on the bench. Indeed, were it not for the Committee, judges themselves might be forced to engage in the sort of inquiries [authorized by Rule 49].

Simons v. Bellinger, 643 F.2d 774, 780-81 (D.C. Cir. 1980).

It is expected that most matters considered by the Committee will be resolved through informal proceedings.

Commentary to Rule 49(e):

The powers and procedures provided in Rule 49(d) and (e) are not the exclusive means for enforcing the provisions of this rule. Disciplinary Counsel may initiate an original proceeding before the Court of Appeals for contempt where it alleges that the respondent has violated Rule 49 by practicing law while disbarred. *In re Burton*, 614 A.2d 46 (D.C. 1992). Disciplinary Counsel may also rely on unauthorized law practice in opposing reinstatement of an attorney suspended from the District of Columbia Bar. *In re Stanton*, 532 A.2d 95 (D.C. 1987). The District of Columbia courts have subject matter jurisdiction to consider original complaints of unauthorized practice of law initiated by private parties and to issue relief if unauthorized practice is found. *J.H. Marshall & Assocs., Inc. v. Burleson*, 313 A.2d 587 (D.C. 1973).