

Getting free legal help

Easy · 15 min to find help, longer for intake · Free

For civil problems (eviction, a landlord keeping your deposit, debt collectors, unpaid wages, family law), start at LSC's map, which finds one of the 129 LSC-funded legal aid groups near you, or your state's LawHelp.org site. If your income is low, you can post a question for a volunteer lawyer at ABA Free Legal Answers (not for criminal cases). LawHelp Interactive fills out court forms free. Got court papers? Call the same day and say the deadline first.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ Your address or ZIP code
- ☐ Every paper about the problem: lease, letters, notices, court papers, texts and photos
- ☐ A one-page timeline: what happened, when, and who said what
- ☐ Your household income, because many programs ask

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 **Find your local legal aid office.** Enter your address on the Legal Services Corporation map. LSC funds 129 independent nonprofit legal aid organizations covering every state, D.C. and the U.S. territories, for low-income people with civil legal problems.
- 2 **Check your state's LawHelp.org site.** It finds free legal aid near you, answers common legal questions, and has free legal forms. Its services are for people with low to moderate incomes.
- 3 **Ask a lawyer online.** If your income is low, ABA Free Legal Answers lets you post a civil question for free, and a volunteer lawyer licensed in your state answers by email. Topics include housing, eviction, consumer rights, work, unemployment, family and education law. It doesn't take criminal questions, and not every state participates.
- 4 **Need a form, not a lawyer?** Law Help Interactive helps you fill out legal forms for free, including for landlord and tenant disputes and identity theft.
- 5 **Try a law school clinic.** USA.gov links a directory of law school pro bono programs by state.
- 6 **Get ready for intake.** Have your timeline, papers and income ready. Say your deadline first, then describe the problem in two or three sentences. Write down the name of everyone you talk to and when.

Watch out Court deadlines don't wait for an appointment. If you got court papers, respond by the date in them, even while you look for help. Ignoring a lawsuit can mean losing automatically and, for debts, a court order taking money from your paycheck or bank account.

DAD NOTE *Call before the deadline, not after. Free help is out there.*

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/legal/free-legal-help/getting-free-legal-help/

Checked October 2, 2026. Sources: Legal Services Corporation; USA.gov; American Bar Association; Federal Trade Commission.