

Legal Support Person

As the fight against corporate domination becomes more effective, the system becomes more aggressive in clamping down on resistance. A legal support person helps coordinate support for those arrested in his/her affinity groups or communities. Although this handout is written with affinity groups in mind, it can also be applied to individuals who want to support their friends if they are arrested.

There are a lot of roles the 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 affinity group know your limits so they can plan ahead – and maybe someone else can help be the legal support person with you.

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, or that you will be checking regularly and frequently.
- ❖ Know as much of people's info as they're comfortable giving – real full name, arrest history (not just activism related), outstanding warrants, responsibilities they need covered if arrested, emergency contacts...
- ❖ Know people's medical info: allergies, trick knees, prescription meds, and their doctor's name and phone #.
- ❖ Have access to people's IDs, bail money (or sources of bail money – friends, parents, etc.).

During the action:

- ❖ *DON'T GET ARRESTED.*
- ❖ Remind people calling that phones may be tapped (the jail's and/or yours).
- ❖ Get (and keep track of) arrested people's booking and arrest numbers and upcoming court dates.
- ❖ If and when you hear from your friends in jail, contact the rest of your affinity group and others the arrested folks want informed of the situation. Update those people regularly, even if nothing's changed.
- ❖ Parents should be able to at least leave messages with the legal support person and be called back.
- ❖ Be able to arrange travel home for your arrested friends. This can mean arranging something with a friend with a car, collecting bus money...
- ❖ Be available until everyone in your affinity group is out of jail.
- ❖ Be able to get messages from the outside world to your arrested friends. This is a HUGE morale booster.
- ❖ Start a call-in or write-in campaign. Call the mayor, the police chief, and other government pawns, or write a letter to the editor denouncing police harassment, misconduct, unlawful arrests, and/or the attempt to oppress and silence people.

Once people start getting out of jail:

- ❖ Copy (and keep track of) everyone's paperwork from the cops (arrest reports, etc.), jail (booking info, property reports) and court (hearing dates, info on charges, etc.).
- ❖ Remind people about their upcoming court dates by calling, mailing and emailing them.
- ❖ Have extra Police Misconduct Report forms (available at www.midnightspecial.net/materials/PMR.html) for your affinity group members to fill out at the action, or after. Police Misconduct Reports destroy the credibility of the police and thus help people's criminal defense. They also lay the groundwork for suing the cops.
- ❖ Get your misconduct reports to the legal team (sometimes they need to be hand delivered)

Small affinity group actions are catalysts for major social change. From ACT-UP in the 80's making AIDS care and awareness a national priority to Food Not Bombs visibly serving free food to hungry people, small actions make a big difference.

The more effective we are the more we risk arrest and other types of oppression. The legal system is designed to break us down and dehumanize us. Having a legal support person is just one more step toward resisting the criminal "justice" system, the corrupt government it props up, and the corporate rulers who use this system to oppress and silence us all.