

# Did you know?

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## LEGAL AID

Legal Aid is run by the Legal Services Society of BC. The idea behind Legal Aid is that no one should be without legal representation in court simply because they don't have enough money. Unfortunately, budget restrictions have limited the availability of legal aid. You must qualify on the basis of financial need and find out if your case is the type that legal aid will cover.

### Legal Aid Coverage

The following are only very general guidelines. Particular circumstances of each case vary and you must discuss your situation with an Intake Legal Assistant to find out if you are covered.

**Criminal Coverage:** If you have been charged with a criminal offence and there is likelihood of jail upon conviction, or a conviction would threaten your present livelihood **or** if you are between the ages of 12 and 17 and you have been charged with a federal offence under the Youth Criminal Justice Act. You may also qualify if you have a condition that makes it impossible for you to represent yourself such as a physical condition, mental or emotional illness, **or** if you are Aboriginal and the case affects your ability to practice your Aboriginal rights such as hunting and fishing.

**Family Coverage:** Legal representation is available for financially eligible people who are victims of domestic violence and may need a physical restraining order to protect them and their child(ren)'s safety, or for parents whose children have been taken or are being threatened to be taken by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

**Immigration:** If you are a refugee claimant or an individual facing an immigration proceeding that may result in removal from Canada.

### How to Apply

1. Contact your local Legal Aid office by looking in the telephone book under Legal Services, Legal Aid (or visit [legalaid.bc.ca/legal\\_aid/legalAidOffices.php](http://legalaid.bc.ca/legal_aid/legalAidOffices.php))

If you live in a remote area and do not have access to a local legal aid office you can apply on the phone by calling the Provincial Call Centre Monday - Friday 9:00am - 4:00pm.

2. An Intake Legal Assistant will ask you questions about your legal problem to find out if Legal Aid will cover it. You will have to provide proof of income to determine if you are financially eligible. (eg. recent pay cheque or welfare stubs). If you operate your own business, you will be required to provide documents such as bank statements and your recent tax return.
3. If your problem is covered and you are financially eligible, you will be referred to a private lawyer. If you are refused, you will probably be offered legal information about your problem. You may appeal a refusal.
4. If you receive money from the resolution of your case, you will be required to pay some or all of your lawyer's fees.

Provincial Call Centre  
Lower Mainland **604-408-2172**  
Toll Free **1-800-577-2525**  
*or*  
North Vancouver Legal Aid  
**604-980-7000**



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