

# HOW CAN WE HELP YOU

## What we Do

Legal Aid ACT offers free legal information 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.

## Our services

### Free legal information and advice

We provide free legal information and initial advice to people in the ACT.

There is no means test for this service.

### By phone

Contact the Legal Aid Helpline on 1300 654 314 (9am–4pm weekdays).

### By appointment

Phone 6243 3471 for an appointment at our Civic or Woden offices. When you come to the appointment, please bring all your documents with you.

### After hours urgent matters

For people in police custody and other urgent matters, phone the After Hours Legal Aid Helpline on 0429 440 084 (weekdays from 6pm-9am, and weekends).

### Magistrates Court and Children's 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 6217 4299, or drop in to the ground floor of the Magistrates Court building, Knowles Place, Canberra City.

### 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.

### 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 3422.

### Legal Assistance

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

### Eligibility criteria

Eligibility for a grant of legal assistance means you must satisfy the:

- ▶ Means test (income and expenditure)
- ▶ Assets test (savings and investments)
- ▶ Legal Aid Guidelines that explain the types of legal matters in which legal assistance may be granted.

Ask us for a copy of the Guidelines 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.

### How to apply for a grant of legal assistance

Obtain an application form from Legal Aid ACT. Complete the application form and lodge it at a Legal Aid ACT office, together with the following documents:

- ▶ Proof of your income and that of any financially associated person;
- ▶ copies of records or statements showing amounts in any bank, building society or credit union accounts owned solely or jointly by you, or by any financially associated person, for the last 3 months;
- ▶ your last tax return if you are self-employed.

## What if your application is refused?

You can ask Legal Aid ACT to reconsider:

- ▶ 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.

To obtain a reconsideration, write a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of Legal Aid ACT at our postal address. State your reasons and include 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 reconsideration, you can request an independent review of the decision. To request a review please write to the Chief Executive Officer, again with your reasons, within 28 days of finding out about the outcome of the reconsideration.

For further details see the pamphlet 'Applying for a Grant of Legal Assistance'.

## 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.

Other free legal aid services

Other sources of free or low cost legal advice and assistance in the ACT are listed in our pamphlet 'Free Legal Services in the ACT'

## Contact Details

### Locations

4 Mort Street CANBERRA CITY  
18 Corinna Street WODEN

### Postal Address

GPO Box 512 Canberra ACT 2601

### Phone Numbers

General Enquiries	6243 3411
Appointments	6243 3471
Legal Aid Helpline	1300 654 314
After Hours Helpline	0429 440 084

### Website

[www.legalaidACT.org.au](http://www.legalaidACT.org.au)

### Email

[legalaid@legalaidACT.org.au](mailto:legalaid@legalaidACT.org.au)

### Publication Orders

[publications@legalaidACT.org.au](mailto:publications@legalaidACT.org.au)

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