



Legal  
Pathways



Targeted  
Referrals



Key  
Terms

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## MINI LEGAL REFERRAL TOOL KIT

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Eligibility



Triage



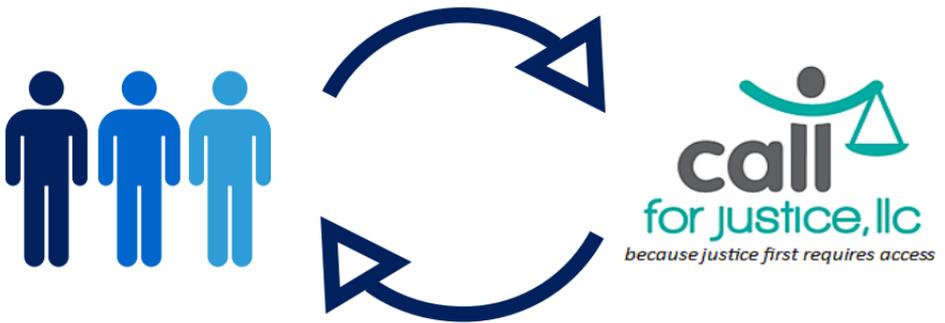
Do's & Don'ts

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# INTRODUCTION

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Call for Justice, LLC (C4J) works to help low-income Minnesotans connect with civil legal resources.



We do this by increasing the flow of legal resource-related information that helps a person in legal need connect to the right resource the first time.

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# THE MINI LEGAL REFERRAL TOOL KIT

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This Mini Legal Referral Tool Kit is intended to aid legal professionals, social workers and lay persons on understanding how to make "smart" legal referrals for persons in legal need.



**By no means does this Mini Legal Referral Tool Kit identify every Twin Cities/Greater MN legal provider;** instead, it provides some shortcuts for directing a person in legal need to helpful legal resources.



General information about the work of C4J can be found at [www.callforjustice.org](http://www.callforjustice.org). Our widely-acclaimed "Legal Resources Cheat Sheet" (a 26 page listing of legal resources by category of need) can be downloaded at [www.callforjustice.org/cheat-sheet](http://www.callforjustice.org/cheat-sheet).

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# SHORTCUTS ON LEGAL REFERRALS

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## Remember the Basics:

- Type of legal issue (Civil or Criminal?; State or Federal?)
- Eligibility (>200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines)
- Twin Cities vs Greater MN

## Think Shortcuts:

Use the Call for Justice "Legal Resources Cheat Sheet" for reference after asking the following questions:

**Veteran?** Refer to MAC-V (651-291 8756) or CMLS Veterans Legal Services (612-332-8151)

**Disabled?** Refer to MMLA Disability Law Center (651-222-3749)

**Spanish-Speaking?** Refer to La Red (612-752-6677) or Immigrant Law Center of MN (651-641-1011)

**Somali-Speaking?** Refer to Bryan Coyle Center (612-338-5282)

**Immigration Issue?** Refer to Immigrant Law Center of MN (1-800-223-1368)

**LL-Tenant?** Refer to Hennepin County Housing Court Project (612-752-6677) or HOME Line (612-728-5767)

**Low-Fee in the Twin Cities Metro (Does the person in legal need have \$500-\$600 available?)** Refer to RCBA Modest Fee Service (651-222-0846) or HCBA Low Fee Family Law Project (612-752-6666)

**Neighbor Problem?** Refer to various mediation services

**Stumped?** Refer to 211 (Dial 2-1-1) or outside the metro call 1-800-543-7709

## Look for Hubs:

Hubs are organizations that serve multiple people or act as liaisons with other organizations (e.g. Council on American-Islamic Relations Minnesota, OutFront Minnesota, law libraries, Court Self-Help centers).

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# KEY TERMS

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**Brief Legal Advice:** Denotes where an attorney limits his/her interaction with a client to a single or limited number of in-person or telephonic meetings. Brief legal advice is usually confined to a discreet topic (e.g. what to put in a divorce petition or how to avoid garnishment of a bank account); often there are other legal issues with the client's legal matter for which the attorney doesn't offer advice due to time constraints or other factors.

**Brief Legal Service:** Denotes where an attorney limits the work he/she does for a client to a discreet item (e.g. writing a letter to a creditor advising that the client's assets are not subject to garnishment). Often there are other tasks involving the client's legal matter which the attorney does not perform due to time constraints or other factors.

**Full Representation:** Denotes where an attorney represents a client from the start to the end of a legal matter. Traditionally, attorneys only provided full representation to clients; this has now changed to where attorneys can provide brief legal advice or brief legal service due to the increasing number of persons who can't afford traditional legal services.

**Federal Poverty Guidelines:** Sometimes referred to as "FPG"; denotes a yearly-adjusted annual income classification system for distributing government benefits or access to government programs. For example, the 2016 "100% FPG" level for a single person is \$11,880/yr. and for a family of 4 is \$24,300/yr.

**Income Eligibility:** Denotes the FPG level at which persons are eligible for various Legal Aid programs, usually relative to full representation ("full rep"). Thus, most Legal Aid programs cap "full rep" at 187.5% FPG (\$22,275/yr. for a single person and \$45,563/yr. for a family of 4). Some Legal Aid programs have a cap at 125% FPG (\$14,850/yr. for a single person and \$30,375/yr. for a family of 4). Brief legal advice via Legal Aid programs are usually capped at 200% FPG (\$23,760/yr. for a single person; \$48,600 for a family of 4). Note: Never guess if someone is financially eligible for a program's legal services; make the referral and let the nonprofit legal provider make its own financial eligibility determination.

**Self-Help Center:** Denotes court system programs and physical spaces where self-represented litigants can obtain assistance on understanding court forms and procedures. Self-help center personnel cannot provide legal advice.

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# SHORT LIST OF LEGAL REFERRALS

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**To talk to a human** 24/7/365 refer to United Way 211 (dial 2-1-1) (outside the metro dial 1-800-543-7709)

To post a civil (not criminal or bankruptcy) question **seeking legal advice** refer to Minnesota Legal Advice Online ([www.mnlegaladvice.org](http://www.mnlegaladvice.org))

For **legal clinics** refer to LawHelpMN.org ([www.lawhelpmn.org](http://www.lawhelpmn.org))

For a **form-builder** or good **background information** refer to LawHelpMN.org

For **immigration/documentation issues** refer to Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota ([www.ilcm.org](http://www.ilcm.org))

For **plaintiff (car accident, workers' comp, employment, malpractice) civil rights or police misconduct cases** refer to the lawyer referral services of the Hennepin County Bar Association (612-752-6666) or Ramsey County Bar Association (651-224-1775)

For **post-conviction/inmate** matters (non-appeals) refer to Legal Assistance to Minnesota Prisoners (LAMP) (651-290-8651); [Brad.Colbert@wmitchell.edu](mailto:Brad.Colbert@wmitchell.edu)

For help **filling out court forms** refer to the centralized MN Courts (Statewide) Self Help Center (651-259-3888) (cannot provide legal advice, however).

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# DO'S & DON'TS FOR PERSONS IN LEGAL NEED

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**Do listen to the professionals who attempt to help you.** If a Court Self-Help Center representative suggests filling out a form in a particular way, do it that way.

**Do ensure that you are on time for appointments and that you leave enough time for waiting in case schedules become backed-up.**

**Do take advantage of every resource the system offers.** LawHelpMN.org is a great starting point for understanding your legal problem and available resources. If you don't have savings or a job, contact one of the three Legal Aid offices in Minneapolis (612-334-5970) and Saint Paul (651-222-5863) or the Volunteer Lawyers Network (612-752-6677) in Minneapolis.

**Do pay attention to deadlines and court dates.** Missing either a deadline or a court date could result in you losing your case, or worse, losing important rights and the ability to have a place to live, or the chance to see your kids, or the ability to access healthcare.

**Do give your attorney every document that relates to your legal problem.** Don't assume the attorney doesn't need a particular document or piece of information.

**Do attempt mediation of your legal problem.** Most of the time, mediation resolves all or part of the problem.

**Do consider paying something for legal help.** The Ramsey County Bar Association (651-224-1775) operates a low fee service (\$620) for many legal matters. The Hennepin County Bar Association (612-752-6666) has a low fee service (\$530) for family law matters. There are various restrictions for these services, so call to get more information.

**Don't mistakenly believe that Legal Aid attorneys aren't "real lawyers".** In fact, most Legal Aid attorneys have more specialized experience in their respective fields than attorneys working for private law firms.

**Don't wait until the last minute before dealing with a legal emergency.** The number one reason for unwinnable legal situations is that the person ignores a legal problem and allows it to mushroom out of control, threatening the person's financial and emotional health. The sooner you see a lawyer about a legal problem, the better.

**Don't ignore your attorney's calls, emails or letters.** There's a reason your attorney is trying to get ahold of you. Sometimes that means getting documents or information to the attorney. Make sure you communicate with your attorney in a timely manner.

**Don't assume that attorneys or the courts or the civil legal system in general can solve every problem in your life.** Some things can't be resolved through the courts. If an attorney tells you this, believe it.

**Don't think you're not smart enough to get help from the various resources in the civil legal system.** The system is geared to help everyone in one way or another. Many people have the ability to be good advocates for themselves.

**Don't get mad or frustrated that your case isn't being handled as quickly as you'd like.** There just aren't enough attorneys or resources to go around. If you really want to take action, call or write your state legislator and ask them to fully fund Legal Aid and other nonprofit legal programs.

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# DO'S & DON'TS

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## Legal Problem vs. Legal Emergency

One of the most important "Do's" that you can convey to a person in legal need is that if they are dealing with a legal problem (e.g. a letter from a creditor threatening legal action), **it's critical that they deal with the problem now by speaking to an attorney**, before the problem mutates into an **emergency**.

We find the human tendency for denial often allows manageable situations to turn into runaway disasters.

**Sometimes simply reminding a person about the "problem vs. emergency" thing helps a person to focus.**



This Mini Legal Referral Tool Kit was created by Call for Justice LLC, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit that helps low-income persons connect with legal resources. For more information contact C4J at [www.callforjustice.org](http://www.callforjustice.org) or 612-333-4000