



**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER**

Justice for Her. Justice for All.

APRIL 2021 | FAQs

What to Expect When You Reach Out to the Legal Network for Gender Equity and TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund

The Legal Network for Gender Equity and TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund help fight against pervasive sex discrimination and sexual harassment in workplaces, schools, and healthcare.

If you've experienced sex discrimination or harassment at work, as a student in school, or as a patient getting health care, we can connect you to attorneys. We can also help connect you to attorneys if you are experiencing issues with accessing paid leave because of COVID-19.

If you have experienced sexual harassment and related retaliation in the workplace, the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund may be able to help fund the legal fees and public relations assistance for your case as well.

Unfortunately, we do not work on issues related to domestic violence, police violence, child custody, or tenant issues. For additional resources that may be of assistance addressing these issues, please click [here](#).

Our form only takes a few minutes to complete. But we recognize this is not an easy process and want to commend you for considering it—even if you do not press 'submit'. We are here to take you through a step-by-step journey so you know what to expect. You can also look at our [frequently asked questions](#).

When you fill out the form...

Know that we believe you.

Coming forward can be difficult, especially if you've encountered situations where you have been victim-blamed, retaliated against, or judged. We cannot guarantee that a lawyer will take your case. But we are here to reduce some of the stressors that come with re-telling your story, finding an attorney, and seeking legal advice. We believe you, and you are not alone.

Share what you can.

We recognize it may be hard to put what happened in writing. We do not ask for a lot of information. At minimum, we need a name, contact information, city and state, and a brief description of your case. While some may find it therapeutic to share more details, others may find it very difficult to do so. We suggest that you share what you can and what feels comfortable for you. It's okay to write something simple like: "I was sexually harassed at my job and I'm looking for attorneys to help."

Know that you belong.

Sex discrimination and harassment can affect anyone. For example, LGBTQ people often experience severe discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Men also experience sexual harassment at alarming rates, but this often goes unreported. Regardless of your sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, we are here to offer our assistance and connect you with attorneys.

After you submit the form...

We got you.

You can expect our team to review your request for assistance. If your case relates to sex discrimination or harassment at work, at school, or when seeking health care, we will connect you with attorneys in our network who work in the state where you live or where this happened.

You should expect a response from us in ten days, although on some occasions we may take a little longer. Our response will include a short list of attorney names, information on your rights, and what you should expect from a consultation. We notify attorneys on the list that someone will be reaching out to them and remind them of their obligations as part of the Legal Network for Gender Equity. We do not provide your name or contact information to the attorneys. In some circumstances we may share a brief explanation of your experience with the attorneys.

What should I expect during a legal consultation?

Preparation & Expectations

After receiving the intake packet, you are responsible for contacting attorneys. Some legal claims may have strict deadlines to file. If legal action is something you are considering, you should contact the attorneys as soon as you can.

In preparation for your consultation, it may be helpful to write down some notes or think about how much you are willing to share. You can also use the example questions for attorneys that we provided in our email to you.

The consultation may be most useful if you share more details about your experience, but sharing those details can be difficult. If an attorney asks personal questions about your experience, it is because the attorney is trying to figure out how to provide the best legal advice. If you do not feel comfortable providing certain information at that moment, you can ask for a pause in the conversation or ask that the topic be set aside for now and returned to later.

In preparation for your consultation, you should also think about what you hope will happen to resolve your legal problem. While some people may be interested in financial settlements, others may be interested in changing company policies. None of these options is better than the other. However, it is important to consider what you are looking for and to talk about this with the attorney.

As a reminder, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to retain an attorney or that we can provide funding for legal fees or public relations support. It is also important to note that the consultation alone may not bring the justice you are looking for.

What you should expect from attorneys in our network:

Attorneys in the Legal Network agree that they will:

- Respond within five business days to anyone connected to them through the Legal Network.
- Not charge for the first consultation.
- During the first consultation, provide information about your legal rights.
- Let the Legal Network know if they end up representing you.

Attorneys in our network are licensed and must meet their state's standard for malpractice insurance. If they have been disciplined by a state bar or by a court before within the last year or if they have ever been disciplined for a serious matter, we do not allow them in the Legal Network.

Attorneys are also required to do some type of trauma-informed training before joining the network. That training can include the webinars we provide here: <https://nwlc.org/resources/webinars-for-attorneys/>.

After the consultation is done...

Talking about your case can evoke memories or feelings that are complex. This may be an important time to lean on a loved one for support or do an activity that provides you with comfort. When you feel like you have the emotional capacity to re-visit the consultation, think about the options you have been provided.

Questions to consider:

- Did I find the consultation useful?
- Do I feel empowered to take the next step in reporting my case or pursuing legal justice?
- Do I need to make a safety or financial plan if I am retaliated against? And if so, what does that look like?
- What are my support networks in case I need someone to process this with?
- Is this something I am willing to speak publicly about?

We appreciate your feedback, and we are constantly searching to improve our system. Please reach out to us if you experience any difficulty with getting in contact with an attorney or if you need more attorneys. We can be reached here: legalnetwork@nwlc.org.