

Are you experiencing domestic and family violence?

Legal Aid NSW can help you



If you are experiencing domestic and family violence, you can get help from Legal Aid NSW.

We can help you get protection from the violence and help with other legal advice and information.

What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic and family violence is behaviour that coerces, controls or causes a person to be afraid.

The abuse can happen in different ways. You do not need to be physically hurt to have experienced domestic and family violence.

Domestic and family violence can happen in many kinds of relationships. It can happen with a current or ex-partner, or between family members like siblings, adult children and parents. It can happen in non-family relationships, like between a person and their carer.

How can Legal Aid NSW help me?

Legal Aid NSW can help you with:

- getting an AVO
- sorting out arrangements for children
- getting child support
- mediation to help resolve disputes about children or property
- financial problems such as paying the mortgage, credit and debt, and housing
- help at court
- planning for your safety at home and at court
- talking to the police or courts for you
- getting a divorce
- sorting out problems with Centrelink
- victims support payments
- immigration issues such as residency applications where there is domestic and family violence

- defending an ADVO or criminal charge if you are the victim of violence and
- sorting out other legal problems you have because of domestic violence.

Where can I get help?

Domestic Violence Unit (DVU)

The DVU is a dedicated statewide service of Legal Aid NSW. Bringing together specialist domestic violence lawyers, social workers and financial counsellors, the DVU helps people with their legal and non-legal needs.

Call: **1800 979 529**.

Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS)

The FASS help families affected by family violence who have a family law issue. FASS duty lawyers can help people with their legal problems and there are dedicated FASS social support workers. Call: **1800 979 529**.

Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services (WDVCAS)

WDVCAS's are locally based, independent services for women and their children seeking information and help with domestic and family violence and getting protection from the court. Call: **1800 WDVCAS** or **1800 938 227**.

What is an apprehended violence order (AVO)?

An AVO is an order made by the court telling a person to stop hurting, harrassing, intimidating, threatening or stalking you. This includes when a person is sending you messages by text, email, or social media in order to make you fear for your safety, or harming or threatening to harm your pets. The AVO can include protection for your kids or other members of your family. An AVO is not a criminal charge.

There are two types of AVO:

1. An apprehended domestic violence order (ADVO) is made when the people involved are related or in a relationship. It can include members of your extended family.
2. An apprehended personal violence order (APVO) is made for all other relationships. For example, where you have a dispute with a neighbour or a workmate.

How do I get an AVO?

There are two ways to get an AVO.

1. Contact the police. They can apply for an AVO on your behalf. If the police have fears for your safety after an incident, they can apply for a provisional (temporary) AVO for you.

The police will let you know about the AVO and when to come to court.

2. You can apply at a Local Court. This is called a private application.

For more information about AVOs, see our brochure [*Are you applying for an AVO?*](#)

For advice about applying for an AVO, phone the DVU on **1800 979 529**.

Do I need a lawyer to represent me in my ADVO application?

As most applications for an ADVO are made by the police, you may not need a lawyer. However if you want to make a private application for an ADVO we might be able to help you.

We can also help you liaise with the police and court, and support you before, during and after the court. Call the DVU on **1800 979 529**.

Can I get a lawyer to represent me in my case?

If you need a lawyer to represent you in court, or you need ongoing assistance, you can apply for a grant of legal aid. This is sometimes called 'getting legal aid'.

Not everyone can get legal aid. A lawyer can help you work out if you may be eligible and help you fill out the application form. Call the DVU on **1800 979 529**.



Will I get a lawyer who works at Legal Aid NSW?

If you qualify for a grant of legal aid, Legal Aid NSW will pay for your lawyer. That lawyer may work for Legal Aid NSW or be a private lawyer paid by Legal Aid NSW.

What is a conflict of interest?

Sometimes a lawyer who works for Legal Aid NSW may not be able to represent you because the other party has been or is currently assisted by a Legal Aid NSW lawyer. This creates a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest does not mean that you are not eligible for legal aid. If a Legal Aid NSW lawyer is unable to help you because of a conflict of interest, you will be referred to another lawyer who can assist you.

More information and help

In an emergency, call the police on 000 or 112 from mobiles.

Domestic Violence Unit

1800 979 529

A dedicated statewide service of Legal Aid NSW bringing together specialist domestic violence lawyers, social workers and financial counsellors.

Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS)

1800 979 529

Help for families affected by family violence and who have a family law issue. They also have dedicated social support workers for women and for men.

Social support for women: 1800 11 FASS
Social support for men: 1300 00 FASS

LawAccess NSW

1300 888 529

LawAccess NSW is a free information service run by Legal Aid NSW. Anyone who has a legal problem in NSW can contact LawAccess NSW for legal help. Click on the Chat with us button at www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au or call **1300 888 529** between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services (WDVCAS)

1800 WDVCAS or 1800 938 227

Information, court advocacy and referral for women in domestic violence situations and assistance with getting an AVO.

Domestic and Family Violence Hotline

1800 RESPECT or 1800 737 732

Provides counselling, information and referral. 24 hours, 7 days.

Victims Services

1800 633 063

Support and assistance for victims of crime. Aboriginal contact line: **1800 019 123** (8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

Domestic Violence Duty Scheme (DVDS)

DVDS court duty lawyers can help you with an AVO matter, and provide advice and referrals for other legal issues such as family law, victims support or debt. Call the WDVCAS on **1800 938 227**.

Family Violence Law Help

www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au is a website with easy-to-understand legal information about AVOs, family law and child protection. .

Mensline

1300 789 978

Phone support and referral for male victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. 24 hours, 7 days. Visit www.mensline.org.au.

Other resources

We have free publications about domestic and family violence. View or order online at: www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/ways-to-get-help/publications-and-resources.

Charmed and Dangerous

This booklet explains the cycle of abuse and how to break free of controlling, abusive or violent relationships.

Are you applying for an AVO?

How to get an AVO and what happens at court.

Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services

This brochure outlines how Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services (WDVCAS) helps women experiencing domestic and family violence and how to get protection from the court.

Are you experiencing violence or abuse? You can make it stop.

What you can do if you are an older person who is experiencing violence or abuse from a partner, family member, carer or someone in your residential facility.

This publication is a general guide to the law. You should not rely on it as legal advice, and we recommend that you talk to a lawyer about your situation.

The information is correct at the time of printing, however it may change. For more information contact LawAccess NSW on **1300 888 529**.

This publication is available in Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.



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Order brochures online at:

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/ways-to-get-help/publications-and-resources

For more information, visit:

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Do you need help to contact us?



If you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **131 450** (9am–5pm) and ask for LawAccess NSW.

Do you find it hard to hear or speak?



If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the [National Relay Service \(NRS\)](#). Ask for LawAccess NSW on **1300 888 529**.