

2011 Legal Resources

I. For Free Help Go to **MidPenn Legal Services**, 213A North Front Street, Harrisburg or call **(717) 232-0581** to see if you are eligible for free legal representation or pro bono assistance.

- Hours: Monday- Friday, 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
- All pro bono (volunteer lawyers) referrals are screened by MidPenn
- A. To be considered by MidPenn:
 1. You must have income at less than or equal to the MidPenn Income Guidelines which are based on the federal poverty level, **and**
 2. The issue must be one MidPenn can address (e.g., not a criminal matter or a fee-generating case like personal injury).
- B. Topics include: domestic violence, welfare, consumer, housing, Social Security/ disability, health, education, custody, divorce, and other poverty-related issues.
- C. MidPenn is a non-profit, charitable organization and does not have enough charitable donations to help everyone.

II. Lawyer Referral Service If you are not eligible for free services, MidPenn will encourage you to call the Dauphin County Bar Association - **Lawyer Referral Service** at **(717) 232-7536**.

- Hours: Monday- Friday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- The service does not take “walk-ins” and can be reached **ONLY** by phone.
- A. If you were not eligible for MidPenn, you can be screened for the Lawyer Referral Modest Means Panel (lawyers who agree to take cases at a reduced hourly rate with a **\$500 down payment**).
 1. It must **not** be a fee-generating matter, **and**
 2. You must have income at less than or equal to twice the MidPenn Income Guidelines.
- B. If you are not eligible for the Modest Means Panel, the Lawyer Referral Service can refer you to a regular-priced attorney.
- C. Lawyer Referral Service may share legal information with you from www.PaLawHelp.org (an easy-to-read online guide to legal information and legal services in Pennsylvania).
- D. However, LRS staff **cannot** take that information and apply it to your particular case because then it becomes legal advice.

III. Other Assistance You may also want to contact other useful programs:

- A. **Penn State Dickinson School of Law - Family Law Clinic** in the Dale F. Shughart Community Law Center at 45 North Pitt Street in Carlisle at (717) 243-2968 (in Carlisle) provides free legal help for people in central Pennsylvania who are having problems related to family matters.
 - Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 - Topics include: Divorce, custody, child support, spousal support, protection from abuse, and other domestic matters
- B. **Dauphin County Area Agency on Aging** at (717) 780-6130, 255-2790 or toll-free at (800) 328-0058 ext. 6130 for free legal help if you are **60 years old or older**.
 - Hours: Monday- Friday, 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
- C. **Senior Helpline** toll-free at (877) 727-7529 for free, confidential telephone service if you are **60 years or older**.
 - Hours: Monday- Friday, 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

- Provides free legal information, advice and referrals.
- Topics include: Consumer problems, health care, estate planning, pensions, family law and housing.

D. **YWCA Legal Clinic for Domestic Violence** at (717) 724-0516, 114 Walnut Street, Harrisburg provides free legal assistance to **victims of domestic violence** who are unable to afford an attorney.

- Topics include: Protection from abuse, defiant trespass letters, custody divorce, child support, spousal support, landlord-tenant/housing, consumer, unemployment compensation, bankruptcy, wills/powers of attorney.

E. **American Civil Liberties Union of PA** at (717) 238-2258

- Topics include: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, privacy, discrimination, police misconduct, inhumane prison conditions, and other issues of unfair treatment by the government.
- Go to www.aclupa.org for more information.

F. **Public Defender** at (717) 780-6370 for legal assistance to anyone who, for lack of sufficient funds, is unable to obtain defense counsel in cases of capital crimes, misdemeanor and felony offenses, summary offenses that carry a mandatory sentence of incarceration, and mental health commitments.

- Hours: Monday- Thursday from 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 pm. and on Friday from 9:00 a.m.- Noon
- To apply, bring your criminal complaint and/or probable cause affidavit to 2 South 2nd Street, Harrisburg

G. **PA Immigration Resource Center (PIRC)** at (717) 600-8099 for legal support to vulnerable immigrants. PIRC services are available for immigrants detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, specifically torture survivors, families, and those with mental or physical disabilities. PIRC also offers services for detained and non-detained victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and other serious crimes.

- Several programs offered and each with qualifications.
- To see if you qualify, call the number above or go to www.pirclaw.org.

H. The Courthouse **Self Help Center** located on the 4th floor of the Dauphin County Courthouse, Front & Market Streets, Harrisburg provides forms and instructions for certain types of cases.

- Hours: Monday- Friday from 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
- Topics include: divorce, custody, driver's license suspension appeals, and name change petitions.
- Each packet cost \$5
- Packets are available free of charge at www.dauphincounty.org/court-departments/self-help.

I. **Neighborhood Dispute Settlement** at (717) 233-8255 provides free mediation to help you resolve disputes without having to hire an expensive lawyer.

- In any case in which any party is represented by a **pro bono attorney appointed by MidPenn Legal Services** or by **MidPenn staff attorneys**, either

side can request a free mediation through the Dauphin County Bar Association Civil Dispute Resolution Program by contacting 232-7536.

- Mediations can be especially helpful in custody cases.
- Can be scheduled without delaying a hearing or other court deadline.

J. **Harrisburg Fair Housing Council** (717) 238-9540, 2100 North 6th Street, Harrisburg provides services that promote fair housing rights and further other housing opportunities for all persons

- Tenant Helpline, walk-in office and workshops provided
- For details, go to www.pafairhousing.org

IV. **Additional Resources**

A. Useful websites

1. www.Palawhelp.org
2. www.palegalaid.net
3. <http://apps.americanbar.org/legalservices/findlegalhelp/home.cfm>
4. <http://www.midpenn.org/>

B. Libraries

1. Dauphin County Courthouse Law Library (717) 780-6605, 101 Market Street, Harrisburg
-Hours: Monday- Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
2. State Law Library (717) 783-5950, Forum Building, Commonwealth Ave and Walnut Street, Harrisburg
-Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.