

TIP 1a

Finding Legal Help in a Civil Case

Sometimes it is difficult to get legal help if you cannot afford it in a civil matter. In most civil cases, you do not have a right to a lawyer. Here are some options to consider in Maryland:

Hire a Lawyer in Private Practice

- Lawyers in private practice will charge you a fee for their services. Fees may be charged at an agreed upon hourly rate. They may also be charged on a contingency. This means the lawyer will take a portion of the award if you win the case.
- Search for a lawyer using a lawyer referral service. The service will refer you to a lawyer you can meet with for a low fee. The lawyer will review your case and quote you a price for their services.
- Find a list of referral services by county at the Maryland State Bar Association's website, msba.org.

Watch the Video



Free or Pro Bono Representation

- If you cannot afford to hire a lawyer in private practice, you may qualify for free legal representation. If an organization provides you with a private lawyer who helps you for free, this is called *pro bono* representation.
- You must apply for representation and provide proof of income and other financial information. Free programs have limited resources and do not handle all case types. There may be a waitlist for assistance.
- To find a legal services program, visit: peoples-law.org/directory.

Represent Yourself

- Self-representation is not always a good idea. If you do represent yourself there are free resources that can help you.
- Court Help Centers can help you represent yourself. You can meet with a lawyer for free who can help you prepare to handle your case on your own. Visit:



Maryland Court Help

Free. Online. In Person. By Phone.

mdcourts.gov/helpcenter for civil cases or mdcourts.gov/family/familyselfhelp for family law cases.

- The courts provide other resources to help you including forms, videos, brochures, and even an App for your phone. Visit mdcourts.gov/courthelp for a full list of resources.
- When representing yourself you may need to do some research. For basic legal information, visit: peoples-law.org. Law libraries are also a good free source of information. Hours and locations: mdcourts.gov/ccll.