


CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE REFERENCE GUIDE

PREPARED BY

Louisiana State
Bar Association

Access to Justice

CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE REFERENCE GUIDE

This Reference Guide was put together by the Louisiana State Bar Association's Access to Justice Department.

The purpose of this guide is to help court staff, community leaders, library staff, clerks, and social service providers direct patrons to available civil legal resources. This guide also gives directions on how to access and use those resources.

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Access to Justice
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For more information, visit
www.lsba.org/ATJ

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SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES



Find Legal Help

The Louisiana State Bar Association's "Find Legal Help" Portal is designed to help you identify your legal options, find an attorney and/or legal aid organization in your area, and access other services and resources that may be of assistance in resolving your legal issue. To access the information listed below, go online to:

www.LSBA.org/goto/FindLegalHelp



Find an Attorney

It is always in your best interest to speak with a licensed attorney about your legal issue. Use the "Find an Attorney" button to search a directory of Louisiana attorneys by name or location. Some cities have a "referral program" through local bar associations.



Civil Legal Navigator

The Louisiana Civil Legal Navigator is a free online resource that helps diagnose your legal issue and provides customized legal information, local court forms, referrals to legal aid, and more for a limited number of civil legal topics.



Legal Aid & Pro Bono Organizations

If you cannot afford to hire an attorney, you may be able to get free legal help from a "legal aid" or "pro bono" organization in your area. To view services in your area, click this button in the portal and select your parish.



Modest Means Directory

The Modest Means Directory provides a list of attorneys who charge reduced fees to people who meet certain income eligibility requirements. Use the directory to locate an attorney near you who handles your specific type of legal issue.



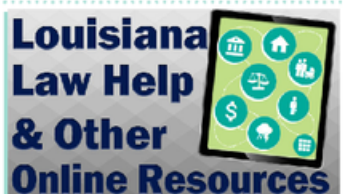
Self-Help Services & Legal Forms

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LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org

LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org is a free online program that allows you to ask civil legal questions through the website, which are answered by volunteer attorneys. Please note that you must meet certain income requirements to be eligible.



Law Help & Other Online Resources

This section of the portal provides links to LouisianaLawHelp.org, and other online resources, including local and statewide services, that can help you learn more about your legal issue and options.

Legal Information

vs.

Legal Advice

Legal information is factual, generic & does not address any specific cause of action. Giving legal information can include:

- Explaining how the court system works & giving general information about court rules and procedures.
- Telling someone what a law is, where to find it, or to consult an attorney.
- Giving court approved forms & other related materials.
- Providing a phone number or website for a lawyer referral service, a law library, & self-help center.

Giving legal information does not create an attorney-client relationship.

Examples of Giving Legal Information:

My spouse & I have been separated for months. How do I file for divorce?

- If you are going to represent yourself, I can help you get you the packet of forms you need. You can find them at www.LouisianaLegalNavigator.org. You can also get more information about divorce from online resources on the Find Legal Help Portal, located at www.LSBA.org/public/findlegalhelp.

I am about to be released from prison. How do I obtain a driver's license?

- Go to the Find Legal Help Portal and use the "Louisiana Law Help & Other Online Resources" to find more information. There you'll find How to Get a Driver's License After Prison Video and Pamphlet.

I can't afford an attorney. Is there someplace I can contact?

- Yes, I can give you a list of legal aid organizations in this area that you can call for free or low-cost legal help if you qualify. You can also find these organizations listed on the Find Legal Help Portal.

Legal advice is telling someone how the law actually applies to or impacts a given situation. Advice also includes giving an opinion of what would happen in one's case or telling someone what to say in a court form or in court proceedings.

Legal advice can only be given by a licensed attorney and does create an attorney-client relationship. Non-lawyers are not allowed to give legal advice, as this is referred to as the unauthorized practice of law.

Examples of Ways to Avoid Giving Legal Advice

Should I get a lawyer?

- It is always in your best interest to speak with a licensed attorney about your legal issue. I cannot advise you whether you should hire a lawyer; only you can make that decision. But here is a list of organizations that you can call for free or low-cost legal help if you qualify.

I'm behind on mortgage payments & can't pay bills. Should I file for bankruptcy?

- You need to decide that for yourself. You may want to talk to a lawyer to help make that decision. Go to the Find Legal Help Portal to access the Bankruptcy Self-Help Resource Center & other resources in your area.

What do I put where it says "relief requested" on this form?

- I can't tell you what words to use, but you should write in your own words what you want the court to do. If you have specific questions, you should ask an attorney.

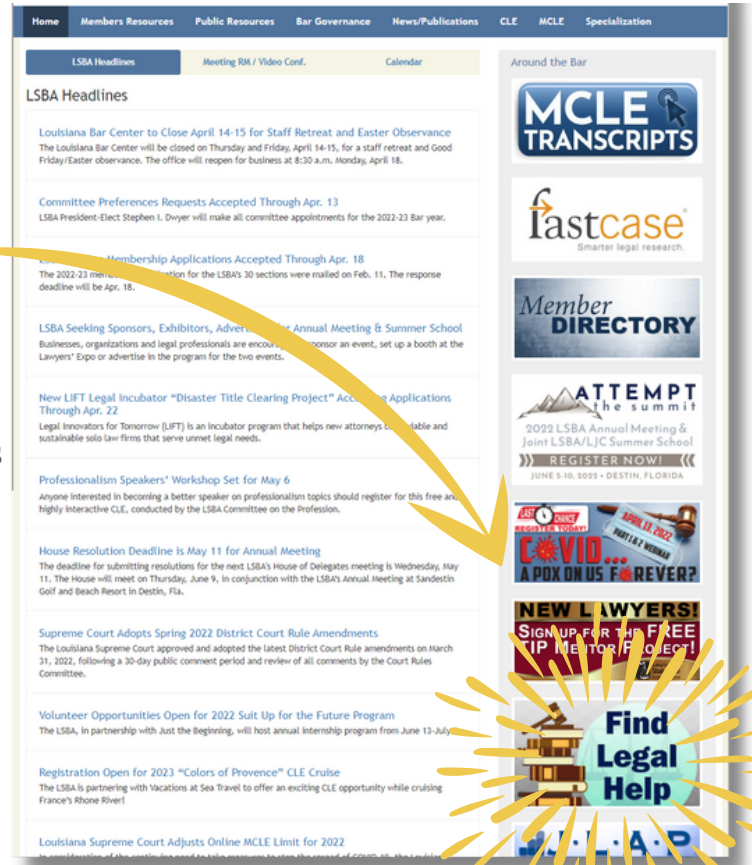
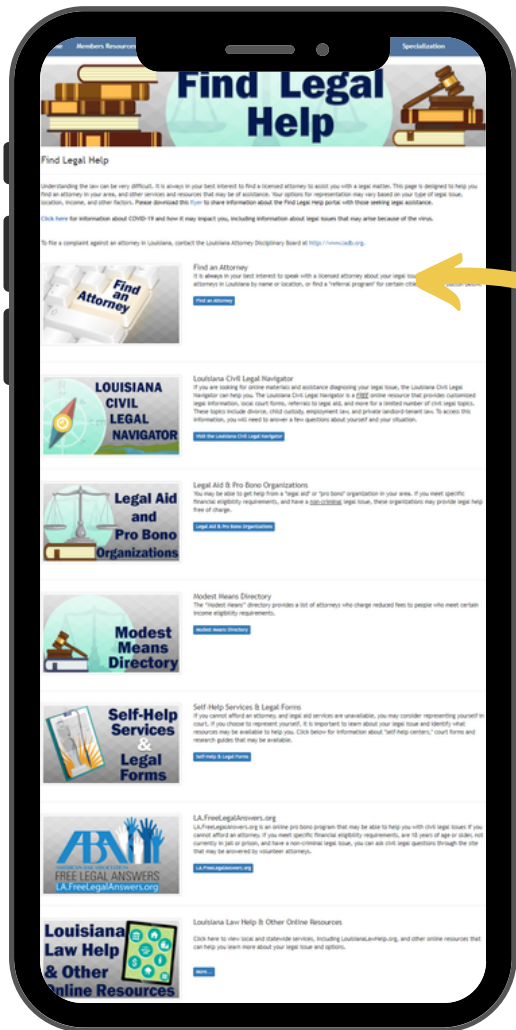
What should I say to the judge when he calls my case?

- I can't tell you what arguments to make in court. There are resources on effective ways to present your case in court available under Self-Help Services on the Find Legal Help Portal.

FIND LEGAL HELP PORTAL

HOW TO ACCESS:

- Go to www.LSBA.org.
- Click on the "Find Legal Help" button.
- From there, users can select from a spectrum of legal services and resources using the specific buttons via the Find Legal Help Portal, as shown below.



It is always in your best interest to speak with a licensed attorney about your legal issue.

Use the “**Find an Attorney**” button to search a directory of Louisiana attorneys by name or location. Some cities have a “referral program” through local bar associations.

NOTE: Each section of the Find Legal Help Portal also contains brief instructional videos explaining how to use the site.

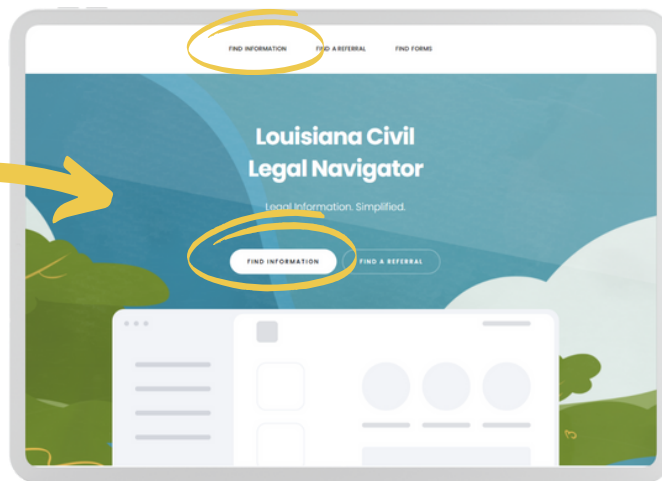


LOUISIANA CIVIL LEGAL NAVIGATOR

The Louisiana Civil Legal Navigator is a free online resource that helps diagnose your legal issue and provides customized legal information, local court forms, referrals to legal aid, & more for a limited number of civil legal topics.

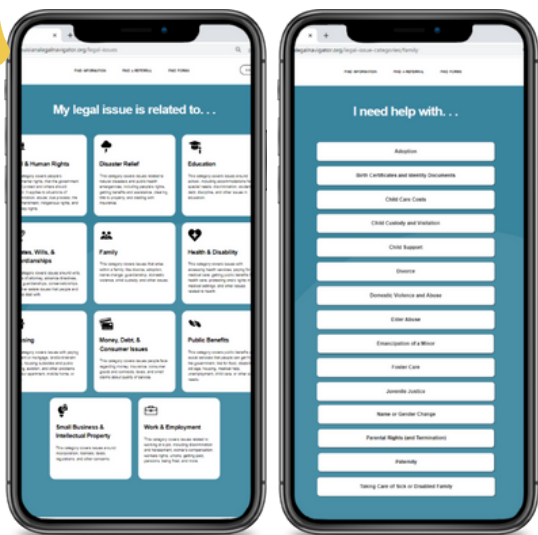
HOW TO USE IN 10 STEPS:

Step 1: In the Find Legal Help Portal, select "Louisiana Civil Legal Navigator."



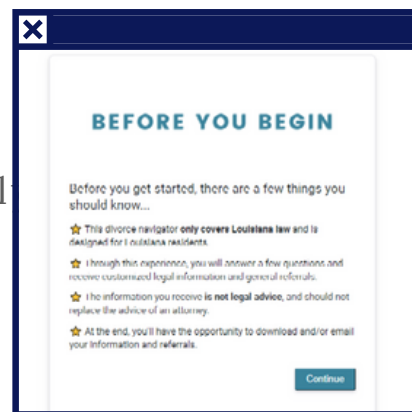
Step 2: Look for your issue.

- Select "Find Information."
- Review the categories listed & select one your legal issue falls under.
- Then select the button that best describes your legal issue.



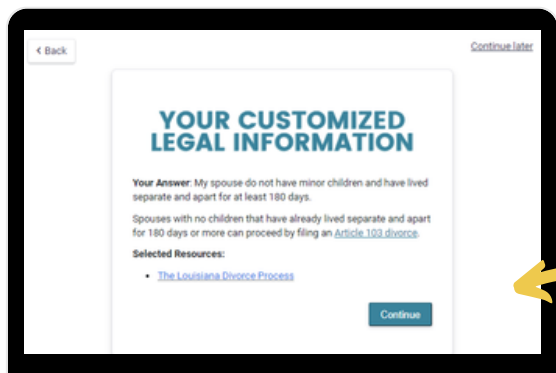
**If you just want referral information, skip to Step 7.*

Step 3: Read the directions carefully and answer the questions.



Step 4: Review Answers.

- When completed, users will be able to view their Customized Legal Information.
 - Note: Each issue raised during the questionnaire will be answered separately. Click on the links to review more information at LouisianaLawHelp.org.



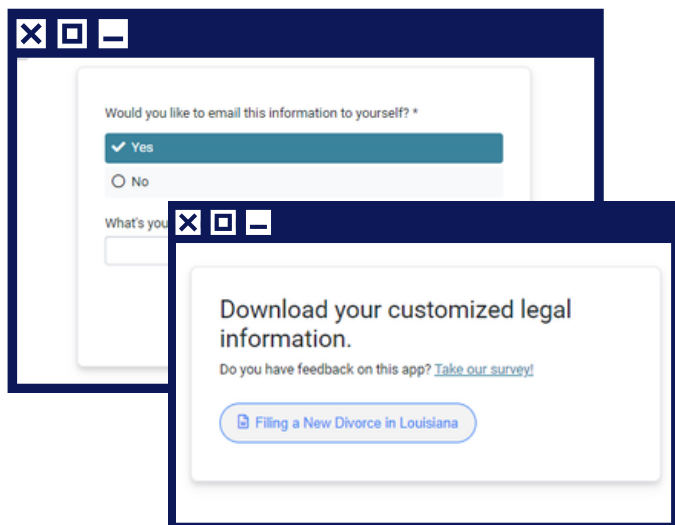
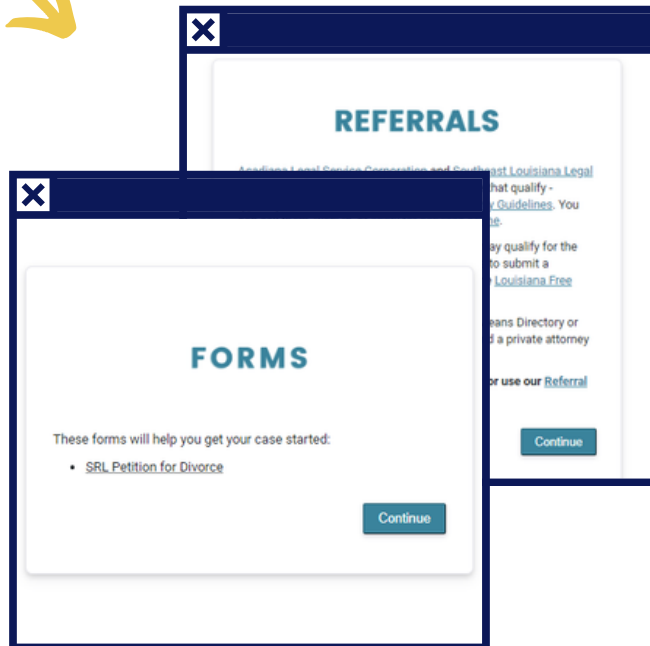


LOUISIANA CIVIL LEGAL NAVIGATOR

Step 5: Referrals & Forms.

- Click "Continue" to view potential referral information.
- Click "Continue" to view any existing court forms.
 - If a court form does not exist for a specific legal issue, this window will not appear.
- If a form exists, refer to the Self-Help Services & Legal Forms section for more information on how to use.

NOTE: If you are looking for a specific self-help form or forms for legal aid clients, please click "Find Forms" on the top right of the Navigator home page.

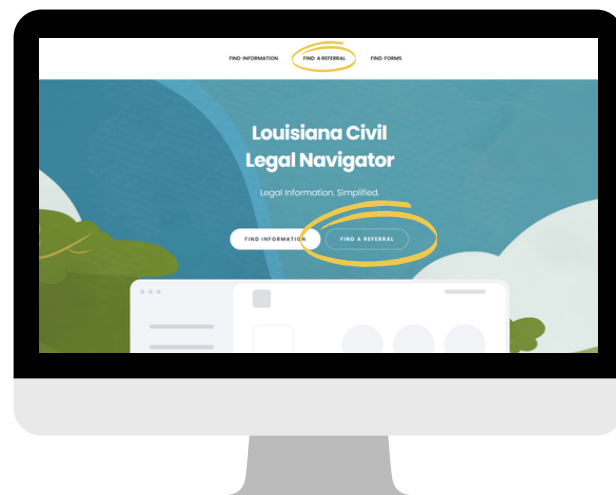


Step 6: Email & Download.

- Users can have results emailed to them.
- Users can also download results.

Step 7: Referral Navigator.

- If you are just looking for referral information, use the Referral Navigator.
- Select "Find A Referral" on the home page of the Civil Legal Navigator.





LOUISIANA CIVIL LEGAL NAVIGATOR

Step 8: Answer a few questions.

- Choose a category for your legal issue.
- Select a Parish.
- Provide Household and Income information.



What type of legal issue do you need help with?

What category does your legal issue fall into? *

- Accidents and Torts
- Civil and Human Rights
- Crime and Prisons
- Disaster Relief
- Education
- Estates, Wills, and Guardianships
- Family
- Health and Disability
- Housing
- Immigration
- Money, Debt, and Consumer Issues
- Public Benefits
- Small Business and Intellectual Property
- Traffic and Cars
- Work and Employment Law

Continue

Step 9: Review Referrals & Resources.

- When completed, users will be able to view their Customized Legal Referrals.
- Click "Continue" to view any Related Resources.



YOUR CUSTOMIZED LEGAL REFERRALS

These 4 organizations should be able to help you with your Housing After a Disaster issue:

- Louisiana Free Legal Answers
- Louisiana State Bar Association Referral Program

RELATED RESOURCES

Here are some related resources if you're looking for more information:

- Disaster Assistance

Continue

Step 10: Email & Download.

- Users can have results emailed to them.
- Users can also download results.

NOTE: If you are looking for a specific self-help form or forms for legal aid clients, please click "Find Forms" on the top right of the Navigator home page.



LEGAL AID & PRO BONO ORGANIZATIONS

If you cannot afford to hire an attorney, you may be able to get free legal help from a “legal aid” or “pro bono” organization in your area. To view services in your area, click this button in the portal and select your parish.

HOW TO ACCESS:

Go To: "Legal Aid & Pro Bono Organizations" in the Find Legal Help Portal.

- Select a Parish to view available legal aid and pro bono services by parish.



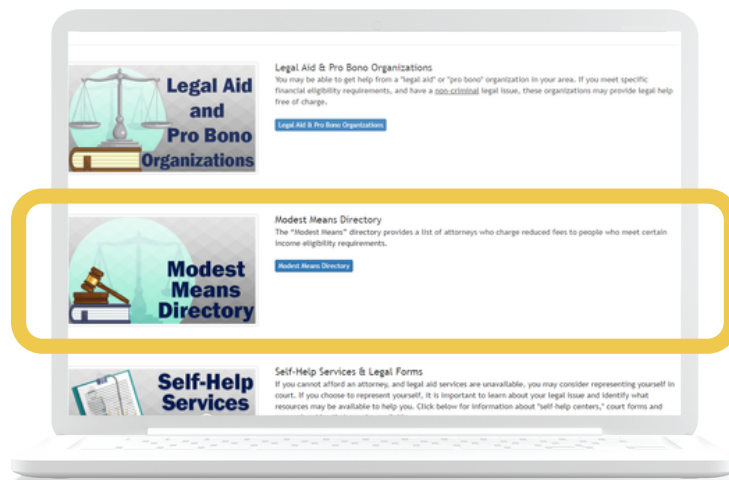


MODEST MEANS DIRECTORY

The "Modest Means Directory" provides a list of attorneys who charge reduced fees to people who meet certain income eligibility requirements.

HOW TO ACCESS IN 5 STEPS:

Step 1: In the Find Legal Help Portal, select the "Modest Means Directory."



Step 2: Read the Directions and Terms of Use carefully.



Step 3: Fill out the online application form:

- Select a Parish
- Select the number of people in the household
- Input household *monthly* income
- Read terms
- Click submit

Those who are determined income eligible can view the directory.

See if you qualify for reduced fees
Some lawyers charge reduced rates depending on your income bracket. Your income bracket is based on your household size and monthly income.

Select Your Parish:

Select Your Household/Family Size:

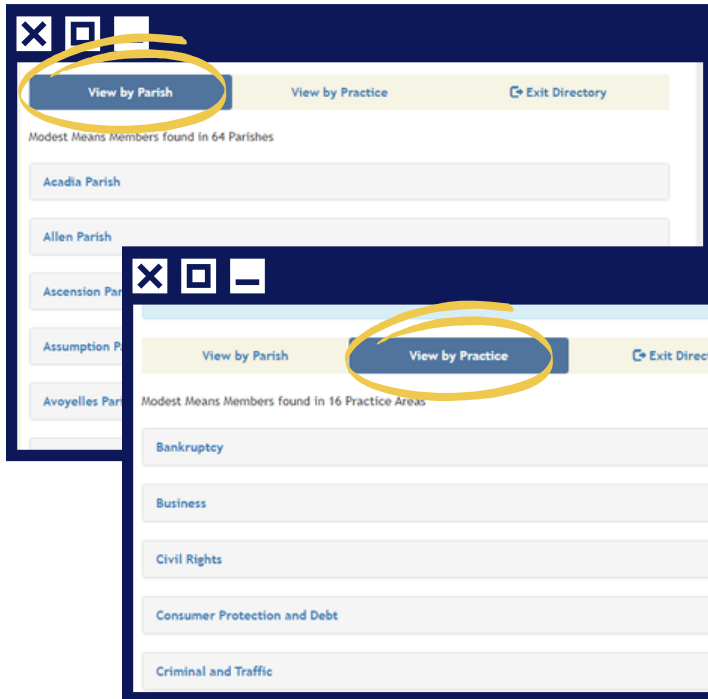
Enter Household Monthly Income:

I have read and agree to the terms of use.



MODEST MEANS DIRECTORY

HOW TO VIEW:

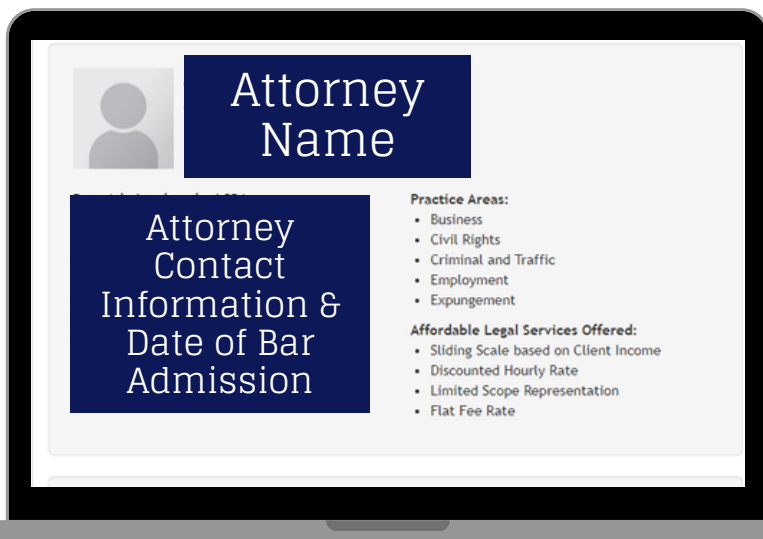


Step 4: To view the Directory, select:

- View by Parish
- or
- View by Practice

Step 5: The online listing includes:

- The attorney's name
- Date attorney was admitted to practice
- Contact information
- Areas of practice
- Types of affordable legal services offered



SELF-HELP SERVICES & LEGAL FORMS

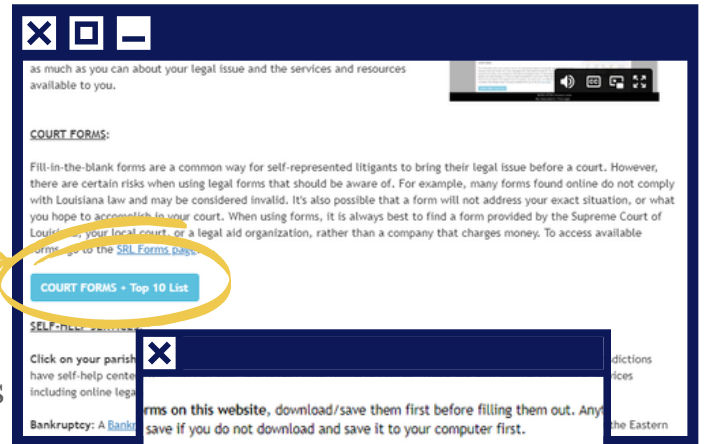
If you cannot afford an attorney and legal aid services are unavailable, you may be able to represent yourself in court. To view forms and any self-help centers or services in your area, click this button in the portal and select your parish.

HOW TO ACCESS SELF-HELP FORMS:

Step 1: In the Find Legal Help Portal, select "Self-Help Services & Legal Forms."

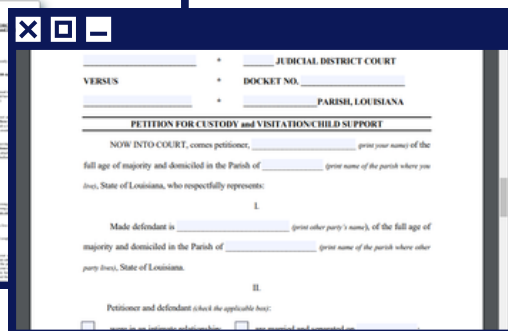
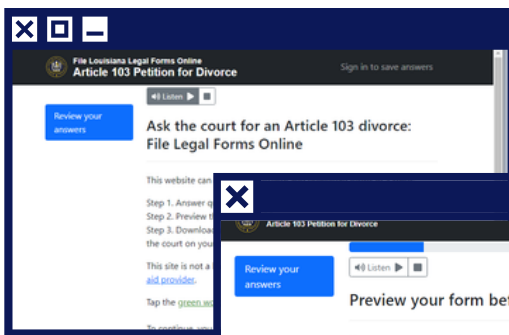
Step 2: To view available forms, click on "COURT FORMS + Top 10 List."

- **Guided Forms** walk you through the process by asking a series of questions and providing a form populated with your responses at the end.
- **Fillable forms** can be typed directly into the document. Make sure to download a copy first.



Step 3: Finalizing Forms.

- Print the forms and follow the instructions for signing and filing.



SELF-HELP SERVICES & LEGAL FORMS

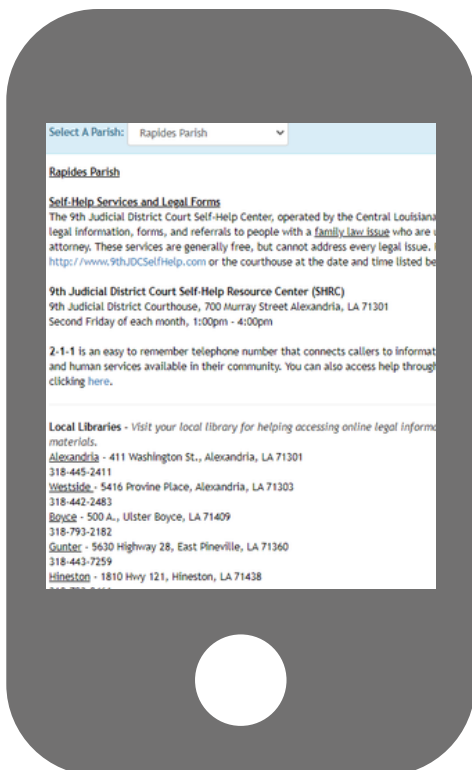


If you cannot afford an attorney and legal aid services are unavailable, you may be able to represent yourself in court. To view forms and any self-help centers or services in your area, click this button in the portal and select your parish.

HOW TO ACCESS SELF-HELP SERVICES:

Step 1: In the Find Legal Help Portal, select "Self-Help Services & Legal Forms."

Step 2: Select a parish.



Step 3: View self-help services in that parish, including:

- Self-Help Centers, both in-person & virtual
- Local Libraries
- Local Court Information



FREE LEGAL ANSWERS

LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org is a free online program that allows you to ask civil legal questions through the website, which may be answered by volunteer attorneys. Please note that you must meet certain income requirements to be eligible.

HOW TO ACCESS:

- **Step 1:** In the Find Legal Help Portal, select "LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org."



Step 2: Sign in. To create an account:

- Select "Get Started."
- Read the Directions and User Agreement carefully.
- Fill out the online application form.



New Client Information (required)

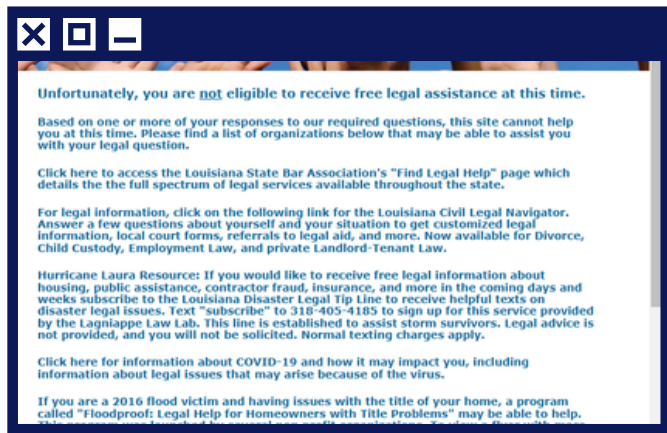
How old are you?

Are you currently in a jail or prison serving a criminal sentence?
 Yes No

How many people live in your household?

About how much money do you and the adult members of your household make each year? If you or your household members were laid off from work as a result of COVID-19, indicate current household income.
 .00

Do you have a checking account? Yes No
 Do you have a savings account? Yes No
 Do you have any stocks or bonds? Yes No



Step 3: Income Eligibility.

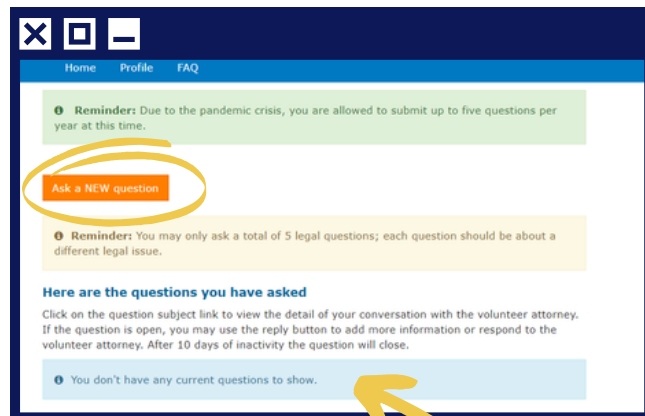
- If *ineligible*, users will be directed to a page that notifies them of ineligibility and lists available resources.



FREE LEGAL ANSWERS

Step 3: Income Eligibility (cont'd.)

- If *eligible*, users will be sent an email to verify their account.
- Click on the verification link in the email, which takes users to the LA-FLA homepage to sign in.



Step 4: Ask a Question.

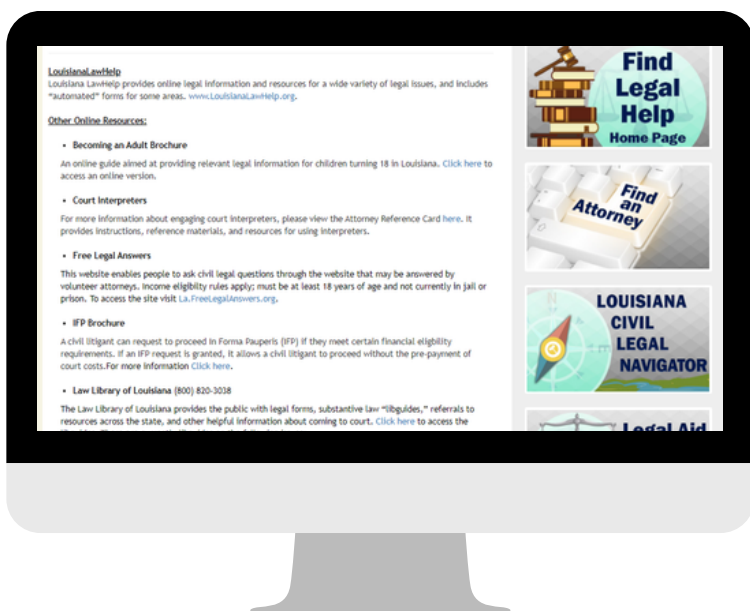
- Select "Ask A NEW Question".
- Fill out the Question form, including as many details as possible.
- Select "Submit your question" to submit for an attorney to review it.
 - Note: *Eligible, users can ask up to 5 legal questions a year.*
- Users can save their question and submit it at a later time.

LOUISIANA LAW HELP & OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

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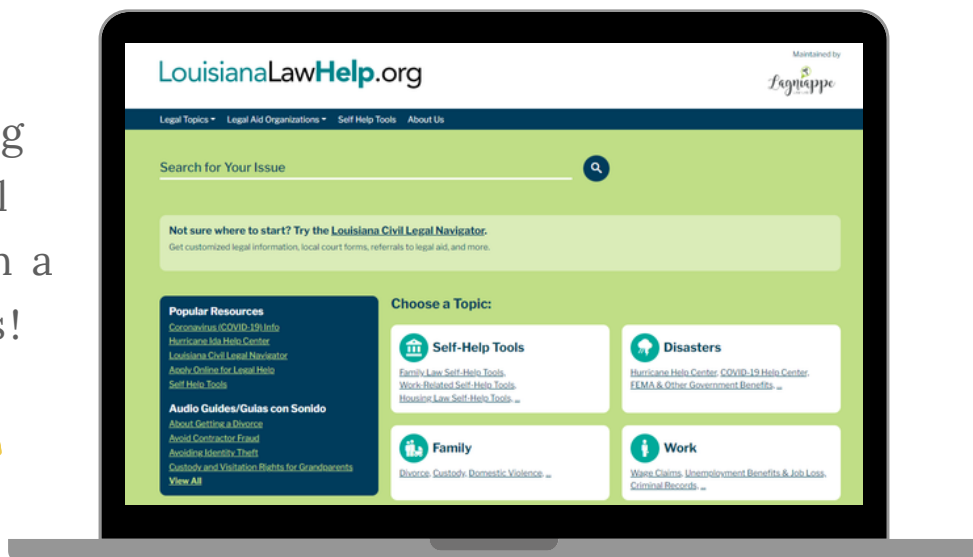
HOW TO ACCESS:

Step 1: In the Find Legal Help Portal, select "Louisiana Law Help & Other Online Resources."



Step 2: Check out all the other online resources.

LouisianaLawHelp.org has many free useful tools and resources on a variety of legal topics!





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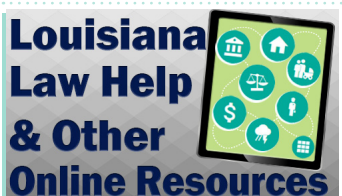
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Louisiana Civil Legal Navigator



Legal Information. Simplified.



Choose a
Legal Topic



Answer a Few
Questions



Get Customized
Legal Info

Currently Available Navigators Include:

- ✓ Divorce
- ✓ Employment & Unemployment
- ✓ Child Custody
- ✓ Landlord Tenant
- ✓ Legal Referrals

www.LouisianaLegalNavigator.org

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Find Affordable Legal Assistance



Modest Means Online Legal Directory may be able to help

www.lsba.org/public/findlegalhelp/

The **Modest Means Online Legal Directory** is an online listing of attorneys who charge reduced rates. Those who qualify can view the list and directly contact an attorney.

To use the Directory, your income must fall at or below 400% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (see chart). Before using, you must agree to the terms and input your household income and family size.

Once determined eligible and the list appears, **you can choose an attorney** you would like to reach out to and contact him or her directly using the contact information provided. There is no cost to use the Directory.



Your annual income based on household size must be at or below this amount to view the Directory:

Household Size	Annual Income*
1	\$60,240
2	\$81,760
3	\$103,280
4	\$124,800
5	\$146,320
6	\$167,840
7	\$189,360
8	\$210,880

*The income information you provide will be verified by the attorney.

**This is not a referral service. You must directly contact the attorneys listed.
Legal representation is not guaranteed.**

Louisiana State
Bar Association
Access to Justice

 Louisiana
State Bar
Association
Serving the Public. Serving the Profession.

NEED A LAWYER, BUT CAN'T AFFORD TO HIRE ONE?

LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org
may be able to help.

LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org is for those who need legal information but cannot afford to hire an attorney. Legal questions submitted to the site will be reviewed and answered by a Louisiana licensed attorney. There is no cost to post a question or to receive an answer on the site.

There are income eligibility requirements for those who want to use the site.

Users must meet the following requirements:

- ◆ Be 18 or older
- ◆ Not currently in jail or prison
- ◆ Have a household income within the federal poverty guidelines

This site ONLY allows civil legal questions – no criminal legal questions will be answered by volunteer attorneys.



Louisiana
State Bar
Association

Serving the Public. Serving the Profession.

Louisiana State Bar Association



Louisiana State Bar Association
Access to Justice
601 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130
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Fax (504) 566-0930

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