

Free and Low Cost Legal Resources



There are several sources of free or low cost legal assistance for lowans seeking the services of an attorney for non-criminal cases. Legal assistance programs have limited resources and are not usually able to accept all cases. Persons seeking assistance will generally go through an intake process and be screened for financial eligibility.

Each organization may also have its own program guidelines for the types of cases that will be accepted, or may have priority areas that require them to give preference to cases that fall into certain issue areas. Factors such as these will be assessed to determine if a particular case is accepted. Since demand for free and low-cost legal services is often greater than program resources, organizations may not have the capacity to serve all clients who meet the financial or priority issue guidelines.

Practicing staff attorneys may work with law school students or paralegals who provide assistance under their supervision. Cases may also be referred to private attorneys who volunteer some of their time to take on “pro bono” (without charge) cases. The following programs offer free or low cost legal services:

Iowa Legal Aid

Administrative Headquarters
1111 Ninth Street, Suite 230
Des Moines, Iowa 50314
Toll free: 1-800-532-1275

Iowa Legal Aid provides free legal help with civil law problems to eligible low-income lo-

wans. Areas of assistance include a broad range of topics, including family and juvenile matters, housing, public benefits, education, health, individual rights, and disability issues. This includes appealing decisions by the Iowa Department of Human Services and enforcing the legal rights of persons with disabilities.

To apply for free legal help from Iowa Legal Aid, call the statewide toll free number Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 11:00 am or from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm, **except Thursday afternoon**. Iowa Legal Aid has ten local offices across Iowa, located in Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, Iowa City, Mason City, Ottumwa, Sioux City, and Waterloo. Offices are open weekdays from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. A list of the local office addresses and service areas is available online at: <http://www.iowalegalaid.org/find-legal-help>. You may also apply for legal assistance online at any time: <http://www.iowalegalaid.org/>

Iowans age 60 and over may call the **Legal Hotline for Older Iowans** at 1-800-992-8161, Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

People who are not able to get help from Iowa Legal Aid may be able to find a lawyer through the **Iowa State Bar Association's Find-a-Lawyer** website at: <http://www.iabar.net/AttorneyOnLine.nsf/srch?OpenForm>.

Attorneys taking part in *Find-a-Lawyer* charge a \$25.00 fee for the first 30-minute consultation. If you need more help beyond the 30-minute consultation, you will need to negotiate a fee arrangement with the attorney.

Drake University Legal Clinic

2400 University Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50311
515-271-3851

The Middleton Center for Children's Rights is part of the Drake University Legal Clinic that includes legal services, training, and public information. Under faculty supervision, law students represent children and handle abuse, neglect and termination of parental rights cases. The Center also includes a resource center and a training center that educates lawyers, judges, social workers and others in various aspects of children's rights law. To request assistance, call the number above. For more information, go to: <http://www.law.drake.edu/academics/middleton/>

Clinical Law Programs

University of Iowa Law School
386 Boyd Law Building
Melrose & Byington Streets
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1113
319-335-9030

Law students working under the supervision of faculty attorneys in the University of Iowa Clinical Law Program practice in the areas of consumer rights, disability rights and policy, domestic violence, immigration, international human rights, juvenile court matters, and workers' rights. Projects include housing and universal design, and legal assistance to individuals with

disabilities for ADA access issues, and assistive technology they require for school, home, or at their job. For information about the Clinical Law Programs and our many other practice areas and offerings, visit the Legal Clinic's website at: <http://www.law.uiowa.edu/clinic>

Disability Rights Iowa (DRI)

400 E. Court Avenue, Suite 300
Des Moines, IA 50309
515-278-2502 or 800-779-2502
TTY: 515-278-0571 or 866-483-3342

DRI is a private non-profit organization that focuses on the rights of Iowans with disabilities and provides legal and advocacy services to Iowans with disabilities. Because their funding is limited, DRI sets guidelines to help decide whether legally based advocacy or representation can be provided in a particular case. The following factors are considered for intake:

- The individual must be a qualifying person with a disability, and must have a disability rights issue (the problem or issue must arise from the individual's disability);
- DRI must have funding and staff available to properly advocate for the individual's issues; and
- The individual's needs for legally based advocacy must fall within DRI's Areas of Focus. A summary of DRI's Areas of Focus are set out by issue area on their website at: <http://disabilityrightsiaowa.org/>

To request assistance/services from Disability Rights Iowa, contact their office to complete an intake from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.