**Legal Resources Template**



Most domestic violence survivors represent themselves during part or all of their involvement with family law matters. While the Family Law Toolkit for Survivors is intended to make that process easier, having legal assistance can make a difference.

Depending on your resources, your specific circumstances, and the availability of assistance when you need it, you may be able to access help with your case.

*Having legal assistance in my family law case was essential to me because I know nothing about the legal system. I believe that if I was on my own, I would not have had nearly as good results.*

- A domestic violence survivor

*I was ready to file for divorce but I didn't know where to start. My legal advocate spent hours explaining how the legal system works and giving me resources for free legal help. She was with me in the courtroom during my trial which I was doing pro se. Now, I know that I can protect my children and myself.*

- A domestic violence survivor

There are different levels of services available. You may wish to access a combination of these.

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| Types of Legal Services | |
| Type | **Description** |
| Advocacy | People who have expertise in domestic violence and the legal system, but who are not attorneys, typically provide domestic violence legal advocacy. Advocates can help you navigate the legal system, explore your options, connect you to resources, and plan for your safety. Advocates cannot give legal advice. |
| Consultation | This typically refers to advice provided by attorneys who are not representing you, but who can speak with or meet with you briefly. Consultations at legal clinics usually are less than one hour. |
| Legal Information | This usually refers to written materials or other forms of education about legal issues. Generally, it is not in the form of legal advice. |
| **Pro Bono** | This refers to free legal services. It is shorthand for the Latin phrase *pro bono publico* which means for the good of the people. |
| **Reduced Fee, Moderate Means,**  **Low Bono** | This refers to legal services that are provided at a discounted rate.  The term low bono is derived from the phrase *pro bono* (see above). |
| **Referrals** | Referrals to agencies or to specific attorneys are usually not a guarantee of assistance, but an attempt to help you connect with someone who may be able to assist you. When requesting a referral, it is important to specify that you are looking for someone with expertise in family law cases where domestic violence is involved. |
| **Representation** | This is when an attorney works on your behalf. This might include advising you about your case, filling out paperwork, communicating with the opposing party or their attorney, and speaking for you in court. Some legal programs provide representation for the full duration of your case, while others may only represent you for part of your case. The availability of free or low cost legal representation is quite limited in insert your county. If you cannot obtain representation, we encourage you to access the other types of legal assistance. |
| **Unbundled Legal Services** | This is when an attorney takes on specific tasks related to your case without providing you with full representation. It might be possible to obtain free (pro bono) unbundled services or to pay for them by the hour or by the task. |

Most of the services listed here are free, but there may be eligibility requirements, and most programs have limited capacity. Contact the organizations listed for more information.

Additional services may be available through a direct referral from a domestic violence program. Speak to a domestic violence advocate to learn more.

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| Legal Resources | | |
| Organization | **Services Include** | **Contact Info** |
| Insert program names for each legal resource | Insert services offered and relevant info such as days/times when clinics are open | Insert contact info including phone, website, and accessible communication options |
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Inclusion in this handout is not an endorsement. We encourage you to evaluate if the services and the provider are the right fit for you. The content of this handout is current as of the time of publication, but may have since changed. If you are not sure where to start, we recommend discussing your options with a domestic violence advocate.

This tool was adapted from the Domestic Violence and Mental Health

Collaboration Project’s Family Law Toolkit for Survivors.

The original version of this tool can be found at

<http://endgv.org/toolkits/family-law-toolkit-for-domestic-violence-survivors/>.

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