

**Child Custody on a Budget:  
Resources That Will Help You  
With Your Child Custody Case**

**Including:**

**Pro-Bono Sites**

**Legal Self-Help Centers**

**Is Free or Reduced-Cost Legal Help Available?**

**Child Custody and Visitation on a Budget**

**Paralegals**

## **Pro Bono Sites**

Many of these organizations provide referrals to private attorneys who may be able to provide legal services for free or substantially reduced fees. Other organizations provide support for pro bono lawyers or information about pro bono services generally.

### **ABA Division of Legal Services - Center for Pro Bono**

<http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/>

### **Pro Bono Services (ABA state by state information)**

<http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/directory.html>

### **Pro Bono Institute**

<http://www.probonoinst.org/>

### **Department of Justice Immigration Review Pro Bono Pages**

<http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/probono/probono.htm>

### **State Bar of California - Access to Justice**

[http://www.calbar.ca.gov/state/calbar/calbar\\_generic.jsp?cid=10176&id=1372](http://www.calbar.ca.gov/state/calbar/calbar_generic.jsp?cid=10176&id=1372)

### **Public Counsel (Los Angeles)**

<http://publiccounsel.org/>

### **Community Law Program (St. Petersburg, Florida)**

<http://www.lawprogram.org/>

### **Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation**

<http://avlf.org/>

### **New Orleans Pro Bono Project**

<http://www.probono-no.org/>

### **Pro Bono Net (many states)**

<http://www.probono.net/>

### **Philadelphia Volunteers for the Indigent**

<http://www.phillyvip.org/>

**Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans**

<http://www.varn.org/>

**Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association**

<http://www.vlpnet.org/>

**Volunteer Lawyers Project (Maine)**

<http://www.vlp.org/>

## Legal Self-Help Centers

Several states and counties within those states offer self-help legal centers either online or in local courthouses. Below is an example from Clark County, Nevada.



**Welcome to the Clark County**



## **Family Law Self-Help Center**

**Family Court and Services Center  
601 North Pecos Road  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101-2408  
(702) 455-1500**



**(702) 455-2500 (Español)**

**[\(Click Here for Map\)](#)**

The Family Law Self-Help Center is dedicated to serving the community by providing informed access, education, information, and support services to self-represented individuals having legal matters before Family Court.



**Below are several other self help centers available for public use. Please note that not every state has such facilities available, and that materials available in these facilities may vary from state to state.**

**Alaska**

<http://www.state.ak.us/courts/selfhelp.htm> - Alaska

**California**

<http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/family/>

<http://www.cc-courthelp.org/> - Contra Costa, California

<http://www.placerbar.org/selfhelp.html> - Placer County, California

[http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?\\_pageid=53,129695&\\_dad=\\_portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?_pageid=53,129695&_dad=_portal&_schema=PORTAL) – San Diego, California

[http://www.saccourt.com/family/self\\_help\\_center/center.asp](http://www.saccourt.com/family/self_help_center/center.asp) - Sacramento, California

**Colorado**

<http://www.courts.state.co.us/chs/court/forms/selfhelpcenter.htm>

**Delaware**

<http://courts.delaware.gov/Courts/Family%20Court/>

**District of Columbia**

[http://www.dcbar.org/for\\_the\\_public/programs\\_and\\_services/family.cfm](http://www.dcbar.org/for_the_public/programs_and_services/family.cfm)

<http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/superior/family/selfhelp.jsp>

**Florida**

[http://www.flcourts.org/gen\\_public/family/self\\_help/index.shtml](http://www.flcourts.org/gen_public/family/self_help/index.shtml) -

Florida

[http://www.circuit7.org/Family%20Court/Family%20SelfWeb%20Page.](http://www.circuit7.org/Family%20Court/Family%20SelfWeb%20Page.htm)

[htm](http://www.circuit7.org/Family%20Court/Family%20SelfWeb%20Page.htm) – Volusia, Putnam, St. Johns, and Flagler counties, Florida

<http://www.clerk.co.hernando.fl.us/Other/SelfHelp.html> -

Hernando County, Florida

<http://www.familylawhelp.org/index.htm> - Sanford, Florida

## **Hawaii**

[http://www.courts.state.hi.us/page\\_server/SelfHelp/19354B6D1243DCECEA6B1654DE.html](http://www.courts.state.hi.us/page_server/SelfHelp/19354B6D1243DCECEA6B1654DE.html) - Hawaii

## **Maryland**

<http://www.courts.state.md.us/family/selfhelp.html> - Maryland

<http://www.mdfamilylawyer.com/> - Granat, Maryland

## **Massachusetts**

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/selfhelp/index.html>

## **Minnesota**

<http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/courts/self%20help%20center.htm> –  
Dakota County, Minnesota

## **Nevada**

<http://clarkcountylegal.com/self-hel.htm> - Clark County, Nevada

[http://www.co.clark.nv.us/district\\_court/self\\_help\\_center\\_index.htm](http://www.co.clark.nv.us/district_court/self_help_center_index.htm) -

Las Vegas, Nevada

## **New York**

<http://www.sbls.org/fcsheets.htm> - Brooklyn, New York

## **Oregon**

<http://www.ojd.state.or.us/mar/familylaw/familylawselfhelp.htm> -

Oregon

## **Wisconsin**

<http://www.wicourts.gov/services/public/selfhelp/index.htm> -

Wisconsin

<http://www.county.milwaukee.gov/display/router.asp?docid=10227> -

Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

[http://courtsselfhelp.waukeshacounty.gov/default.asp?pcontent=shelp11  
&page=shelp11](http://courtsselfhelp.waukeshacounty.gov/default.asp?pcontent=shelp11&page=shelp11) – Waukesha County, Wisconsin

[http://www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/courtsselfhelp/default.asp?pcontent  
=default](http://www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/courtsselfhelp/default.asp?pcontent=default) – Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

## **Is Free Or Reduced-Cost Legal Help Available?**

Once you have decided you need a lawyer, it is a good idea to shop around. The first step is to compile a list of names. The recommendation of someone whose judgment you trust is an excellent place to start your search. You may want to begin by asking relatives, friends, clergy, social workers, or your doctor for recommendations. Often those persons can refer you to someone who has provided similar legal services for them. Remember that you need to know more about the lawyer than simply that the person is a good attorney. Ask the persons making the recommendation for specific information about the type of legal help the lawyer provided them and how their case was handled.

The following resources may assist you in your search for an attorney:

### ***Bar Association Referral Lists***

Many state and local bar associations maintain lawyer referral lists organized by specialty. You can consult the lawyer referral service for the name of an attorney who specializes in the type of case you have.

Keep in mind that the referral is not a recommendation nor does it guarantee a level of experience. Bar associations may charge participating lawyers and law firms a fee to be included on the referral list. Also, many bar associations have committees that conduct training or public service work for the benefit of older people. An attorney serving on one of these committees could have the expertise you are looking for. Check the white or yellow pages (under "Lawyers") of the telephone book for the number of the state or local bar association.

### ***Other Sources***

The National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) is a nonprofit professional association of attorneys specializing in



**legal issues affecting older persons. NAELA is not a legal referral service; however, it does sell a registry listing over 350 member attorneys nationwide (\$25 including shipping and handling).**

**National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys  
1604 N. Country Club Road  
Tucson, Arizona 85716**

**There are also a number of lawyer directories. Two of the larger directories are likely to be available at your local library. The Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory lists 600,000 American and Canadian lawyers alphabetically by state and by categories. Each entry has a biography, which includes information on each lawyer's education, specialty, law firm, and the date of admittance to the bar. It also includes a "rating" based on information supplied by fellow lawyers. It does not include a rating by clients or judges. The Who's Who in American Law directory lists about 24,000 lawyers and includes biographical notes. This directory is somewhat difficult to use as the lawyers are listed alphabetically rather than by state or specific area of expertise.**

**Many communities also have other lawyer referral services to assist people in finding a lawyer. Often the services are for specific groups such as persons with disabilities, older persons, or victims of domestic violence. Groups that may be good sources for a local referral include the Alzheimer's Association and other support groups for specific diseases, Children of Aging Parents, the Older Women's League, the state civil liberties union local social services agency, or the local agency on aging. Other referral services may be run by groups of attorneys specializing in a certain area. Some services may screen the lawyers who wish to have referrals in a particular area. If you use a referral service, ask how attorneys are chosen to be listed with that particular service. Many services make referrals to all lawyers who are members (regardless of type and level of experience) of a particular organization.**

**Lawyers are permitted to advertise within specific guidelines. You will be able to gather some useful information from the publicity, however, like advertisements in general, you should always be careful about what you read or hear. Many advertisements for attorneys specializing in certain areas of the law (such as personal injury or medical malpractice in which there may be substantial fees) offer free consultations. Other advertisements may list a set fee for a particular type of case. It is always a good idea to investigate further and to comparison shop. Many attorneys who do not advertise may also provide free consultations or offer set fees for a certain legal problem. Also, keep in mind your case may not be a "simple" one and set fees are usually for routine, uncomplicated cases.**

**In addition, the court and your banker may be good referral sources.**

**Finally, the telephone book often lists lawyers according to their specialties.**

## **IS FREE OR REDUCED-COST LEGAL HELP AVAILABLE?**

**There are a number of options for finding affordable legal help. Federally funded legal services programs exist in every state and there are pro bono or reduced-fee attorney panels and legal hotlines in a number of states.**

### ***Free Legal Help for Older People***

**The Older Americans Act (OAA) requires your state office on aging to fund a local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) program that provides free legal help on noncriminal matters to people age 60 and over. Each of the over 644 local AAAs sets aside funds to provide free legal assistance for those older persons who are in the greatest social and economic need. In many states, the AAAs contract with the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) funded programs described below. They may also set up their own programs or contract with private attorneys to provide legal services to older persons.**

**OAA legal services advocates provide representation in court or at administrative hearings, community education, and self-help publications. The OAA programs offer other types of assistance and services as well. For example, an advocate may assist an older person with a food stamp appeal and arrange for transportation to a nutrition site. The OAA legal services programs do a great deal of outreach to the community. Some attorneys spend as much as half of their time speaking at senior centers or visiting people in their own homes.**

**There are no income guidelines that clients must meet in order to qualify for services. However, the legal services provider and the Area Agency on Aging may set priorities about the preferred type of representation, such as obtaining government benefits, and may not be able to provide help in cases the agency considers to be a lower priority.**

**Cost: No cost to eligible clients.**

**Eligibility & Access to Service:** OAA legal services providers handle civil (not criminal) matters for persons age 60 or older regardless of income. Local offices set priorities for the types of cases they will handle. Not all cases can be handled.

**Locating Local Agencies:** Agencies providing free legal help to older persons can be identified by calling your local Area Agency on Aging listed in the government section of the telephone directory.

A national directory of OAA legal services providers (entitled **Law & Aging Resource Guide**) lists a state-by-state breakdown of the addresses and phone numbers of each office and is available from the American Bar Association Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly, 1800 M Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 331-2297. Single state profiles are free. A complete copy of all state profiles is \$20.

**Legal Aid Offices (free help to low-income people of all ages)**

There is also a nationwide network of legal aid offices (or legal services) that receive federal funds to provide free legal help to low-income people of all ages. The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is a quasi-governmental entity that receives an annual appropriation from the U.S. Congress and funds 324 legal aid programs throughout the country.

LSC legal aid programs are designed to provide free legal services to persons with low incomes, including many older persons.

The legal help provided by LSC-funded programs is substantially the same as that provided by the OAA-funded programs and, in many cases, is provided by the same office. Staff advocates provide representation in court or at administrative hearings, community education, legal clinics, and self-help publications, as well as helping client groups in the community such as tenants groups. Many offices also conduct outreach programs to assist persons in nursing homes, mental

**hospitals, or others who cannot easily reach the legal aid office. The legal services offices have a staff that specializes in issues related to older people, such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other public benefits.**

**There are income and asset guidelines that you must meet to be eligible for LSC-funded programs. The office can readily explain these eligibility requirements to you. As mentioned above, some of these offices also receive special Older Americans Act funding, and can provide help to people 60 years of age and over, regardless of income or assets.**

**Cost: No cost to eligible clients.**

**Eligibility & Access to Service: Legal aid offices handle civil (not criminal) cases for persons with income below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines (\$12,300 for a couple in 1994). Local offices set priorities and not all cases can be handled. In some cases (such as abuse), the income guidelines may be waived.**

**Locating Local Agencies: You will find these agencies in your telephone book under "legal aid" or "legal services" offices or by calling your local bar association. Before making an appointment, call to make sure that the services are free. Be aware that some private attorneys have opened clinics that use the same type of name but don't provide free services.**

**Also, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association publishes an annually updated national directory that lists the addresses and phone numbers of all LSC-funded legal services offices, by state and county.**

**The guide can be obtained by writing to: NLADA Directory, 1625 K Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 452-0620. The cost is \$30.**

### ***Pro Bono or Reduced-Fee Attorney Panels***

**Most legal aid offices and some bar associations have started special pro bono panels (pro bono refers to free legal help that**

private attorneys provide as a public service). In addition, some private attorneys are willing to reduce their fees if a client's income is low.

The panels discussed in this section are the listings of the private attorneys willing to offer some free or reduced-fee legal services. The panels do not employ the attorneys but simply work to connect the attorneys willing to offer services with the clients who need them.

**Cost:** Reduced-fee panels provide legal help at a cost less than the fee that the private attorney "usually" charges for a case of the same type.

The exact fee varies based on locale and the individual attorney's fee schedule. Attorneys who agree to handle a case pro bono will not charge for their services although there may be court costs and other costs associated with the case.

**Eligibility & Access to Service:** Many local bar associations have lists of attorneys who volunteer for either reduced-fee panels or for pro bono cases. Some have special panels for elderlaw cases. In many instances, the local legal services programs (LSC and OAA) are part of this network. The legal services programs identify cases of persons who exceed financial guidelines or whose cases they are otherwise unable to handle. The cases are then referred to pro bono or reduced-fee panels.

Since the OAA and LSC legal services programs often must first screen the cases for the pro bono or reduced-fee attorney panels, contact with the legal aid agency is often a good way to identify a program in your area.

**Locating Local Sources:** Local legal aid offices and bar associations are usually listed in the yellow (under "Lawyers") or white pages of the telephone book.

### ***Legal Hotlines***

Some areas offer special legal hotlines for call-in advice. Often this telephone advice service is sponsored by bar associations and has limited hours or covers limited geographical areas.

**Sometimes the hotline may be offered for a limited time such as on Law Day, May 1.**

**The federal government's Administration on Aging (AoA) sponsors statewide legal hotlines that provide legal advice to all persons age 60 or older, regardless of income or the nature of their problem. The hotlines are staffed by attorneys who give advice, send pamphlets, or make referrals to special panels of attorneys or to legal services programs.**

**Cost: Most (including the AoA-funded hotlines) do not charge for the advice given. Cases which require additional work are referred to private attorneys or legal services programs (individual hotline policies will vary).**

**Eligibility & Access to Service: Open to all persons age 60 or older.**

**The services exist only in limited areas of the country. See Appendix 2 for a listing of the statewide legal hotlines as of the date this guide was published. Plans are underway to expand to other states.**

**Locating Local Agencies: Call your local bar association or Area Agency on Aging.**

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**Excerpted from An Older Person's Guide to Finding Legal Help  
from Legal Counsel for the Elderly  
601 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20049**

# **Child Custody & Visitation on a Budget**

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## **Child Custody & Visitation - Get Help Now**

**For most people, a child custody dispute is one of the most stressful events imaginable. Even in the best child custody scenarios, difficult family and personal issues need to be resolved reasonably and objectively. What kinds of custody arrangements are possible? Can the parents share physical custody of the children? If not, which parent will the kids live with most of the time? What rights will the other parent have to visitation with the children? Even though custody and visitation disputes have the potential to be among the most stressful and emotional of all legal matters, having an experienced custody and visitation attorney on your side can make the process easier, and can help to ensure that your interests are protected to the fullest extent possible.**

### **How a Custody and Visitation Attorney Can Help**

**Whether you are a single parent in a child custody dispute, or a married person who needs to resolve child custody and visitation as part of a divorce, now is the time to make sure you will have an experienced custody and visitation attorney on your side throughout the process. More so than in other types of civil law cases, what can be at stake in a child custody dispute will seriously impact you and your family now and for many years in the future. An experienced child custody and visitation attorney will evaluate your case with you – explaining what you can expect and identifying your options. At every stage in the custody dispute process, your attorney will represent you zealously, and will act to protect both your legal rights and your personal interests, all with the goal of ensuring that the outcome of your case is as favorable for you as possible.**

### **Hiring a Family Law Attorney: Fee Agreements**

**When you hire a family law attorney, your fee agreement should set out the types of services the lawyer will perform for you, the type of fees that will be charged, and the amount you will be expected to pay. The agreement should also identify how other**

**costs will be handled, and should explain the lawyer's billing practices.**

**In your initial meeting with your lawyer you should discuss the lawyer's fees and the fee arrangement. Your discussions with your lawyer about fees and costs might cover the following topics:**

- **Type of Fee Arrangement: How will the lawyer bill? Will the lawyer bill on an hourly basis, or will you pay a retainer fee?**
- **Type of Permissible Costs: Which costs are properly passed on to you? Will you have to pay for copying costs? How much per page? Will you be responsible for electronic research charges?**
- **Estimated Fees and Costs: What will the case cost? The lawyer may not be able to determine the exact amount of time and effort required to handle your case, but should be in a position to give you an estimate based upon past experience.**
- **Frequency and Detail: You should find out how often you will be billed and whether interest or other charges will be added to unpaid amounts. The lawyer's bills should include details of the services provided along with an itemization of costs.**
- **Basic Charges: If the lawyer charges by the hour, you should find out the minimum billing segment. Is it one-quarter or one-tenth of an hour or some other figure? For example, a lawyer may bill you for a tenth of an hour (six minutes) for a simple three minute telephone call. You should also find out whether you will be billed for work by others – associates, legal assistants, or paralegals.**
- **Control: How much control will you have over fees and expenses? Do you want to be notified after fees and expenses reach a certain amount? Do you want to be**

**notified before the lawyer incurs an expense over a certain amount?**

**You might want to take notes during your discussions so you can know what terms you and the lawyer agreed upon. Based on your discussions, you should have the fee arrangement put in writing. The lawyer may have a pre-printed fee agreement for you to sign. If the agreement does not include the terms your discussed with the lawyer, ask the lawyer to change the language. The agreement should state clearly what you and the lawyer agreed to do.**

### **Hiring a Family Law Attorney: Types of Legal Fees**

**The type of fee arrangement that you make with your family law lawyer will have a significant impact on how much you will pay for his or her services. Legal fees depend on several factors, including the amount of time spent on your case; the lawyer's ability, experience, and reputation; the complexity of the case; the results obtained; and the costs involved. Other factors such as the lawyer's overhead expenses (rent, utilities, office equipment, computers, etc.) may affect the fee charged.**

**There are several common types of fee arrangements used by lawyers:**

**Consultation Fee :** The lawyer may charge a fixed or hourly fee for your first meeting in which you both determine whether the lawyer can assist you. Be sure to check whether you will be charged for this initial meeting.

**Contingency Fees :** Contingency fee agreements are typically not available for family law matters, but they are used in some rare cases. A lawyer's contingency fee is based on a percentage of the amount awarded or the financial outcome of the case. Contingency fee percentages vary, but a one-third fee is common. Some lawyers offer a sliding scale based on how far along the case has progressed before it is settled. Courts may set a limit on the amount of a contingency fee a lawyer can receive. Lawyers may be prohibited from making contingency

fee arrangements in certain kinds of cases, such as child custody matters.

**Flat Fees :** A lawyer charges a specific, comprehensive fee. A flat fee is usually offered only if your family law case is relatively simple or routine, such as an uncontested divorce.

**Hourly Rate :** The lawyer will charge you for each hour (or portion of an hour) that the lawyer works on your case. Thus, for example, if the lawyer's fee is \$100 per hour and the lawyer works 5 hours, the fee will be \$500. This is the most typical fee arrangement. Some lawyers charge different fees for different types of work (legal research versus a court appearance). In addition, lawyers working in large firms typically have different fee scales with more senior members charging higher fees than young associates or paralegals.

**Referral Fee:** A lawyer who refers you to another lawyer may ask for a portion of the total fee you pay for the case. Referral fees may be prohibited under applicable state codes of professional responsibility, unless certain criteria are met. Just like other fees, the total fee must be reasonable and you must agree to the arrangement. Your state or local bar association may have additional information about the appropriateness of a referral fee.

**Retainer Fees:** The lawyer is paid a set fee, perhaps based on the lawyer's hourly rate. You can think of a retainer as a "down payment" against which future costs are billed. The retainer is usually placed in a special account and the cost of services is deducted from that account as they accrue. Many retainer fees are non-refundable unless such a fee is deemed unreasonable by a court. Since this type of fee arrangement can mean several different things, be sure to have the lawyer explain the retainer fee arrangement in detail.

With all types of fee arrangements, you should ask what costs and other expenses are covered in the fee. Does the fee include the lawyer's overhead and costs or are those charged separately? How will the costs for staff and support be charged-

- such as secretaries, paralegals, messengers, and process servers. In contingency fee arrangements, make sure to find out whether the lawyer calculates the fee before or after expenses.

### **Hiring a Family Law Attorney: Types of Legal Costs**

The amount a family law attorney charges you for legal services may include the lawyer's usual fees *plus* additional expenses and costs. For example, if a lawyer will represent you in a divorce proceeding, you may have to pay a fee for filing the divorce petition or response, or other court costs as well. There are a number of costs that may appear on your lawyer's bill. Some lawyers may charge for these costs separately, while other lawyers may lump the expenses together as a separate item on your bill. Still others may include some of these costs in their fee. Be sure to find out before you hire your lawyer if these types of costs are included, and whether they will be itemized on your bill. Costs in addition to the lawyer's time may include:

- Filing fees and court costs
- Photocopying
- Long distance telephone charges
- Postage charges
- Paralegal time
- Messengers
- Computer or research-related costs
- Secretarial and staff time
- Deposition and court reporter costs (including transcripts)
- Facsimiles (faxes)
- Experts, consultants, and witness fees
- Investigators
- Process servers (delivery of legal documents relating to the case)
- Travel expenses

There may be other charges not listed above. It is a good idea to ask the lawyer for a written estimate of anticipated costs to make sure you understand the different costs that you will have to pay. For example, you will want to find out if there is a set rate for some costs (e.g., \$0.15 per page for copying costs). If you

are concerned about the costs building up, you can also tell your lawyer that any costs over a certain amount have to be approved by you in advance. You also may be able to negotiate in advance the amount charged for many of these costs.

### **Hiring a Family Law Attorney: Controlling Your Legal Costs**

If you discussed the basis and nature of legal fees and costs with your family law attorney and have a written fee agreement, you have taken the necessary first step to help you control your legal expenses. Still, there are a few things you can do during the course of your case to help you and your lawyer manage the overall fees and costs:

**Get Organized:** During your first interviews, bring as much information as you can and share it with your lawyer. Think about the case in advance before talking to a lawyer. Write down the questions that you want your lawyer to answer. This could help cut down the time that the lawyer will spend investigating the case and gathering information.

**Be Thorough:** Tell your lawyer all the facts. Do not assume that your lawyer knows them all. Your lawyer should tell you that all your information will be kept in confidence. In order to represent you efficiently, it will help your lawyer to know as much as possible about your case and to avoid surprises during the course of the representation.

**Be Efficient:** Try to be as concise as possible. In many circumstances you will pay for every minute you spend with your lawyer. A friendly relationship can facilitate the handling of your case, but you should try to limit your discussions to your legal matter. You will not want to pay for a long, friendly conversation about non-legal matters.

**Communicate:** You need to discuss the case with your lawyer and prepare for meetings. You are probably the primary source of information about your case. If something new happens, you should inform your lawyer. It may change what the lawyer is doing on the case and save you and the lawyer time (and thus money).

**Examine Your Bill : Make sure that your bills do not contain costs or expenses beyond those you agreed to pay for. Even if you agreed to pay on a contingency basis (very rare in family law cases), you should check to see that costs and expenses are monitored and properly billed.**

## **PARALEGALS**

**Paralegals can fill out your child custody modification forms to submit to your family court. The cost of having your work done by a paralegal is much, much lower than the standard rate charged by an attorney to do the same work. Following is a list of paralegal associations that will be happy to help you locate a local paralegal to help you submit your custody/divorce forms.**

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**The following is a list of state and local paralegal associations, most of which are affiliated with either the National Assn of Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA), or with the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA). Contact information is listed where available.**

### **ALABAMA**

**Alabama Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President Linda Reid, Birmingham**

**Legal Assistant Society of Phillips Jr. College/Southern Inst.  
(NALA)**

**Faculty Advisors: Douglas Ingram and Elizabeth B. Sullivan,  
Birmingham**

**Samford University Paralegal Association (NALA)  
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Dolores Grissom, Birmingham**

### **ALASKA**

**Fairbanks Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: Carolyn Bollman, North Pole**

**Alaska Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 101956  
Anchorage, AK 99510-1956**

### **ARIZONA**

**Arizona Association of Professional Paralegals, Inc. (NFPA)**



**P.O. Box 430 Phoenix, AZ 85001**

**Arizona Paralegal Association (NALA)**

**President: Debra J. Frazee, Mesa**

**Legal Assistants of Metropolitan Phoenix (NALA)**

**President: Fawn K. Barnes, Phoenix**

**Tucson Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Shirley M. Welch, Tucson**

### **ARKANSAS**

**Arkansas Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Sara L. Talbert, Cabot**

### **CALIFORNIA**

**California Association of Independent Paralegals (NFPA)**

**39120 Argonaut Way, #114**

**Fremont, CA 94538**

**Legal Assistants Association of Santa Barbara (NALA)**

**President: Sonja B. Youngdahl, Santa Barbara**

**Orange County Paralegal Association, Newport Beach (NALA)**

**President: Linda McCown**

**Paralegal Association of Santa Clara County (NALA)**

**President: Karen C. Gale, San Jose**

**Paralegal Association of Southland California (NFPA)**

**P.O. Cox 50271**

**Pasadena, CA 91115**

**Sacramento Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)**

**P.O. Box 453**

**Sacramento, CA 95812-0453**

**(916) 763-7851**

**San Diego Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)**

**P.O. Box 87449**

**San Diego, CA 92138-7449  
(619) 491-1994**

**San Francisco Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 2110  
San Francisco, CA 94126-2110  
(415) 777-2390; (415) 333-9075**

**San Joaquin Association of Legal Assistants, Fresno (NALA)  
President: Melinda McConnell**

**Ventura County Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: John S. Garrison, North Hills**

**COLORADO  
Association of Legal Assistants of Colorado (NALA)  
President: Brenda Allensworth Mientka, Colorado Springs**

**Rocky Mountain Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 1835  
Aurora, CO 80001-1835  
(303) 369-1606**

**CONNECTICUT  
Central Connecticut Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 230594  
Hartford, CT 06123-0594**

**Connecticut Association of Paralegals, Inc. (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 134  
Bridgeport, CT 06601-0134**

**New Haven County Association of Paralegals, Inc. (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 862  
New Haven, CT 06504-0862**

**DELAWARE  
Delaware Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 1362  
Wilmington, DE 19899**

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**National Capital Area Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 19124**  
**Washington, D.C. 20036-9998**  
**(202) 659-0243**

**FLORIDA**  
**Central Florida Paralegal Association (NALA)**  
**President: Alix Popkin, Orlando**

**Dade Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Lori O. Allen, Bay Harbor Island**

**Florida Independent Paralegal Alliance (FIPA)**  
**4866 Gandy Boulevard, West**  
**Tampa, FL. 33611**  
**(813) 931-7776 or (813) 835-1105**  
**Fax: 931-7907 e-mail: APSTampa@aol.com**

**Florida Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA)**  
**President: Karen S. McLead, Clearwater**

**Gainesville Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Nadine Smith, Gainesville**

**Jacksonville Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Teresa M. Bullock, Jacksonville**

**Paralegal Association of Florida (NFPA)**  
**6265 West Sample Road, #297**  
**Fort Lauderdale, FL 33067**

**Pensacola Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Catherine M. Kaiser, Pensacola**

**Tampa College-Brandon Student Association (NALA)**  
**Faculty Advisors: Lance L. O'Bleness and Tom Parks, Tampa**

**Volusia Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Julie Anne Tilotson Pruett, Ormond Beach**

**GEORGIA**

**Georgia Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)**

**P.O. Box 1802**

**Atlanta, GA 30301**

**(770) 433-5252**

**Georgia Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Elaine H. Hall, Alma**

**South Georgia Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Clarice M. Glass, Nashville, Ga.**

**Southeastern Association of Legal Assistants of Georgia (NALA)**

**President: Sherri A. Morgan, Pooler**

**HAWAII**

**Hawaii Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)**

**P.O. Box 674**

**Honolulu, HI 96809**

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**Gem State Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Jane A. Creviston, Hailey**

**ILLINOIS**

**Central Illinois Paralegal Association (NALA)**

**President: Debra J. Monke, Bloomington**

**Heart of Illinois Paralegal Association (NALA)**

**President: Janelle Crump, Peoria**

**Illinois Paralegal Association (NFPA)**

**P.O. Box 8089**

**Bartlett, Il 60103-8089**

**(708) 837-8088**

**INDIANA**

**Indiana Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Stephenie S. Veach, Evansville**

**Indiana Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
Federal Station  
P.O. Box 44518  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
(317) 767-7798**

**Michiana Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 11458  
South Bend, IN 46634**

**Northeast Indiana Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 13646  
Fort Wayne, IN 46865**

#### **KANSAS**

**Kansas Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: Connie S. Kennedy, Wichita**

**Kansas Legal Assistants Society (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 1675  
Topeka, KS 66601**

#### **KENTUCKY**

**Greater Lexington Paralegal Association, Inc., (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 574  
Lexington, KY 40586**

**Western Kentucky Paralegals (NALA)  
President: Shelly Ragan, Murray**

#### **LOUISIANA**

**Louisiana State Paralegal Association (NALA)  
President: Karen Greer, Monroe**

**New Orleans Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 30604  
New Orleans, LA 70190  
(504) 467-3136**

**Northwest Louisiana Paralegal Association (NALA)**  
**President: Jan L. Melton, Shreveport**

**MAINE**

**Maine State Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Lawrence Yerxa, Kittery**

**MARYLAND**

**Maryland Association of Paralegals (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 13244**  
**Baltimore, MD 21203**  
**(410) 576-2252**

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**Central Massachusetts Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 444**  
**Worcester, MA 01614**

**Massachusetts Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**5 Grant Street**  
**Framingham, MA 01701-6708**  
**(508) 879-4001**

**Western Massachusetts Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 30005**  
**Springfield, MA 01103**

**MICHIGAN**

**Legal Assistants Association of Michigan (NALA)**  
**President: Sharon A. Schafer, Dearborn**

**MINNESOTA**

**Minnesota Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**8030 Old Cedar Ave. S, #225**  
**Bloomington, MN 55425**  
**(612) 853-0272**

**MISSISSIPPI**

**Mississippi Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Elizabeth S. Woods, Jackson**

**University of Southern Mississippi Society for Paralegal Studies  
(NALA)**

**President: Trisha Trigg, Hattiesburg**

#### **MISSOURI**

**Kansas City Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)**

**P.O. Box 13223**

**Kansas City, MO 64199**

**(913) 381-4458**

**St. Louis Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Cheryl R. Haley, St. Louis**

#### **MONTANA**

**Montana Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: LaCinda R. Williams, Missoula**

#### **NEBRASKA**

**Nebraska Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**

**President: Mary K. Bronson, Omaha**

#### **NEVADA**

**Clark County Organization of Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA)**

**President: Dorothy C. Lappin, Las Vegas**

**Sierra Nevada Association of Paralegals (NALA)**

**President: Darlene Errington Stone, Reno**

#### **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Paralegal Association of New Hampshire (NALA)**

**President: Cheryl L. Meachen, Henniker**

#### **NEW JERSEY**

**Legal Assistants Association of New Jersey (NALA)**

**President: Manny Ferrao, Rahway**

**Prudential Insurance Company of America - Paralegal Council  
(NFPA)**

**751 Broad Street  
Newark, NJ 07102**

**South Jersey Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 355  
Haddonfield, NJ 08033**

**NEW MEXICO  
Legal Assistants of New Mexico (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 1113  
Albuquerque, NM 87103-1113**

**Southwestern Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: Louise M. Shippy Tuttle, Albuquerque**

**NEW YORK  
Long Island Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
1877 Bly Road  
East Meadow, NY 11554-1158**

**Manhattan Paralegal Association, Inc. (NFPA)  
521 Fifth Ave., 17th Floor  
New York, NY 10175  
(212) 330-8213**

**Paralegal Association of Rochester (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 40567  
Rochester, NY 14604  
(716) 234-5923**

**Southern Tier Association of Paralegals (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 2555  
Binghamton, NY 13902**

**West/Rock Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 668  
New City, NY 10956**

**Western New York Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 207, Niagara Square Station**



**Buffalo, NY 14202  
(716) 635-8250**

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**Coastal Carolina Paralegal Club (NALA)  
Faculty Advisor: Col. Robert E. Switzer, Jacksonville**

**Metrolina Paralegal Association (NALA)  
President: Kelly C. Walker, Charlotte**

**North Carolina Paralegal Association (NALA)  
President: Sharon L. Wall, Raleigh**

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President: Linda Brastrup Johnson, Moorhead, MN**

**Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: Connie L. Sundby, Minot**

**OHIO**

**Cincinnati Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 1515  
Cincinnati, OH 45201  
(513) 244-1266**

**Cleveland Association of Paralegals (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 5496  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
(216) 575-6090**

**Greater Dayton Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 515 Mid-City Station  
Dayton, OH 45402**

**Northeastern Ohio Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 80068  
Akron, OH 44308-0068**

**Paralegal Association of Central Ohio (NFPA)**

**P.O. Box 15182  
Columbus, OH 43215-0182  
(614) 224-9700**

**Toledo Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: Denise Wright, Maumee**

#### **OKLAHOMA**

**Oklahoma Paralegal Association (NALA)  
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**Rogers State College Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
Faculty Advisor: Michelle K. Price, Claremore**

**Rose State Paralegal Association (NALA)  
Faculty Advisor: Judy Shaw, Midwest City**

**TJC Student Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
Faculty Advisor: Judith Tucker, Tulsa**

**Tulsa Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: Donna G. Wilson, Tulsa**

#### **OREGON**

**Oregon Legal Assistants Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 8523  
Portland, OR 97207  
(503) 796-1671**

**Pacific Northwest Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: Dawnne L. Linenbrink, Eugene**

#### **PENNSYLVANIA**

**Central Pennsylvania Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 11814  
Harrisburg, PA 17108**

**Chester County Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 295  
West Chester, PA 19381-0295**

**Keystone Legal Assistant Association (NALA)**  
**President: Kimberly J. Houser, Summerdale**

**Lycoming County Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 991**  
**Williamsport, PA 17701**

**Philadelphia Association of Paralegals (NFPA)**  
**2 Penn Center Plaza, Suite 200**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19102**  
**(215) 854-6352**

**Pittsburgh Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 2845**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15230**  
**(412) 255-1070**

**York County Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 2584**  
**York, PA 17405-2584**

**RHODE ISLAND**  
**Rhode Island Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 1003**  
**Providence, RI 02901**

**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**Central Carolina Technical College Paralegal Association**  
**(NALA)**  
**President: Sheri Windham, Sumter**

**Columbia Legal Assistants Association (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 11634**  
**Columbia, SC 29211-1634**

**Greenville Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
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**Paralegal Association of Beaufort County South Carolina (NALA)**

**President: W. Henry Thames, III, Beaufort**

**Paralegal Association of the Pee Dee, Inc. (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 5592  
Florence, SC 29502**

**Tri-County Paralegal Association (NALA)  
President: V. Sheri Towne, Charleston**

#### **SOUTH DAKOTA**

**National College Student Association of Legal Assistants  
(NALA)  
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**South Dakota Legal Assistants Association (NALA)  
President: Michael M. Bultema, Aberdeen**

#### **TENNESSEE**

**Greater Memphis Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA)  
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**Memphis Paralegal Association (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 3646  
Memphis, TN 38173-0646**

**Tennessee Paralegal Association (NALA)  
President: Caleeta L. Beagles, Trenton, Ga.**

#### **TEXAS**

**Capital Area Paralegal Association (NALA)  
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**Dallas Association of Legal Assistants (NFPA)  
P.O. Box 12533  
Dallas, TX 75225  
(214) 991-0853**

**El Paso Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)  
President: Valerie S. Olivas, El Paso**

**Legal Assistant Association/Pennian Basin (NALA)**  
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**Northeast Texas Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
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**Nueces County Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
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**Southeast Texas Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
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**Texarkana Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
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**Texas Panhandle Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
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**Tyler Area Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Carolyn S. Burton, Tyler**

**West Texas Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Judi Marie Simpson Beaver, Lubbock**

**Wichita County Student Association (NALA)**  
**Faculty Advisor: Billie Ruth Goss, Wichita Falls**

**UTAH**  
**Legal Assistants Association of Utah (NALA)**  
**President: Kathy Scott-Thalman, Salt Lake City**

**VERMONT**  
**Vermont Paralegal Organization (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 6238**  
**Rutland, VT 05702**

**VIRGINIA**  
**Peninsula Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA)**  
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**Richmond Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Jane Nuttall, Richmond**

**Tidewater Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)**  
**President: Colleen M. Hagy, Norfolk**

#### **WASHINGTON**

**Association of Paralegals and Legal Assistants of Washington  
St (NALA)**  
**President: Sheila M. White, Spokane**

**Columbia Basin Paralegal Association (NALA)**  
**President: Regina A. Stevens, Kennewick**

**Washington State Paralegal Association (NFPA)**  
**5500 Olympic Drive**  
**Suite 105, Box 269**  
**Gig Harbor, WA 98335**  
**(206) 851-2557**

#### **WEST VIRGINIA**

**Legal Assistants of West Virginia, Inc. (NALA)**  
**President: Andrea Rayfield, Huntington**

#### **WISCONSIN**

**Madison Area Legal Assistants Association (NALA)**  
**President: Kristine Caldwell, Madison**

**Paralegal Association of Wisconsin, Inc. (NFPA)**  
**P.O. Box 92882**  
**Milwaukee, WI 53202**  
**(414) 272-7168**

#### **WYOMING**

**Legal Assistants of Wyoming (NALA)**  
**President: Julie Pate, Casper**