



Access to Justice



On Demand

Presented by:
The Kentucky Bar Association
Continuing Legal Education Commission

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Published October 2025

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The Kentucky Bar Association would like to give special thanks to the volunteer authors who contributed to these program materials.

Fayette County Legal Help Center

Opened March 2022, the FCLHC is a collaborative project between KAJC and Fayette County Office of the Circuit Court Clerk, Fayette County Family Court Judges, the Fayette County Law Library Trustees, and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

In addition to KAJC staff, FCLHC has a panel of 50 volunteer attorneys who have volunteered more than 800 hours over the last year. Each week, the Center assists between 30-35 patrons. To date, more than 3,300 patrons have been aided.

KAJC has been tracking outcomes of cases that present at the Center. Of the patrons who have visited the Center, 44 percent have filed a case in court. Of that number, 91 percent have received a final decision in the case they filed.

Jefferson County Legal Help Center

Opened in January 2024, the JCLHC operates under the auspices of the Jefferson County Law Library Trustees and the Friends of the Jefferson County Public Law Library. The JCHLC and the Law Library are directed by Amy Hilliard.

JCLHC has a panel of 15 volunteer attorneys. Each week, the Center assists between 25-30 patrons, with that number increasing each week. To date, more than 1,600 patrons have been aided.

The JLHC webpage can be found at <https://jcpll.net/legal-help-center/>.

Kenton County Legal Help Center

Opened April 2024, the KCHLC is a collaborative project between KAJC and the Kenton County Office of the Circuit Court Clerk, the Kenton County Law Library Trustees, the Administrative Office of the Courts, Northern Kentucky Volunteer Lawyers, Inc., and Legal Aid of the Bluegrass.

KCLHC is staffed by KAJC employees and volunteer attorneys. KCLHC has a panel of 48 attorneys and 15 law students (from NKU, Chase College) serving as volunteers. The Center sees between 25-30 patrons each week. More than 1,000 patrons have been assisted since the opening.

Legal Aid of the Bluegrass provides staff who screen patrons for eligibility for Legal Aid services.

Across all centers, the top 10 most requested information/forms are:

- Divorce with no children
- Divorce with children
- Custody/parenting time
- Probate
- Name changes/amend birth certificates
- Expungement (misdemeanor & felony)
- Grandparents visitation
- Guardianship for minor
- Guardianship for adult
- Small claims for plaintiff

For more information on the Legal Help Centers and how you can get involved, please contact Glenda Harrison at glenda.harrison@kyaccesstojusticecommission.org.

To volunteer for the Fayette County Legal Help Center, visit:

[Fayette County Legal Help Center](#)

To volunteer for the Kenton County Legal Help Center, visit:

[Kenton County Legal Help Center](#)

To volunteer for the Jefferson County Legal Help Center, visit:

[Jefferson County Legal Help Center](#)

KENTUCKY FREE LEGAL ANSWERS: HOW DOES IT WORK?

Kentucky Free Legal Answers is based on the walk-in clinic or dial-a-lawyer model where clients request brief advice and counsel about a specific civil legal question from a volunteer lawyer. Lawyers provide information and basic legal advice without any expectation of long-term representation.

Clients who meet eligibility (see **Eligibility** below) sign the client user agreement, create a username and password, post a request for legal advice and information, and provide facts about their case that will help the lawyer answer the question. Clients will be asked to select a category (such as “housing” or “debt”) that best describes their question. The lawyer may ask for additional information before responding to the client’s request, but the client will have a choice to respond to that request or not. Client’s names and opposing party’s name and county, but no other identifying information, will be shared with the volunteer lawyer. Clients are informed that there is no guarantee that a question will be answered. If a question is not answered within approximately 30 days, the client will receive an email from the website administrator instructing them to seek assistance elsewhere. The client will also be provided with a list of additional resources.

Lawyers who would like to participate must create a username and password, provide contact information and their Kentucky Bar Association number, sign the lawyer user agreement, and request approval from the website administrator. Before the lawyer’s account is activated, the website administrator checks to ensure the lawyer is licensed in Kentucky and is in good standing with the Kentucky Bar Association. Once a lawyer has been approved by the website administrator, the lawyer receives an email notification and can begin answering client questions.

Lawyers may log in at any time to review a list of client questions and select the one(s) they want to answer. Lawyers will use the categories provided by the client (such as “housing” or “debt”) to help determine which questions they would like to answer. A lawyer will have the opportunity to read the full question before deciding to take it from the list and answer it. Once a lawyer takes a question from the list, the lawyer has three days to answer it. Lawyers will be allowed to ask follow-up questions if they need additional information in order to answer the client’s question. The lawyer’s identity is not revealed to the client unless the lawyer decides to do so. Once a lawyer answers a question, the client will receive an email with a link to log-in and view the answer, and, if the question is left open, send a follow-up question to the lawyer.

Lawyers will be able to view a log of questions they have answered.

Who is eligible to use Kentucky Free Legal Answers?

Eligibility for use of Kentucky Free Legal Answers is limited to the following:

- The client must have household income less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level (this may be temporarily increased to respond to a disaster);
- The client may not have liquid assets exceeding \$10,000 (this includes checking and savings account balances, as well as the value of any stocks or bonds and may be temporarily increased to respond to a disaster);
- The client may not be incarcerated;
- The client may not request assistance with criminal law matters.

Clients must provide their name, opposing party (if known), county, and zip code in order to request advice.

Clients agree to post no more than three new legal questions per year. They can follow-up with an attorney on each question as many times as the attorney and client choose.

What lawyers should participate?

All lawyers are welcome! While there are certain types of legal questions that regularly come up at legal clinics, we need lawyers with different areas of expertise and practice to volunteer. We hope the website will appeal to lawyers who want to give back but have been unable to participate in traditional *pro bono* work due to family obligations, schedule, employment constraints, or geographic location. We also hope to engage lawyers who already provide *pro bono* representation and are willing to give more of their time to those who need it.

What happens if a lawyer cannot answer a client's question?

A lawyer might be unable to answer a client's question for a number of reasons. Some examples might be a conflict of interest, client's failure to respond to lawyer requests for additional information, or the question is determined to fall outside the lawyer's area of expertise. Lawyers will have access to resources on various areas of substantive law to help them answer questions. If a lawyer determines that (s)he cannot answer a question, the lawyer may place the question back into the queue so that another volunteer lawyer may try to assist the client. If a lawyer takes a question and doesn't respond within three days, the question will automatically return to the open questions queue.

What type of relationship exists between the client and lawyer?

When a client submits a question and receives an answer from a lawyer, there will be a lawyer/client relationship formed between that client and the lawyer who responds. That relationship, however, will be limited in scope and duration as described in the use agreements for both clients and lawyers. The representation will be limited to providing an answer to the legal question and will not involve any continuing representation of the client beyond the act of providing such an answer. The lawyer will provide short-term, limited legal services to a client (the eligible client of this site) without expectation by either the lawyer or the client (the eligible client of this site) that the lawyer will provide continuing representation in the matter. Both the eligible clients and lawyers must consent to the limited nature of this relationship both as to scope and duration as indicated when they accept the terms of the use agreement. Eligible clients and lawyers who do not accept the terms of the use agreement will not be allowed access to the site.

How do lawyers check for conflicts of interest?

Under [SCR 3.130\(1.7\)](#) Conflict of interest: current clients

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), a lawyer shall not represent a client if the representation involves a concurrent conflict of interest. A concurrent conflict of interest exists if:

- (1) the representation of one client will be directly adverse to another client; or
 - (2) there is a significant risk that the representation of one or more clients will be materially limited by the lawyer's responsibilities to another client, a former client or a third person, or by a personal interest of the lawyer.
- (b) Notwithstanding paragraph (a), a lawyer may represent a client if:
- (1) the lawyer reasonably believes that the lawyer will be able to provide competent and diligent representation to each affected client;
 - (2) the representation is not prohibited by law;
 - (3) the representation does not involve the assertion of a claim by one client against another client represented by the lawyer in the same litigation or other proceeding before a tribunal; and
 - (4) each affected client gives informed consent, confirmed in writing. The consultation shall include an explanation of the implications of the common representation and the advantages and risks involved.

Under [SCR 3.130\(6.5\)](#) Nonprofit and court-annexed limited legal services programs

- (a) A lawyer who, under the auspices of a program sponsored by a nonprofit organization or court, provides short-term limited legal services to a client without expectation by either the lawyer or the client that the lawyer will provide continuing representation in the matter:
- (1) is subject to [Rules 1.7](#) and [1.9\(a\)](#) only if the lawyer knows that the representation of the client involves a conflict of interest; and
 - (2) is subject to [Rule 1.10](#) only if the lawyer knows that another lawyer associated with the lawyer in a law firm is disqualified by [Rule 1.7](#) or [1.9\(a\)](#) with respect to the matter.
- (b) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(2), [Rule 1.10](#) is inapplicable to a representation governed by this Rule.

What about professional liability insurance coverage?

Volunteer lawyers who provide brief advice and counsel via the website will be covered by professional liability insurance maintained by the American Bar Association. If an issue of malpractice arises, the ABA Free Legal Answers administrator can trace each answered question back to the attorney who answered it. The site administrator may have to contact lawyers participating in the program from time to time related to this insurance coverage.

Is there a confidentiality issue with client information/lawyer advice being housed on the internet?

The website is designed to protect client privacy and operates through an email-based platform that restricts access using a screening process. Confidentiality is maintained because only the website administrator can view communications between a client and a lawyer. Information accessible to the administrator and the lawyer responding to a client's question will remain confidential, subject to the terms outlined in the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Client inquiries and lawyer responses submitted through Kentucky Free Legal Answers may be stored in a secure database for evaluation purposes, such as measuring the program's effectiveness. Appropriate measures will be taken to safeguard this database, and access will be limited to the administrator. However, clients should be aware that absolute security cannot be guaranteed when using internet-based systems.

For each visitor to the website, the web server automatically recognizes only the visitor's domain name. This information is collected solely for statistical purposes. Aggregate data may also be gathered regarding which pages visitors access or view on the site.

The information collected is used exclusively to improve the website's content and is not shared with other organizations for commercial purposes. Information may, however, be disclosed when legally required — such as in response to a request from government authorities conducting an investigation — or to verify or enforce compliance with our website policies and applicable laws, or to protect against misuse or unauthorized use of the site.

Navigating the website and selecting questions to answer

When your account has been approved by the website administrator, you will receive a notification email. To get started you will go to <https://ky.freelegalanswers.org/> and select "Sign In" at the top right side of your screen. After you enter your username (which is your email address) and password, you will automatically be directed to a page that lists all the questions that have been posted for lawyers to answer.

You will notice that the questions are coded by flags. These flags let you know how long each question has been in the queue. Questions with red-outline flags are those that have been posted for more than 10 days and questions with filled-in red flags are questions that have been in the queue for at least 25 days and will be closed if no lawyer is able to answer them. Questions that are not answered within 30 days will be closed and the client will be notified.

There are various ways in which to view questions in the queue:

1. You can view a list of all the questions in the queue; this is the default view.
2. You can view a list of questions that have been in the queue for 25 days or longer by clicking on the "Importance" option under the "Sort" button.
3. You can view questions by legal categories by clicking on the "Filter" button.

4. You can easily view any question you have taken to answer by clicking "Home" on the menu and looking at questions in your personal queue.

The client is asked to use the subject line to tell you, in their own words, what the question is about (for example, eviction, divorce, bankruptcy, etc.). The Category and Subject functions are tools to help lawyers quickly decide which questions they would like to review and answer.

Selecting questions you want to answer

You can read the first few lines of each posted question by clicking the "Preview" button. If you decide you want to see more details of the question, click the subject to be taken to the question detail page. When you have found a question, you would like to answer, click the "I want to answer this question" button on the bottom of the question detail page. If you eventually decide you do not want to take a question, you can click the "I want to return this question" to send it back to the full queue. You can also decide if you want to answer a question immediately by clicking "Answer Now" or answer the question later by clicking "Answer Later." Please respond within three days of taking a question. If you fail to respond within three days, the question will be moved back into the queue.

Once you have taken the question, you will be able to reply to the client and provide an answer or ask follow-up questions. The client will not know your identity unless you choose to provide it. If you ask the client a question, you will receive an email when the client responds and a prompt to log back into the website to respond.

How do I subscribe to a category?

If your area of practice is specialized and you only want to answer certain types of questions, you can subscribe to a Category and receive an email notification each time a question in that particular Category is posted.

To subscribe to a Category (for example, immigration), click on the "Manage Subscriptions" tab at the top of the screen. Scroll down to the Category you are interested in and click on the red circle. When the red circle changes to a check mark, you have successfully subscribed to that category. You may also choose where you want to get subscription emails. To change it from your username email, click on your email address next to the green check and enter your different email address. Click the save icon to save your email address. You can unsubscribe at any time.

How do I contact the administrator with a question?

If you have a question or run into a technical problem with the site, you may contact the administrator by emailing the site administrator listed on the website.