

Where is the Legal Aid Office located?

You can drop in to the Legal Aid Office in two locations:

- **CIVIC** 4 Mort Street (in the bus interchange) 8.30am to 5pm
- **WODEN** 18 Corinna Street (opposite Phillip Health Centre) 9am to 5pm

What if I can't get transport into Civic or Woden?

The Legal Aid Office (ACT) provides information and legal advice over the phone:

- For enquiries about Legal Aid applications, phone 6243 3411
- For legal information or advice, phone the Free Legal Advice Line on 1300 654 314

What legal issues can I get advice on?

If you phone the Free Legal Advice Line you can ask for advice on most legal issues.

What matters can I get legal representation for?

Legal Aid Office (ACT) Guidelines state that the office can provide representation only for certain legal matters. For more information about the Guidelines, contact the Free Legal Advice Line on 1300 654 314.

Is Legal Aid free?

If you require *initial legal advice* (through the Free Legal Advice Line or a first appointment with a solicitor), this will be provided free of charge.

If you require *ongoing legal representation* you will need to apply for Legal Aid funding. If you are

granted Legal Aid funding you may be asked to pay a contribution towards legal costs (starting at \$90). If you feel you may have difficulty paying this amount you should talk to your solicitor, or inform the Legal Aid Office in writing.

I need a Solicitor. What do I do?

If you need a lawyer, you can contact the **ACT Law Society** for contact details of a solicitor in your area. Phone 6247 5700.

If you cannot afford a private solicitor, you can make an application for a grant of Legal Aid.

Application forms are available at any of our offices, or you can apply online at our website at www.legalaid.canberra.net.au.

Applications take 2 to 5 working days to process and should be lodged as soon as possible. Urgent applications will be given priority.

If you have not seen a solicitor for initial advice, phone the Legal Aid Office on 6243 3471 to make an initial appointment for advice before filling in an application form. This appointment will be with a Legal Aid lawyer or a private solicitor depending on the circumstances of your case.

I just want some quick advice, but I don't need an appointment. What can I do?

If you need some quick advice and don't feel that you need an appointment, phone the **Free Legal Advice Line** on 1300 654 314. If you have a criminal problem, phone 6243 3407. The Advice Line is open 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

If your matter is complex or if the solicitor needs to read your documents, you will be advised

to see a solicitor. (You may request an initial face to face appointment with a Legal Aid solicitor by phoning 6243 3471.)

I can't get through to the Legal Advice line. Is anyone there? Is the Advice Line just a recorded message? Is the Advice Line in the ACT?

Calls to the Legal Advice Line are answered by a Legal Aid solicitor. This service is run from the ACT. This is the only way the Legal Aid Office gives out advice over the telephone.

The Legal Advice Line operates from 9am to 4pm weekdays. The Line can be extremely busy at times. If all the solicitors are engaged on other calls, you will hear one of two messages:

- that you have been placed in a queue and will be attended to shortly, or
- that the lines are busy and you should call again later.

If no one answers your call or if the number is engaged for long periods of time, this means that the lines are full and you are unable to be placed in a queue. If this occurs please try again later. Or if you are unable to wait, you may contact the Legal Aid Office on 6243 3471 to request an appointment to see a solicitor.

If you are calling after hours and need to speak to a solicitor urgently, call the **After Hours Urgent Matters line** on 0429 440 084. This service operates overnight (from 6pm to 9am Monday to Thursday), and on weekends (from 6pm Friday to 9am Monday).

I've been referred to a private solicitor for my free advice. Why can't I see a Legal Aid solicitor? Does this mean I can't apply for Legal Aid?

If you are referred to a private solicitor it may be because it is a conflict of interest for the Legal Aid Office to see you, or because the Office is too busy to take on a new case. In either situation *you can still apply for a grant of legal aid*. If your application is accepted, the Legal Aid Office will pay for you to be represented by an independent solicitor.

It is a conflict of interest (and unethical) for a legal firm to act on behalf of both parties to a case. It would mean that the lawyers representing each party could access information about the other party, which would be unjust.

If there is a conflict of interest, one party will be referred to an independent solicitor.

If there is a conflict of interest and you are referred to a private solicitor for advice *you can still apply for Legal Aid*.

The other party to my dispute has already been granted Legal Aid. Does this mean I have missed out?

No, *you can still apply for Legal Aid*. Where both parties to a case wish to apply for a grant of Legal Aid and both are eligible for aid, the Office will act for one party and refer the other to a private solicitor, whose fees will be paid by the Legal Aid Office.

Who is eligible for Legal Aid?

To be eligible to receive Legal Aid you must meet the Means Test (an income and assets test) and your matter must be one that falls within the Legal Aid Guidelines.

I live in NSW and there is no Legal Aid Office nearby. Where do I apply?

If you live in NSW and you want help with a matter that has arisen in NSW, contact the Legal Aid Commission (NSW) on 1800 806 913.

If you live in NSW but the circumstances of your matter arose in the ACT, contact the Legal Aid Office (ACT).

My application for a grant of Legal Aid has been refused. Why? What do I do now?

If your application for Legal Aid has been refused, you will receive a letter outlining the reason(s) for this decision.

If you have been refused Legal Aid you have the right to ask for reconsideration. To have the decision reviewed, submit a letter to our office within 28 days of the date of your refusal letter. Please state the reasons why you think the decision not to grant Legal Aid should be changed.

If you are applying for reconsideration, please make sure all relevant information is included in your letter. If you are not sure what information is important for your application, read the application form, or ask one of the reception staff.

Frequently Asked Questions

about

Legal Aid



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For more copies,
phone 6243 3419