

Legal

Common legal issues faced may include immigration issues, landlord/tenant problems, marital strife including divorce and child custody, child and spouse abuse, and child support enforcement, insolvency and bankruptcy, disability and workers' compensation, criminal prosecution, and issues related to elderly care and estate planning.

A number of entities exist in the community to provide legal services to low-income people, but they are of varying degrees of accessibility and responsiveness. Unfortunately, these organizations are understaffed and insufficiently budgeted to satisfy the pro bono needs of all needy people. While attorneys have an ethical obligation to help those unable to pay, they are often employed by organizations through which that obligation cannot be easily fulfilled and many attorneys tend to specialize in areas catering to corporate clients, making it difficult for them to develop the expertise and experience to provide legal assistance to the poor.

Various potential sources available to assist those in need and access pro bono or reduced-fee legal services.

A couple of points to remember if you have challenges that could turn into legal issues:

1. **Don't ignore** notices from landlords, lenders, courts, hospitals/doctors, police/prosecutors or utilities.
2. **Get ahead** of the curve, when problems arise act in a timely fashion and don't delay.
3. **Talking** with the landlords, lenders, hospitals/doctors, police/prosecutors or utilities is helpful, particularly in advance of it going to court or involving lawyers.

Legal Resources

1. **Ward and Stake Resources.** When legal service needs are identified as obstacles to self-reliance or personal progress, the issue should be brought to the Bishop's or Branch President's attention, who may choose to share it with members of the Ward Council. There, networking may identify an attorney with the appropriate specialization who is known to and approachable by one of the ward leadership. Attorneys reside in some wards and stakes who may be willing to provide pro bono assistance.
2. **Free Legal Clinics.** There are a number of free clinics offered that can identify whether the challenge is truly a "legal issue" or something else that others could help take care of, assist in simple legal matters, help those in need determine the

next steps to take or help them find appropriate legal representation. Some of these clinics are listed below:

NAME	PHONE/WEBSITE	COMMENTS
Utah State Bar – Virtual Legal Clinic and Utahlegalhelp.org	https://www.utahlegalhelp.org/vlc 801-297-7049	Virtual Legal Clinic is a free, over-the-phone legal service sponsored by the Utah State Bar and allows connection with a lawyer by phone or email for up to 30 minutes. The volunteer lawyers are not agreeing to provide ongoing representation but only brief information and advice. The website also has options for reduced costs, private attorneys, Do-it-yourself and helpful articles. Click “Find Legal Help” on Web page.
Family Law Clinic	https://www.legalaidsocietyofsaltlake.org/assisted-pro-se 801-238-7440 Information Line for downtown Salt Lake Matheson Courthouse 801-233-9675 for West Jordan Courthouse	Resources designed to help people representing themselves in filling out necessary forms for family law matters.
University of Utah Pro Bono Initiative – covering many areas of the law	https://sjquinney.utah.edu/pro-bono-initiative/ 801-581-5418	Provides free brief legal advice. See website for the various areas of law, dates, times and locations and to schedule an appointment.

BYU Law School Clinics	https://law.byu.edu/explore/resources/centers-clinics/community-legal-clinic#1 801-297-7049	See website for areas of law, dates, times and locations of clinics.
NoMas – No More a Stranger Legal Foundation	https://www.nomaslegal.org/	A Non-profit foundation specializing in immigration related matters.

3. Non-Profit Legal Services Organizations. Legal services are available through the following:

NAME	PHONE/WEBSITE	COMMENTS
Utah Legal Services	https://www.utahlegalservices.org/ 801-328-8891 Offices in Salt Lake, Ogden, Provo and St. George	Represent low-income people in non-criminal cases, including Family law, public benefits, housing, consumer, seniors, agricultural workers, American Indians, expungement and referrals for cases they don't take. See website or call. See: ULS Basic Info.pdf
Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake	https://www.legalaidsocietyofsaltlake.org/ 801-328-8849	A law firm giving low-income families affordable legal help in divorce, custody, guardianship, and orders of protection including for victims of domestic violence. Also providing assistance to Seniors estate plan and end of life issues.
The Disability Law Center	https://disabilitylawcenter.org/ 801-662-9080	Represents those with physical and mental disabilities. See webpage for more information.

Catholic Community Services - Immigration	https://ccsutah.org/programs/immigration?highlight=WyJpbW1pZ3JhdGlvbiJd 801-977-9119 Salt Lake Office 801-428-1295 Ogden Office	Provides legal representation to immigrants and refugees as they upgrade their immigration status. CCS also answer questions about immigration laws.
Holy Cross Ministries – Legal Immigration Program	https://www.hcmutah.org/legal-immigration-program/ 801-261-3440	Helping immigrants gain legal status and participate in community.
NoMas – No More a Stranger Legal Foundation	https://www.nomaslegal.org/	A Non-profit foundation specializing in immigration related matters.
Timpanogos Legal Center	http://timplegal.org/ Hotline 801-649-8895	A non-profit providing free legal help, focused on domestic violence.

4. **Small Claims Court.** The Utah State Court System administers a “Small Claims Court” designated to settle legal issues and problems arising from contractual or service disputes or other claims seeking the recovery of money, which do not exceed the sum of \$15,000 (scheduled to increase to \$20,000 on January 1, 2025). A small claims court allows an individual or business to be compensated by a party who has not performed according to an agreement or who has committed some wrongdoing. Individuals may represent themselves or hire an attorney to represent them in Small Claims Court. For a detailed explanation of processing claims through Small Claims Court, go to www.utcourts.gov/howto/smallclaims.
5. **Utah State Courts Self Help Website.** The Utah State Court’s System maintains a website offering Self Help Resources, including information on protective orders, expungement, divorce, collection, housing and evictions and more. <https://www.utcourts.gov/en/self-help.html>