

Legal aid

If you need more than legal advice, we may provide a lawyer to help with your case. To apply for **legal aid**, you must fill in an application form and show us proof of your income and assets. You can **apply online** via the Online Legal Services Portal (lsc.sa.gov.au/legalaid). Hard copy application forms are also available from our offices or private lawyers. You will usually get a letter within 14 days to say if you have been granted legal aid. You will hear sooner if your matter is urgent.

Who can get legal aid?

Legal aid is not available for every legal problem. In granting legal aid we consider:

- your **financial situation** - your income and assets (and your partner’s or anyone else with whom you have a financial relationship)
- **legal aid guidelines** - for example, for a criminal matter, there must be a real risk of imprisonment, and family matters must usually involve a genuine dispute over children that you cannot resolve
- whether your case can **succeed**.

Can I choose my own lawyer?

Yes. You can choose a private lawyer to represent you under a grant of legal aid. There are some **rules** to ensure that your lawyer is appropriately experienced to represent you. If you do not have a lawyer, we may use one of our experienced staff lawyers or pay a private lawyer to represent you.

What will it cost?

Legal aid is not free. There is a minimum contribution of \$70 for family law matters and \$50 for other matters. You may be asked to pay more towards your legal costs, depending on your income and assets.

If you have real estate, a **Statutory Charge** can be placed on the title. Your legal costs will be repaid at a later date when the property is sold or transferred. See our **Statutory Charge fact sheet** for more information.

When does legal aid start?

We will pay legal fees from the date legal aid is granted. You must pay for any legal costs incurred before your application is approved.

Can I get legal aid for any legal problem?

No. Under our legal aid guidelines, some legal problems do not usually justify a grant of legal aid.

We **do not** usually **represent** people in:

- divorce applications or family law property disputes, unless there are special circumstances
- traffic offences, unless there is a real risk of imprisonment
- simple will disputes
- complaints about lawyers (these are referred to the Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner)
- defamation cases
- conveyancing
- bankruptcy matters
- neighbour or fencing disputes
- defending intervention orders
- matters where other help is available, such as from Consumer and Business Services for simple consumer complaints
- matters where private lawyers are prepared to act and be paid from money received at the end of the case, such as personal injury matters
- unfair dismissal applications
- minor criminal matters with no risk of imprisonment
- business or corporate matters.

Each application for legal aid is considered on its own merits. Even if we cannot represent you, we can usually provide information and advice.

Call our Legal Helpline on 1300 366 424

Legal Helpline 1300 366 424
Child Support Advice 8111 5576

Legal Services Commission Offices

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Adelaide Office
159 Gawler Place
Adelaide 5000
Call 8111 5555 | • Port Adelaide Office
263 St Vincent Street
Port Adelaide 5015
Call 8111 5460 |
| • Elizabeth Office
Suite 2 Windsor Building
1 Windsor Square
(off Playford Boulevard)
Elizabeth Shopping Centre
Elizabeth 5112
Call 8111 5400 | • Port Augusta Office
34 Flinders Terrace
Port Augusta SA 5700
Call 8686 2200 |
| • Noarlunga Office
Noarlunga House
Ramsay Place
Noarlunga Centre 5168
Call 8111 5340 | • Whyalla Office
17A Forsyth Street
Whyalla 5600
Call 8620 8500 |

Do you need help calling us?

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450 | |
| • National Relay Service
TTY users call 133 677 | SMS Relay 0423 677 767 |
| Speak and Listen users
call 1300 555 727 | Internet Relay users visit
nrschat.nrscall.gov.au |

Visit us online at lsc.sa.gov.au

Need legal help?





The Legal Services Commission helps people with legal problems. This might be if you are

- in trouble with police
- in a car crash
- going to court
- having problems with family or children.

The Legal Services Commission can provide legal information and legal advice. In some cases, we can also provide a lawyer to give you more help.

Legal Help for all South Australians

Legal Helpline 1300 366 424

Anyone can call the Legal Helpline for **free** legal information and advice.

Call 1300 366 424 between **9:00 am** and **4:30 pm** **Monday to Friday**.

Legal Chat

Legal Chat is an **online text service** that gives legal information via mobile phone, tablet or computer when the Legal Helpline is open. Simply click on the **Legal Chat icon** in the bottom right-hand corner of our website.

Legal advice

For face-to-face advice, we can book you an **appointment** to talk to a legal adviser at one of our offices. We can give initial advice for most legal problems and refer you to other places to get help. To save time, you should first **call the Legal Helpline** for advice. Appointments are free of charge and are usually 30 minutes.

There are some limited areas, such as migration, NDIS and reviews of mental health, guardianship and administration orders, where we can provide more help once you are referred from our helpline or other services.

Family Advocacy and Support Service

This service is located at the **Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia**. It recognises that people coming to court have more than just legal needs. The service has both duty lawyers and social support workers.

Duty lawyers can provide legal advice about family law matters and help with adjournments, legal aid applications and referrals, but cannot provide ongoing help or representation.

Social workers support people affected by family violence with non-legal needs such as safety, housing, financial counselling and accessing other support services.

Call 8111 5300 or find this service at court.

Duty solicitors

Duty solicitors are legal aid lawyers located at the **Magistrates Court** and **Youth Court**. They help people charged with **criminal offending**. Duty solicitors can provide legal advice and help with bail applications and adjournments. Whether the duty solicitor can help you depends on what you have been charged with, your personal circumstances and how many other people need help that day. They are usually very busy so it is best to get advice before going to court.

Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service

This service is for **women experiencing family violence**. Lawyers can provide advice and representation in relation to **intervention orders** in the Magistrates Court and **tenancy matters** at the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Call 1800 246 642 or visit wdvcas.lsc.sa.gov.au.

Family Law Conferencing

Family Law Conferencing uses **mediation** to help resolve family law problems. To use our conferencing service, either you or the other person involved in the dispute must be receiving legal aid.

To find out more about conferencing, see our **Family Law Conferencing brochure** or call the Family Dispute Resolution Unit on **8111 5534**.

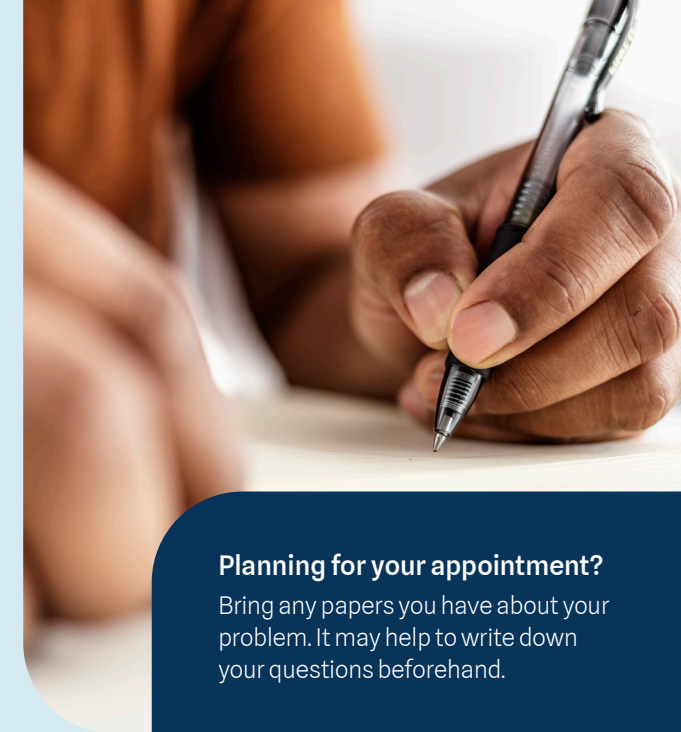
amica

Another way to resolve family law problems without going to court if your relationship is still amicable is via **amica**. This is an **online tool** that can help you **reach agreement** about parenting, property and money matters when you separate. Visit amica.gov.au.

Child Support

We can help those **owed** or **owing** child support. For help and advice, **call 8111 5576**, leave your details and we will call you back.

You can also email childsupportunit@lsc.sa.gov.au.



Planning for your appointment?

Bring any papers you have about your problem. It may help to write down your questions beforehand.

Information and education

Looking for information? Visit our **Law Handbook** at www.lawhandbook.sa.gov.au for a **practical guide to the law** in South Australia.

We also run free **legal information sessions**, workshops and webinars. Visit lsc.sa.gov.au/Education for more information and to request an information session.

Publications

We publish booklets, pamphlets and other resources on a range of legal topics. To download or order our publications, visit lsc.sa.gov.au/publications.

If you need this publication in a different format, call **8111 5555** and ask for the Community Legal Education Team. We are happy to discuss your needs.