

# Finding a Lawyer



**T**he United States legal system has many private attorneys or lawyers and very few non-profit attorneys who help people of low or moderate income. Finding a lawyer in any area of law can be frustrating for immigrants who have the additional barriers of

- a) Understanding a complicated new legal system,
- b) Living in a new country,
- c) Learning a new language.

Below are some tips on how to gain access to a free or affordable lawyer.



## **If I am low-income and have few resources, can I find a free attorney who will help me?**

There are legal services organization listed in this guide that may be able to help you depending upon the type of legal issue that you have and the eligibility requirements of the organization.

Usually there is no fee to receive help from these organizations.

Some of the areas of law offered by organizations include:

- Immigration
- Citizenship
- Employment
- Landlord/tenant
- Public Benefits
- Domestic violence and other areas.

See the specific listings for areas of law and eligibility requirements. Separate section is



**Need to get somewhere?** For VTA (bus) information on how to get to an agency, call (408) 321-2300. Give the operator facts about where you are coming from and where you would like to go.

created for agencies with primary focus in immigration law.

## **What if I am low-income and need help with a criminal matter?**

If you are very low income and have a problem in the area of criminal law, you may qualify for the Public Defenders Office. Ask the Judge to refer you to the Public Defenders Office at your first court date.

## **What if the legal services organizations do not practice the area of law that I need help with, but I am low-income?**

The Modest Means Panel of the Santa Clara County Bar Association may be able to help you if your legal problem falls into one of seven areas of law - Bankruptcy, Consumer, Criminal Law, Family, Immigration, Juvenile and Landlord/Tenant. If you meet the income eligibility requirements, you will be matched with an attorney and charged an administrative fee for a 30 minute consultation. If your legal problem requires further legal assistance and you choose to hire the attorney, you will be charged reduced hourly fees that have been established by the Modest Means Panel.

## **What if I earn too much to qualify for the Modest Means Panel?**

You may call the Lawyer Referral Service for assistance. You will have to explain your problem. A half-hour consultation will be arranged for you with a lawyer who is experienced in that area of law. The Lawyer Referral Service will charge you a \$40 administrative fee. The attorney will not charge you for the first 30 minutes of the consultation. You and the attorney are not obligated to go beyond consultation. If you require further legal assistance, you can negotiate an arrangement for attorney's fees during the consultation.

# Finding a Lawyer

## Asian Law Alliance

991 West Hedding Street # 202, San Jose, CA 95126

Tel: (408) 287-9710

Website: [www.asianlawalliance.org](http://www.asianlawalliance.org)

Language(s): Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Spanish

Services: Civil rights, consumer, domestic violence, employment, family law, housing, immigration, public benefits, senior/elder law.

## Bay Area Legal Aid

2 W. Santa Clara St., 8th Floor, San, Jose, CA 95113

Tel: (408) 283-3700 x 313

Website: [www.baylegal.org](http://www.baylegal.org)

Language(s): English, Spanish

Services: Community economic development, consumer, domestic violence, employment, health, housing, public benefits.

## California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. Administrative Office.

1430 Franklin Street, Suite 103

Oakland, CA 94612.

Tel. (510) 267-0762

Website: [www.crla.org](http://www.crla.org)

Language(s): English, Spanish

Services: Civil rights, community economic development, education, employment, health, housing, public benefits, seniors/elder law.

## Katharine and George Alexander Law Center Santa Clara University School of Law

1030 The Alameda, San Jose, CA 95126

Tel.: (408) 288-7030

Website: <http://law.scu.edu/kgaclc>

Language(s): Spanish, Vietnamese, others by arrangement

Services: Bankruptcy, immigration, community economic development, consumer, employment, immigration, workers' rights, community workshops.

## Legal Aid Society of Santa Clara County

480 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95112

Tel: (408) 998-5200

Housing discrimination: (408) 283-1535 x 237

Immigration issues: (408) 998-5200, extension 231

Website: [www.legalaidsociety.org](http://www.legalaidsociety.org)

Language(s): English, Spanish

Services: Provides legal representation for the indigent community in civil matters including domestic violence, health access advocacy, housing law, individual rights, fair housing, landlord-tenant mediation, immigration, quality education, and special education. Self-help clinics are offered in the areas of evictions, domestic violence, restraining orders, and establishing paternity (for custody and/or visitation).

## Law Foundation - Silicon Valley

152 North Third Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, San Jose, CA 95112

Tel.: (408) 293-4790

TDD (408) 294-5667

Website: <http://www.lawfoundation.org>

Language(s): English, Spanish, Vietnamese

Services: AIDS/HIV, children's rights, civil rights, consumer, disability, domestic violence, education, employment, family law, health, housing, public benefits, veterans.

## Pro Bono Project Silicon Valley

480 North First Street, Suite 219

Tel.: (408) 998-5298

Website: [www.probonoproject.org](http://www.probonoproject.org)

Languages: English, Spanish

Services:

- Family Law Clinics – Divorce, Paternity Issues, Domestic Violence, Custody Matters
- Federal Legal Assistance Self Help (FLASH) Program
- Lawyers in the Library Clinics
- Virtual Lawyers in the Library (Coming Soon)
- Limited Scope & Full Representation



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- Debtors' Rights Clinics
- General Administrative Support – Client Intake, Translation, Form Completion

## **Santa Clara County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service**

31 North 2nd Street, San Jose, CA 95113  
Tel: (408) 287-2557  
Tel: (408) 971-6822 for Lawyer Referral Service  
[www.sccba.com/displaycommon.cfm](http://www.sccba.com/displaycommon.cfm)

Language(s): English, Spanish

Services: Provides a referral service for persons in need of consultation with a lawyer. A one-half hour evaluative appointment is provided for a minimal fee and referral is made to counsel experienced in the appropriate legal area. Modest Means Program provides referral for persons that cannot afford standard attorney's fees. Each person must be screened for income eligibility.

## **Senior Adults Legal Assistance (SALA)**

160 East Virginia Street, Suite 260, San Jose, CA 95112  
Tel: (408) 295-5991  
Website: [www.sala.org](http://www.sala.org)

Language(s): English, Spanish

Services: Advanced health care directives, domestic violence, elder abuse, housing, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income and Social Security matters, public benefits, nursing homes and alternatives to institutionalization, seniors/elder law, simple wills.

## **YWCA Silicon Valley**

375 S. Third Street, San Jose, CA 95112  
Tel: (408) 295-4011

Website: <http://ywca-sv.org>

Language (s): English, Spanish

Services: Counseling, domestic violence, human trafficking, rape crisis. Restraining orders, divorce, child support and child custody, civil and criminal cases, mediation.

