

# Do Legal Support for your Affinity Group at the 2019 Climate Strike Week of Action!

All participants in the Climate Strike are encouraged to form affinity groups, which are groups of about 5 to 12 friends, family, colleagues—anyone you have affinity with. One of the many advantages of being in an affinity group (AG) is sharing responsibility for important tasks. Some people in your affinity group may choose to risk arrest. If so, at least one other person should take responsibility for providing legal support for them.

This handout is geared toward people organized in affinity groups, but it can be used by individuals who want to support one or more friends risking arrest. There are a lot of roles a legal support person can fill; below are some examples. Don't feel like you're disqualified if you can't do them all. Just let your AG know your limits so they can plan ahead—and maybe someone else can help be the legal support person with you.

## On Safety & Trust

An ideal affinity group is one in which all members have done activism together for years, where everyone trusts one another implicitly. This is rare! It's ok if you don't have that level of trust with everyone else in your AG. But as a result, the legal support person should only collect basic information that is needed to track people in the legal system like legal name and date of birth, and not to collect information that could get folks into serious long-term trouble.

- Do collect full legal name, full birth date, and a local home address for everyone going to the protest.
- Do NOT collect immigration status, if there are outstanding warrants, or other sensitive information unless you have deep trust.
- Finally, collect everyone's email address and phone number for organizing long-term support, if needed, for anyone who gets arrested and charged.

## Before the Action

- Arrange ahead of time, and let ALL of your affinity group members know, a local number that accepts collect calls from jail where you can be reached.
- The bare minimum is voicemail that you will be checking regularly and frequently.
- They should write the number on themselves in permanent ink so they'll have it in jail.
- Have everyone planning on going to the protests—even those who aren't risking arrest!—give you their basic information. (Plenty of people get arrested without planning on it first.)
- Although most people in Bay Area are released on citations after a protest arrest, it can be helpful to have a plan for raising bail money: folks' friends, parents, etc.

## **During the Action**

- DON'T GET ARRESTED IF YOU ARE A LEGAL SUPPORT PERSON.
- If and when you hear from your friends in jail, remind them not to talk about their arrest details, because jail phones are monitored.
- Regularly check your number's voicemail in case you missed a call.
- Record and track arrestees' booking and arrest numbers and upcoming court dates.
- To report arrests call the NLG legal hotline at 415-285-1011 if you are in custody or 415-909-4NLG (4654) if you are out of custody.
- Give the hotline your AG name, your own name and contact info (phone & email), and the basic information for anyone arrested in your AG.
- This helps the NLG track the arrestees, dispatch lawyers to jail if needed, and coordinate long-term support.
- Contact the rest of your AG, and anyone the arrested folks want informed of the situation, but do not discuss the underlying facts of the arrest.
- Update these people regularly, even if nothing's changed.
- Supporters should be able to at least leave messages with the you and be called back.
- Arrange travel home for your arrested friends: Organize car rides or have someone waiting at the jail when folks get released.
- Keep monitoring the phone number until everyone in your AG is out of jail. This is usually within 12 hours in the Bay Area for an arrest leading to a citation, but may be longer in some cases.

## **Once People Start Getting Out of Jail**

- Copy (and keep track of) everyone's paperwork from: the cops (arrest reports, citations), the jail (booking info, property reports) and the court (hearing dates, info on charges, etc.)
- You never know when an arrestee or lawyer will urgently need a specific piece of info from one of those documents.
- Contact the NLG at 415-909-4NLG (4654) to let them know which arrestees were released.
- Remind folks about their upcoming court dates by calling, mailing and emailing them.
- If anyone was harmed, collect any evidence of police misconduct and contact trusted civil attorneys about possible lawsuits against the police.