

# Legal Aid ACT



## HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

### WHAT WE DO

Legal Aid ACT offers free legal information, referral and advice to everyone in the ACT community. We also provide ongoing legal assistance and representation to people who cannot afford a private lawyer (eligibility criteria apply).

### WHO WE ARE

Legal Aid ACT was established under the *Legal Aid Act 1977*, and acts independently of government. We aim to inform people of their legal rights and obligations, and to improve their access to the justice system.

There are legal aid services in every Australian state and territory. If you live outside the ACT we can put you in touch with a legal aid service in your area.

### FREE LEGAL ADVICE AND INFORMATION

We provide free legal information and initial advice to people **in the ACT**. We will not ask any questions about your financial circumstances before providing this advice.

#### By phone

Ring the Legal Aid Helpline on **1300 654 314** (8.30am - 5pm weekdays).

#### By appointments

Phone 6243 3411 for an appointment at our Civic office in relation to your family law, criminal law or civil law matter (refer to our brochures about what each of these practices can assist with). When you come to the appointment, please bring all of your documents with you.

#### Magistrates Court and Childrens Court duty lawyer service

Free duty lawyer services are provided in criminal cases at the ACT Magistrates and Children's Courts to advise and assist people who have not been able to make arrangements for legal representation.



### **Domestic Violence & Personal Protection Orders Unit**

Legal Aid ACT assists people applying for or responding to protection orders and domestic violence orders. This is a free service. Phone 6207 1874, or drop in to the ground floor of the Magistrates Court building, Knowles Place, Civic.

### **Family Law duty lawyer service**

Free duty lawyer services are available to advise and assist people in family law cases at the Canberra Registry of the Family Court and the Federal Magistrates Court. Located corner University Ave & Childers St, Civic

### **Mental Health duty lawyer service**

Legal Aid ACT can advise and assist people who are detained in hospital under the *Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Act 1994*.

### **Community Legal Education**

Legal Aid ACT's community legal education program provides free information sessions, workshops and publications to community groups and schools, to increase awareness of the legal system. For more information, phone 6243 3475.

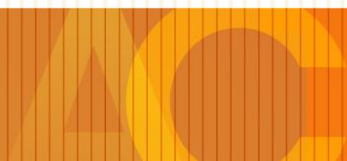
## **LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

If you need ongoing legal assistance or representation, you can apply for a grant of legal assistance.

### **Eligibility criteria**

To receive a grant of legal assistance you must satisfy the:

- Means test (income and expenditure)
- Assets test (savings, property and investments)
- Legal Aid ACT Guidelines that explain the types of legal matters in which legal assistance may be granted. Ask us for a copy of the Guidelines from Legal Aid ACT or download a copy from [www.legalaidACT.org.au](http://www.legalaidACT.org.au).



## **Contributions**

Most grants of legal assistance are given on the condition that you pay a contribution towards the costs of providing the assistance. For further details see our pamphlet 'Applying for a Grant of Legal Assistance'.

## **What if your application is refused?**

You can ask Legal Aid ACT to reconsider a:

- a refusal to grant you legal assistance;
- a decision about a contribution;
- a decision to stop or change your grant of legal assistance;
- a decision to limit the type or extent of legal assistance you are receiving.

You should write a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of Legal Aid ACT at our postal address stating your reasons and including all the information you think is relevant. Send your letter to Legal Aid ACT within 28 days of finding out about the decision.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the appeal, you can request an independent review of the decision. To request a review write to the Chief Executive Officer, again with your reasons, within 28 days of finding out about the outcome of the appeal.

## **Complaints and suggestions**

If you have any complaints or suggestions to make about our services, please write to the Chief Executive Officer at our postal address.

## **Interpreter**

If you need an interpreter, please contact Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

