

THE PRO BONO PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: I need help with my financial matters. I have a lot of consumer debt, and my creditors are already calling daily. Am I eligible to file for bankruptcy relief?

A: Bankruptcy is a legal remedy for those burdened by unmanageable debt. Individuals typically file under one of two chapters of the United States Bankruptcy Code: Chapters 7 and 13. A Chapter 7 bankruptcy case does not involve the filing of a plan of repayment. Instead, the bankruptcy trustee assigned to the case gathers and sells any nonexempt assets of the debtor and uses the proceeds of those assets to repay creditors. Part of the debtor's property may be subject to liens and mortgages that pledge the property to other creditors. The Bankruptcy Code allows the debtor to keep certain exempt property, but a trustee will liquidate the debtor's remaining assets. **Potential debtors should realize that the filing of a petition under chapter 7 may result in the loss of property. Under local Louisiana rules, a debtor's primary residence is exempt from liquidation so long as the debtor's equity in the home is no more than \$35,000.**

Q: My child's other parent is refusing to abide by the terms of our court-ordered custody arrangement and will not return my child to me. What can I do?

A: The Pro Bono Project does not provide direct legal representation for child custody matters. However, our Self-Help Resource Centers may have the tools you need to file the appropriate forms with the courts. You may visit the website at <http://probono-no.org/self-help-resource-center> to learn more about the resources

Q: I have a legal issue and would like to apply for services. How can I do so?

A: We are happy to assist you. Please call our main line at 504-581-4043 for more information on services we provide and the regions we operate in. For an application, visit www.probono-no.org or email intake@probono-no.org.

Q: What services do you offer?

A: The Pro Bono Project offers free legal services for persons with low income who have uncontested civil, non-criminal legal problems in the Louisiana parishes of *Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St Bernard, St Tammany and Washington* only. Examples of the type of cases which might be accepted by our office include:

- Uncontested
- Divorces Successions
- Wills/Power of Attorney
- Chapter 7 Bankruptcy
- Landlord/Tenant
- Intra-family Adoptions
- Interdiction
- Name Change
- Paternity
- Title Clearing
- Lease Disputes
- Social Security Benefits
- Consumer Protection
- Taxes
- Home Ownership/Real Property
- Wage Claim

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Q: What services do you *not* offer? Where else can I go for help?

A: The Pro Bono Project does not accept cases that involve the following:

- Emergency legal matters
- Criminal or traffic matters
- Fee generating cases
- Personal injury lawsuits
- Contested child custody/child support
- Contested divorces
- Domestic violence

If you have a case which The Pro Bono Project may *not* handle, you can refer to any of the websites as additional resources for your legal concerns:

- Southeast Louisiana Legal Services: <https://slls.org/>
- Louisiana Bar Association Modest Means Online Legal Directory: www.lsba.org/Public/FindLegalHelp
- New Orleans Bar Lawyer Referral Service: www.neworleansbar.org/for-public/find-a-lawyer/
- LIFT (Legal Innovators for Tomorrow): www.lsba.org/lift
- Louisiana Law Help: www.Louisianalawhelp.org
- Tulane Law Clinic: 504.865.5930
- Loyola Law Clinic: 504.861.5590

Q: I have a criminal charge against me. Can you represent me?

A: The Pro Bono Project provides civil legal aid for non-criminal legal matters. To find a legal resource for a criminal legal matter, please visit: Louisiana Bar Association Modest Means Online Legal Directory: <https://www.lsba.org/Public/FindLegalHelp/ModestMeans.aspx>

For an expungement, please contact the Justice & Accountability Center at <https://www.jaclouisiana.org/>

Q: I received a case acceptance letter and have been waiting for a volunteer. Are you still seeking someone to assist me?

A: Yes. Your case is listed as available on our website. We also regularly communicate with volunteers to encourage them to volunteer their time. Since we cannot guarantee an attorney will volunteer for your case matter, we encourage you to visit other nonprofit agencies who may be able to assist you or the private bar. Visit the Louisiana State Bar Association's Find Legal Help tab at: www.lsba.org/Public/FindLegalHelp

Q: I have a case with a volunteer attorney, but I do not know how to contact them?

A: If you have a volunteer attorney, please call our office at 504-581-4043 or email intake@probono-no.org. We are happy to assist you with connecting with your volunteer.

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