

Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. ®

Find Help at LawH

We provide free legal aid to people with civil legal problems in western New York.

www.lawny.org

Find Help at LawHelpNY.org

You are sitting at a redlight. The Subaru Forester in front of you asks “**Want peace? Work for justice.**” Has that ever made you think? We all know judges, lawyers, police officers, and activists work for justice. That just might not be your thing, but I bet you still wouldn’t mind a little peace even if you’re not John Lennon or Judge Judy. What might you be able to do? I present to you **a practical approach.** LawHelpNY.org is a website that has been designed to promote justice in a very real way. Read on to understand the landscape and how it might relate to you.

There are so many people already working for justice. Legal service providers in New York State, like LawNY, are committed to creating access to justice. These offices do everything they can to provide excellent **civil legal services** to anyone who cannot afford an attorney. According to a recent report, within the past year, 71% of low-income households in our country experienced at least one civil legal problem and 25% of all low-income households experienced 6 or more civil legal problems. Meanwhile, low-income Americans seek professional legal help for only 20% of the civil legal problems they face. The report tells us people either decide to deal with a problem on their own, don’t know where to look for help, or they didn’t even know the problem they’re facing is a “legal” one ([LSC Report](#)).

This report is from the Legal Services Corporation, which funds 133 legal aid offices in the United States. These offices will serve 1 million low-income Americans in 2017, but will only be able to fully address about half of the legal problems they are facing. This is primarily due to a lack of resources. This creates what civil legal services providers call a “**justice gap.**” The justice gap looks like people navigating court all on their own with no representation. The justice gap can also look like families losing their housing, jobs, or public benefits for reasons that are contestable in court and therefore possibly preventable.

There is tons of work being done to close the justice gap. Legal aid offices are responding with great ingenuity to spread out the resources that are currently available. **LawHelpNY.org** is a collaborative project of law offices across New York State that has been growing now for over 15 years. So where do you come in? **Simple: Spread the word!** LawHelpNY.org connects people to appropriate service providers and legal resources. Remember the reasons why low-income Americans seek professional help for only 20% of the civil legal problems they face?

1. They decide to deal with a problem on their own.
2. They don't know where to look for help.
3. They didn't know their problem was a legal one.

LawHelpNY.org addresses each situation.

Situation 1. LawHelpNY.org has a collection of resources designed to help people who have decided to represent themselves in court. (We have posted a video about this on this very blog too - check out Pro se Initiatives!) For example, know someone who needs their landlord to make repairs in their house? LawHelpNY.org made a guide for that - [click here](#).

Situation 2. LawHelpNY.org has coordinated with over 600 legal organizations in New York State in order to list how they can help and how to get ahold of them all in one place. LawHelpNY wants to amplify the voices of legal service providers. Visit the site, click on "Find a Lawyer" and put in your location and a legal issue to find a lawyer that serves low-income clients for free near you. [This link will take you directly to the find legal help page.](#)

Situation 3. LawHelpNY.org has been designed to inform people of their rights. If a person does not know their problem is a legal one, it is because a person does not know their rights are being violated. On the homepage of LawHelpNY.org you will see a big blue box that says “Learn more about your issue, your rights and where to find legal services near you.” Below that are the most common civil legal issues: Housing, Money and Taxes, Family and Youth, Immigration, Public Benefits, Workers’ Rights, Health and Wills, Seniors, Veterans and Military, Criminal Records, and Discrimination. Within each legal issue, LawHelpNY.org gets even more specific, for example you could click on the issue “Family and Youth” and choose between twenty topics ranging from Divorce to Adoption, if you ever needed to know what rights you have during either proceeding and who is available to help.

LawHelpNY.org is a website, yes, but really LawHelpNY is a team of people dedicated to helping people solve their legal issues. Part of the team behind LawHelpNY.org spends most of their time translating legal information into words that everyone can understand. We want people to know their rights and to be able to take action, but no one can take action if they don’t understand. Everything on the website is written and designed with that in mind. Please consider working for justice today in a way that could achieve real results for people you know. LawHelpNY.org can help.

If you would like more information about LawHelpNY.org, including print materials to hand out at our organization or a presentation at your organization, please contact Taylor at 315-781-1465.

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