

Sources of legal advice

Factsheet

The NSW Attorney General cannot provide legal advice to individuals about their private legal matters, and does not intervene in private legal disputes. The NSW Department of Justice also cannot provide legal advice or intervene.

The information below explains how to find a lawyer (where you are able to pay for the lawyer's services), as well as sources of free or subsidised legal advice and assistance.

Solicitor Referral Service

The Law Society of NSW operates the Solicitor Referral Service, which searches for firms that are likely to meet your individual needs and then provides you with their contact details. You can either:

- call (02) 9926 0300 between 9am to 12pm or 1pm to 4pm, Monday to Friday
- email ereferral@lawsociety.com.au with your request criteria and contact details, or
- complete an online referral request at www.lawsociety.com.au

LawAccess NSW

[LawAccess NSW](#) is a free Government service, which provides telephone legal information and referrals to anyone who has a legal problem in NSW. If you are going to court, have a legal problem, or have any question about the law, LawAccess NSW can help you.

In some cases LawAccess NSW can provide legal advice. LawAccess NSW assists everyone, and in particular people who:

- live in regional, rural and remote areas of NSW
- are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- have a disability
- are from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background
- are at risk of harm
- have an urgent legal problem.

You can contact LawAccess NSW on 1300 888 529 (for the cost of a local telephone call), Monday to Friday during business hours.

Legal Aid NSW

Legal Aid NSW provides a range of services to people who need legal advice, assistance and representation, and who qualify for legal aid.

Provision of legal aid for representation in court proceedings depends on whether or not you meet the means test (how much you earn and own) and in some cases, a merit test (whether your case is likely to succeed). As funds are limited, Legal Aid NSW makes sure that legal aid is granted to people who are most disadvantaged in the community such as children, people on benefits and people with a mental health problem.

Even if a grant of legal aid is not available for legal representation in court proceedings, all residents of NSW are eligible for a free initial consultation with a lawyer. Legal advice is not means or merit tested.

Advice is usually limited to a 20 minute consultation. To find your nearest Legal Aid NSW office, visit www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au or telephone LawAccess NSW on 1300 888 529 (for the cost of a local telephone call), Monday to Friday during business hours.

Community Legal Centres (CLCs)

CLCs are independent community organisations that provide information and referral services, advice on legal matters, legal casework and representation in targeted areas of law, and community legal education.

Your nearest CLC is listed on the Community Legal Centres NSW website located at www.clcnsw.org.au.

Pro bono referral schemes

Pro bono' means a lawyer works voluntarily and without payment. The following organisations operate referral services to lawyers who may work pro bono:

- Law Society of NSW's Pro Bono Scheme
phone: (02) 9926 0364
or visit: www.lawsociety.com.au/public/pro-bono-scheme
- NSW Bar Association's Duty Barrister Scheme or NSW Legal Assistance Referral Scheme (LARS) phone: (02) 9232 4055 or visit:
www.nswbar.asn.au/briefing-barristers/legal-assistance/duty-barrister-scheme and
www.nswbar.asn.au/briefing-barristers/legal-assistance/
- Justice Connect Pro Bono Referral Service
phone: 1300 044 332 or visit:
www.justiceconnect.org.au

Prisoners Legal Services (PLS)

The Prisoners Legal Service is a specialist service of Legal Aid NSW and visits NSW jails, provides free and confidential legal advice, and also provides representation in some matters.

Prisoners who need an appointment should ask their jail's wing officer, area manager or welfare officer to put their name down in the 'Legal Aid Book'. Prisoners can also contact the PLS directly on the Common Auto Dial List as a free call by choosing option 11#. The service can also be contacted on telephone (02) 8688 3888.

For further information

Visit <http://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/legal-regulatory-information-services>