THE #FKLM FAMILY BLUEPRINT

Finding a Legal Aid Office Near You

Legal & Policy Literacy · Find Reliable Help

The national funder's directory of local civil legal-aid organizations.

IN THIS GUIDE

- What the finder does
- Using it step by step
- What to expect from LSC-funded programs
- When the finder does not turn up an answer
- Try it: a real example
- Scripts you can use
- Your checklist

A free guide from My Fairy GodParents — for youth impacted by parental incarceration, justice-impacted youth, and the caregivers and families who support them.
myfairygodparents.org/resources/family-blueprint

Print, write on it, and share it with the people helping your family.

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THE DIFFERENCE THIS MAKES

The Legal Services Corporation, known as LSC, is the largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans and maintains a national finder tool that locates the LSC-funded legal aid program serving a given address. It exists so that a family anywhere in the country can find their local legal aid organization without already knowing its name.

This matters because legal aid organizations are usually organized by region, not by topic, and a family that has just moved, or is dealing with a facility in a different county than where they live, can easily end up calling the wrong office. The finder solves that by working off geography.

Like LawHelp.org, the LSC finder is a directory, not a source of legal advice, and it is free with no account required. This lesson covers how to use it and what to expect once it points you to a program.

WHAT THE FINDER DOES

You enter an address or ZIP code and it returns the LSC-funded legal aid organization or organizations that serve that area, along with contact information. Coverage areas are drawn by region, so a program's territory may cover several counties or an entire state.

Because it is organized by LSC funding, it will surface programs that meet federal standards for how legal aid is delivered, though it does not cover every legal aid organization in the country — some state and local programs operate outside LSC funding and would not appear here.

The listing typically gives you a phone number, and sometimes intake hours or an online application, rather than a general information page. This is a working contact, not just a name.

USING IT STEP BY STEP

Use the address of the person who needs help, not necessarily your own address if you live somewhere different — for a family with a parent incarcerated in another county or state, this distinction matters and affects which office has jurisdiction.

When the results come back, note that more than one organization may be listed if there are programs

serving different case types in the same area — for example, one general legal aid office and one specialized in a particular issue such as domestic violence or veterans' matters.

Call the number provided and expect an intake process: questions about income, household size, and the nature of the legal issue. This is standard and is how the program determines whether it can take the case, not a sign of anything going wrong.

+ WHAT TO EXPECT FROM LSC-FUNDED PROGRAMS

LSC-funded programs are restricted by federal rules in what kinds of cases they can take — there are limits, for instance, in some criminal-adjacent matters and certain types of cases, and eligibility is generally tied to income. Ask directly rather than assuming.

These restrictions are not a reflection of your situation; they are structural limits on the funding, and a program that says it cannot take a particular kind of case is not saying no to you personally. Ask what they can do or where else they would suggest.

Wait times vary widely by region and caseload. Some programs can take a new client quickly; others have waiting lists, particularly for anything other than an emergency matter. Ask directly what their current timeline looks like so you can plan around it.

+ WHEN THE FINDER DOES NOT TURN UP AN ANSWER

If no program appears for an address, or the listed program cannot take your case, go back to LawHelp.org for that state, or call 211 and ask specifically for legal aid referrals. These tools overlap rather than compete, and using more than one increases the odds of a real connection.

Law school legal clinics, bar association referral services, and court self-help centers are also worth asking about if LSC-funded programs cannot help — a legal aid intake worker will often know these alternatives even if they cannot take your case themselves.

+ USING THE RIGHT ADDRESS

A mother lived in one county but her partner was incarcerated in a facility two counties away, and she needed help understanding a child support order tied to his case. She initially searched using her own address and reached a program that told her the matter fell outside their service area.

She used the LSC finder again with the county where the court order had been issued, which returned a different regional program. That office confirmed it handled child support modification requests and walked her through their income eligibility over the phone.

The mismatch had cost her a week, but was resolved once she used the address tied to the legal matter rather than her home address.

+ WORDS YOU CAN USE

Starting an intake call after using the finder

"I found your organization through the LSC legal aid finder for [address/county]. I have a [type of legal issue] and I'd like to know if this is something you handle and what the income eligibility guidelines are."

Asking about wait times

"If I'm eligible, roughly how long is the wait before someone can review my case? Is there anything I should submit now to avoid delay?"

Asking for a referral when they cannot help

"I understand this isn't something your program can take. Given what I've described, is there another organization, clinic, or referral service you'd suggest I contact?"

+ USE THE LSC FINDER THIS WEEK

- [ ] Identify the correct address to search — the one tied to the legal matter, not necessarily your own.
- [ ] Search the LSC legal aid finder using that address.
- [ ] Note every organization returned, not just the first one.
- [ ] Call and ask directly about income eligibility and case types before a full intake.
- [ ] Ask about current wait times so you can plan around them.
- [ ] If no program fits, cross-check LawHelp.org and call 211 for referrals.
- [ ] Ask any legal aid worker for alternative referrals if they cannot take your case.

+ REFLECT AND WRITE

Am I searching with the address that actually matters for this legal issue?

Have I asked directly about eligibility rather than assuming I don't qualify?

What is my backup plan if the first program listed cannot help?

Have I asked about wait times so I'm not caught off guard by a deadline?

YOUR NEXT STEP

Find your local office and save its number in your phone.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Source: Legal Services Corporation — verified August 2026. Curated and summarized by MFGP.
https://www.lsc.gov/about-lsc/what-legal-aid/get-legal-help
This is general information and practice guidance — not legal advice, mental-health treatment, or a statement of any court, agency, or facility's rules. Policies differ by state, county, facility, school, and program, so always confirm details with the office involved.
For decisions with legal, medical, financial, or clinical consequences, work with a licensed professional or the organizations listed with each resource.
The information provided through The #FKLM Family Blueprint is for general educational purposes and is not legal advice. Laws and policies differ by jurisdiction and may change. Families needing advice about their individual circumstances should consult an appropriately qualified attorney or legal-services organization.

You do not have to do this alone.

More free guides, scripts, and checklists:
myfairygodparents.org/resources/family-blueprint