

Ontario Legal Assistance Directory: Free, Affordable and Private Options

Legal help ranges from free general information, to brief advice, to full representation. The right starting point depends on your issue, your budget and how much help you need.

Prepared by Lawyers of Ontario ✓ Information checked 13 October 2026

Check before you rely on it: this isn't a complete list of every service in Ontario. Eligibility, coverage, intake and hours can change, so confirm details with each provider.

1 Choose a starting route

Find the situation closest to yours, then go to that provider's section for details.

IF YOU...	START WITH	COST	CONFIRM
need to understand your legal issue in plain language	Steps to Justice §2	Free	Whether general information answers your question
can't afford help with an Ontario civil issue	Pro Bono Ontario hotline §2	Free	Whether your issue is covered; limits of brief help
have a housing, income support or other community issue	Community legal clinic §2	Free if eligible	Area served, issues covered, intake criteria
can't afford representation for a potentially covered issue	Legal Aid Ontario §3	Eligibility-based	Financial eligibility, coverage, how to apply
want an introductory talk with a lawyer or paralegal	Law Society Referral Service §4	Free 30-min consult	Consultation terms; cost of later work
want to check a legal professional or build a shortlist	Law Society directory §4	Free to search	Practising status, practice focus, availability
want to compare private firms by location or practice area	Lawyers of Ontario §4	Free to search	Practice fit, location, fees, availability
can pay for a specific task but not a whole matter	Limited scope lawyer §5	Paid, per task	Exact tasks, exclusions, your responsibilities

2 Free legal help and information

Start here if cost is the main barrier, or if you first need to understand where you stand.

Steps to Justice Free

Plain-language legal information with links to further help. It helps you understand your issue and what to ask, but general information isn't the same as advice on your specific facts.

Online: stepstojustice.ca

Pro Bono Ontario civil advice hotline Free

Up to 30 minutes of free legal advice and help on covered Ontario civil matters, for people who can't afford a lawyer. Help is given during the call; it isn't ongoing representation.

Phone	<u>1-855-255-7256</u>
Hours	Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (check for changes or closures)
Not covered	Family, criminal and immigration matters
Ask	What help is possible on the call, and what you need to do afterwards

Online: probonoontario.org/hotline

Community legal clinics Free if eligible

Community-based clinics that often help with issues like housing and income support. Subject areas and intake criteria vary by clinic.

Good for	Housing, income support and similar community issues
Usually not	Criminal charges, divorce, or every type of dispute
Ask	Whether the clinic covers your issue and neighbourhood, and whether it gives information, advice, representation or a referral

Find a clinic by address or postal code: legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics

3 Legal Aid Ontario

Legal Aid Ontario Eligibility-based

Offers different kinds of help depending on your issue and financial eligibility. Not every matter qualifies, and applying doesn't mean a lawyer has been retained for you.

Phone	<u>1-800-668-8258</u> (toll-free) · <u>416-979-1446</u> (Toronto/GTA)
Applying	The application page explains current routes and the records you may need. Online applications have conditions, so check them first.
Ask	Whether you'll need to contribute to or repay any costs

How to apply: legalaid.on.ca → How do I apply for legal aid?

4 Find and check a lawyer

Use these to find a lawyer or law firm, get an introductory consultation, or check that a professional is licensed.

Lawyers of Ontario Free to search

Search Lawyers of Ontario by location, practice area or firm name, including family, criminal defence, employment, real estate, business, and wills and estates. A paid consultation can be useful even before you decide to hire.

Compare	Experience, fee structure, availability and communication
Confirm	Practice fit, location, timeline, consultation fee, ongoing costs, and any language or accessibility needs
Before work	Get the scope and fees confirmed

Browse firms: lawyersofontario.com/lawyers-ontario

Lawyers of Ontario is a directory, not a law firm or legal aid provider. Being listed doesn't guarantee availability, suitability or outcome. Use the Law Society directory to verify a lawyer's status.

Law Society Referral Service Free 30-min consult

Connects you with a participating lawyer or paralegal for an introductory consultation of up to 30 minutes, free of charge. Confirm the current terms directly.

- Document preparation and any further legal work are separate from the consultation and may cost money.

Online: [Iso.ca](https://iso.ca) → Law Society Referral Service

Law Society of Ontario directory Free to search

The official directory for finding legal professionals and checking their practising status. A listing doesn't mean the professional has an appointment available or can take your matter, so contact the firm and mention any upcoming dates.

Online: lsodirectory.iso.ca

5 Lower-cost paid help

If you can pay for part of the work but not a whole matter, this lets you control scope and cost.

Limited scope legal services Paid, per task

Also called "unbundled" services: you hire a lawyer for specific tasks instead of the whole matter, such as reviewing a document, preparing one, or advising on a single step.

- Ask for a written description of the tasks, who is responsible for what, dates, filing and communications.
- It isn't right for every situation, and it isn't necessarily free.

Learn more: stepstojustice.ca → Get legal services for a lower price

6 Prepare before you contact a provider

In immediate danger? Call 911. If a legal step is urgent, contact a professional directly; don't wait to finish this checklist or hear back from several services.

- ☐ Write a short description of the problem and the people involved.
- ☐ Note any urgent notices, hearings or deadlines.
- ☐ Ask what documents and financial information they need.
- ☐ Explain any language, accessibility or safe-contact needs.
- ☐ Ask what happens next and who is responsible for your matter.

MY NOTES: WHO I CONTACTED, WHEN, AND WHAT'S NEXT

Going to a consultation?

Use our free Ontario Lawyer Consultation Preparation Checklist.

lawyersofontario.com/resources →

SOURCES AND SCOPE

Each linked provider is the source for its own service description. Information checked 13 October 2026. No endorsement of, affiliation with, or guarantee of availability from any listed provider is implied.

This document provides general information only and is not legal advice. Seek professional legal advice from a qualified lawyer whenever needed.