

LEGAL AID AVAILABLE TO QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

Pro Bono Center – Allegheny County Bar Foundation – Legal Services Directory
(http://www.nlsa.us/resources/links/information_resources/Legal_Services_Directory.pdf)

- The Directory is intended to be used to refer low-income individuals and organizations to an appropriate provider of free or reduced-cost legal services available to residents of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.
- ACBA & ACBF projects:
 - Disaster Relief Project: primarily provides representation and advice to victims of disasters and catastrophes. (412) 402-6677.
 - Divorce Law Project: represents plaintiffs in simple no-fault divorce actions and conducts outreach clinics at community service agencies. (412) 402-6714.
 - Federal Court Prisoners Civil Rights Pro Bono Project: represents prisoners who have filed non-frivolous civil claims in federal court. (412) 208-7518.
 - Flood Assistance Program: provides legal advice, referrals, and/or representation to individuals who are impacted by flooding in Allegheny County. (412) 402-6677.
 - Indigent Birthparent Attorney Project: represents indigent birthparents in termination of parental rights proceedings in Orphans' Court. (412) 261-5555.
 - Juvenile Court Project: provides pro bono legal representation to qualified low-income parents who are parties to a dependency action through Allegheny County's Juvenile Court. (412) 391-4467.
 - Military Personnel Pro Bono Project: offers legal advice, referrals, and/or representation to military personnel and their immediate family members who are Allegheny County residents who have been called to active duty as a result of war and/or military action.
 - Military and Veterans Legal Advice Call-in Day: four-hour call-in program at KDKA providing legal advice to military personnel and veterans.
- Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership projects (group of law firm and corporate legal department members who develop signature pro bono projects):
 - Anti-predatory Lending Clinic: provides representation to individuals who have been victimized by unfair or illegal lending practices.
 - Catholic Charities Legal Clinic: general legal clinic held once a month at the offices of Catholic Charities in downtown Pittsburgh. (412) 456-6920.
 - Child Custody Guardian Project: provides attorneys to serve as guardians representing the best interests of at-risk children in high-conflict custody cases.

- Custody Conciliation Pro Bono Project: limited representation of clients at family law custody conciliations.
- Project H.E.L.P. (Homeless Experience Legal Protection): in partnership with Operation Safety Net, provides legal advice and representation to individuals and families who are experiencing temporary or chronic homelessness.
- McKees Rocks Clinic: general clinic held two times per month at Focus on Renewal in McKees Rocks.
- Millvale Community Clinic: general legal clinic held once a month at the Wellness Center of the Sisters of St. Francis in Millvale, Pennsylvania. Provides legal advice to low-income residents of the Millvale area on a variety of legal issues. (412) 526-8545.
- Veterans Legal Clinic: general legal clinic held on the first Tuesday of every month at The Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard. Provides legal advice to veterans on a variety of legal issues, including obtaining benefits to which the veteran may be entitled. (412) 363-8761.
- The Wills Project: provides drafting of wills, living wills, and Healthcare Powers of Attorney for senior citizens who meet income-eligibility guidelines.
- Member Organization projects:
 - Christian Legal Aid of Pittsburgh: provides free legal consultation on **non-criminal** matters including but not limited to family law, protection from abuse orders, bankruptcy, landlord-tenant issues, and elder law. (412) 622-0232.
 - Education Law Center: provides legal advocacy to families who have public education related problems. Services include individual counseling and technical support, legal representation in select individual cases and cases involving key issues affecting large numbers of students, and advocacy for administrative and legislative reforms at the local, state, and national levels. (412) 391-5225.
 - Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts: provides advice and representation to emerging and small arts organizations and low-income individual artists in the following areas: incorporation, by-laws and 501(c)(3) status filings, entertainment contracts, immigration law, trademark, copyright, and other IP issues. (412) 391-2060.
 - Jewish Family & Children's Service: offers family and immigration law assistance to low-income refugees and immigrants in Pittsburgh. (412) 422-7200.
 - Kidsvoice: represents abused, neglected, and at-risk children in Juvenile Court dependency proceedings. (412) 391-3100.
 - Lawlinks, A Program of the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University: provides legal services, education, and advice to small, grassroots, non-profit organizations. (412) 397-3100.

- Mental Health America – Allegheny County: provides legal consultations and limited representation to individuals receiving mental-health services. Focus is on issues that are **non-criminal**. (412) 391-3820.
 - Neighborhood Legal Services Association: provides advice and representation in the following areas: employment and unemployment compensation law, family law, tenant's rights, debt collection and bankruptcy law, protection from abuse, SSI and social security disability, litigation defense, estates with limited assets, and adult guardianships. (412) 255-6700.
 - North Hills Community Outreach, Inc.: provides counseling and referral services at clinics in the North Hills regarding family, consumer, and landlord/tenant issues. (412) 487-6316.
 - Pittsburgh Aids Task Force Legal Committee: advises, refers, and/or represents people living with AIDS and HIV infection, their family, and friends in legal matters including: wills, living wills, powers of attorney, SSI/SSDI, guardianship, issues involving civil rights, employment discrimination, medical treatment discrimination, confidentiality issues and medical insurance. (412) 345-7456.
 - Pro Se Assistance Program, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Family Division – Adult Section: assists eligible unrepresented applicants in the preparation of motions to be presented to a Family Court judge. (412) 350-5600.
 - Uptown Legal Clinic: offers pro bono legal services at Bethlehem Haven to indigent and low-income individuals in matters pertaining to family law, housing, debtor-creditor, and benefits issues. (412) 391-1348.
- This information is also available at http://www.acbf.org/Pro_Bono_Center/Member_Organizations.asp.
 - Eligibility for pro bono legal services is normally based on income, although some programs, particularly those that serve the elderly, are available regardless of income. Income-based programs normally set their limits according to a percentage of the federal poverty guidelines. Guidelines are set each year by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and can be found at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/>. Some Pro Bono Center projects accept clients whose family income is no higher than 250% of the poverty guidelines, while other organizations and projects have much lower eligibility thresholds.
- PALawHELP.org: a guide to legal information and free civil legal services for low-income persons and seniors in Pennsylvania. At this website, you can locate information on a variety of legal issues, as well as information on how to contact programs providing legal assistance in Pennsylvania. This includes basic eligibility and contact information for the programs providing free legal assistance in Pennsylvania. Available at <http://palawhelp.org/PA/index.cfm>.

Neighborhood Legal Services Association (www.nlsa.us)

What is it?

- Provides free **civil** legal services to low income individuals and families.
- Depending on the particular civil legal problems, NLSA may provide direct representation, advice, assistance in self-representation, brief service/limited legal assistance or referral to a private attorney (including free and reduced-fee). NLSA also provides community education on legal topics. Free interpretation services are provided to those with limited English abilities and the hearing-impaired.

How to Request Services

- Requests for services may be made by telephone, in person, and in Allegheny County at outreach sites for some elderly and abuse victims, and for patients from UPMC-McKeesport Hospital through referrals from hospital staff to our attorney who works on site at the hospital 3 days a week as part of a Medical Legal Collaborative for Patients.
- For those calling by telephone, an intake unit screens for financial eligibility and case type. Eligibility determinations are done by 4 intake specialists for Allegheny County and by the secretaries in Beaver, Butler, and Lawrence Counties. NLSA provides home visits to home-bound callers. “Language Line” is used for non-English speakers. Hours of operation by telephone are 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday of each week, excluding major holidays. Evening telephone advice is available between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. Callers who cannot get through on the line are given the option to leave a message and have their calls returned. All callers have their telephone calls returned within 2 business days.
- For those walking into an office, services are accessed from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Beaver, Butler and Lawrence Counties and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Allegheny County. All offices close for lunch between noon and 1:00 p.m. Only those in an emergency situation will have a file opened through the walk-in process. Anyone without an emergency will be asked to access services by calling the correct office for their county.
- Those without telephones who walk into the office will have their eligibility determined regardless of whether or not their case presents an emergency. If possible, they will be seen by a casehandler at the time of the visit or an appointment will be scheduled for them to meet with a casehandler.
- Office Hours & Locations: NLSA offices are located in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler and Lawrence Counties. Each is staffed by attorneys, paralegals and support personnel equipped to assist clients with civil legal matters.
 - Allegheny County: 928 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-3799
Phone: (412) 255-6700
Toll Free: (866) 761-6572
Fax: (412) 355-0168
Telephone Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
 - Beaver County: Stone Point Landing, Suite 204A, 500 Market Street, Bridgewater, PA 15009

Phone: (724) 378-0595

Fax: (724) 378-9795

Telephone Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

- Butler County: Holly Pointe - Suite 301, 220 South Main Street, Butler, PA 16001-5973

Phone: (724) 282-3888

Fax: (724) 282-4622

Telephone Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

- Lawrence County: 125 East North Street, Suite 329 - Temple Building, New Castle, PA 16101-3751

Phone: (724) 658-2677

Fax: (724) 658-5994

Telephone Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Other Services

- Law Clinics: NLSA hosts clinics at its central office on Wednesday evenings from 5:30 until 7:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required for anyone interested in attending one of the clinic. Those attending the clinic will listen to a brief general introduction and then have an opportunity to meet individually with an attorney. If additional legal assistance is needed, the client may be given a pro bono or reduced-fee referral. All clinic attendees must pre-register by calling (412) 255-6700.
- Unfortunately NLSA does not have the resources to provide full service in every case. In order to assist as many eligible clients as possible, NLSA has set up a telephone advice system in all service areas. This Helpline is a convenient way for clients to obtain basic legal advice, pamphlet material, and referrals to other agencies which may be able to assist them.
 - Allegheny County Office Helpline: (866) 761-6572 or (412) 255-6700
Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. and Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
 - Beaver County Office Helpline: (724) 282-3888
Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. and Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
 - Lawrence County Office Helpline: (724) 658-2677
Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. and Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
- There are also brochures providing information on frequently asked questions for particular areas of law. This information can be found at <http://www.nlsa.us/resources/info.html>. Hard copies of brochures can be obtained at the NLSA Central Office in downtown Pittsburgh.

Lawyer Referral Services

- Allegheny County Bar Association (ACBA) Lawyer Referral Service: a person can get a thirty minute consultation with a private attorney for a \$30 fee. Call (412) 261-5555. This service does not guarantee that any attorney it refers will be able to assist you. Its attorneys typically handle only Allegheny County matters – that is for residents of Allegheny County or those who have had a case arise in Allegheny County. Individuals who are ineligible for pro bono programs, due to either their income or the nature of their legal issue, may get help in finding an attorney through this service. The service is designed to assist the public in locating lawyers for specific types of legal matters. After the brief consultation, clients determine if they would like to hire the attorney at the attorney’s regular fee scale.
- ACBA Modest Means Program: a client, once screened, will be referred to one attorney who has agreed to provide a particular service at a reduced fee. To qualify for the Modest Means Panel, an individual must fall within 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines before taxes. In the event that an individual misrepresents his or her income, the attorney will be free to charge his or her normal rates. Fees must be paid prior to the attorney performing any work, and if services sought exceed the program specifications, the attorney may charge an additional fee. Contact the ACBA Lawyer Referral Service at (412) 261-5555. Program areas are Family Law, Wills, Powers of Attorney, and Living Wills. Rates vary for each program area.

- **FLAT FEE**

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| Uncontested Divorce (w/No Property Claims) | \$250.00 |
| Custody Conciliation | \$250.00 |
| Support Conference/Hearing | \$300.00 |
| PFA Hearing | \$250.00 |
| Simple Will | \$50.00 |
| Living Will | \$25.00 |
| Power of Attorney | \$25.00 |
| DUI (ARD Eligible) | \$500.00 |
| Bankruptcy | \$500.00 + Filing Fees |

- **HOURLY RATE***

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| Uncontested Divorce (w/Property Claims) | @ \$60.00/hr |
| Contested Divorce (w/Property Claims) | @ \$60.00/hr |
| Contested Divorce (w/No Property Claims) | @ \$60.00/hr |

* The attorney may charge a retainer to be set at his/her discretion.

Office of the Public Defender of Allegheny County

(<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/opd/>)

Contact information: (412) 350-2401. Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: County Office Building, 542 Forbes Avenue Room 400, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

- The Office of the Public Defender provides legal representation to those individuals who are financially unable to secure sufficient funds to obtain legal counsel in matters where counsel is constitutionally guaranteed.
- Generally, the Office of the Public Defender provides representation in criminal matters and to individuals in the following areas: juvenile delinquency, critical

pretrial identification procedures, preliminary hearings, state habeas corpus proceedings, state trials, including pre-trial and post-trial motions, Superior Court appeals, Pennsylvania Supreme Court appeals, post conviction hearings at the trial and appellate levels, criminal extradition proceedings, probation and parole violation hearings, involuntary commitment under the Mental Health Procedures Act, and any proceeding where personal liberty is in jeopardy.

How do I get a public defender to represent me in a case?

- If you have been arrested and charged with a criminal offense or received a summons in the mail, you must come in person to the Office of the Public Defender to apply for legal services.
- When you come to the office, you should bring these documents with you:
 - The criminal complaint or summons you received;
 - Verification of income.
- To verify your income, you should bring with you:
 - Your last 4 pay stubs;
 - Proof of SSI or other government support or your Access card.
- If you are not employed, not receiving public assistance and not receiving some kind of government support, you should bring a letter from the relative or friend who is supporting you now.
- After the Office of the Public Defender has determined that you are charged with an offense covered by the Public Defender Act and that you are not financially able to hire a private attorney, you will be interviewed about the new charges and you will have the opportunity to speak with a lawyer about your case.
- If you are in jail because of these new charges, you will be automatically interviewed by one of our paralegals, usually within 48 hours of your arrest.

What do I do if I do not qualify for Public Defender services?

- If you do not qualify for Public Defender services because you exceed the income guidelines or because your case is not authorized by the Public Defender Act, you should contact the Lawyer Referral Service of the Allegheny County Bar Association at (412) 261-5555.

What if I am able to hire my own attorney?

- Services are limited to people who cannot afford counsel on their own.

Neighborhood Legal Services, Allegheny County Public Defender, Allegheny County Bar Foundation, and Allegheny County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service websites are all resources that should be consulted for any questions you may have regarding the above services.