



Local Court of New South Wales

Getting help with legal and court matters

This information sheet has been prepared for general information purposes. While every care has been taken to ensure its accuracy, you should seek independent legal advice about your case.

The NSW Attorney General's Department acknowledges that legal and court matters can sometimes be confusing and people may be unsure how to get help.

This information sheet will help you find your way, highlighting the services of NSW Local Courts and LawAccess.

If you have matters before the court, you are encouraged to seek independent legal advice. Law Access NSW can give you free legal information on ph: 1300 888 529 (TTY 1300 889 529).

LawAccess NSW is the central contact point for people who have a legal problem in NSW. It operates between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

LawAccess NSW can help you find the legal information or the assistance you require. The service provides legal information, referrals, and in some cases legal advice, working closely with Legal Aid, Community Legal Centres, the Law Society of NSW, the NSW Bar Association and courts in NSW.

LawAccess NSW can also direct you to a local court or another agency if your matter requires assistance regarding procedure or process. LawAccess may also refer you to other services when you require legal advice or face-to-face assistance.

How local court staff can help

Staff at local court registries can give you information about your court matter and court forms. People telephoning a local court may first be transferred to LawAccess NSW for information and referral options. In some instances, LawAccess may refer you back to the court registry for specific advice in relation to local courts process and procedure.

Court registry staff can help you:

- apply for an apprehended violence order
- apply for urgent apprehended violence orders including when there has been an injury to the person and/or damage to their property
- when local court proceedings have commenced (eg. civil claims)
- when an agency such as a community legal centre has provided you with advice and referred you to the local court for information or assistance with forms
- when telephone assistance may be difficult
- witness court documents.

Most full-time local court registries have a registrar or deputy registrar who can provide information, assistance and guidance to members of the public on local court procedures and applications.

This is called the chamber service. The chamber service does not provide legal advice and cannot represent people in court.

The chamber service may be available by appointment at your local court, depending on the nature of the inquiry and the availability of the senior registry officer.

Contact the local court registry (by phone or in person) to find out if staff can assist you directly, whether your enquiry could be best answered by Law Access, or if you need to speak to the chamber service.

Local court staff and the chamber service can help you prepare some court documents for matters to be heard by a local court, including:

- applications to commence proceedings (including Statements of Claim for civil proceedings) where the cause of action is straight forward
- apprehended domestic and personal violence applications
- defences, notices of motion to stay proceedings and set aside judgment in civil actions (but not advice on what to say in support of a defence or motion)
- family law applications
- Family Law recovery orders in limited circumstances, primarily in country locations where no other service is available.

Local court staff **cannot** help people seeking assistance or advice on:

- drafting complex applications or documents
- affidavits, deeds of settlement or their equivalent in any jurisdiction. You may need to seek legal advice for these matters.
- forms to be lodged in the Family Law Courts (ph: 1300 352 000 or visit www.familylawcourts.gov.au) or the Federal Court of Australia (ph: (02) 9230 8567 or visit www.fedcourt.gov.au)
- forms to be lodged with the Child Support Agency (ph: 131 272).

Find your nearest local court at www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lc, or contact the Attorney General's Department switchboard on (02) 8688 7777 and ask for Local Court specific to your matter.

If you need an interpreter, call the NSW State Government Translating and Interpreter Service on ph: 131 450 and ask them to put you through to LawAccess NSW.