



**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER**

Justice for Her. Justice for All.

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What to Expect When You Reach Out to the Legal Network for Gender Equity

The Legal Network for Gender Equity helps fight against sexual harassment and other sex discrimination at work, in school, and when seeking health care.

If you've experienced sex discrimination at work, as a student in school, or as a patient getting health care, we can connect you to attorneys in our Legal Network for Gender Equity.

Unfortunately, we do not work on issues related to domestic violence, police violence, child custody, or tenant issues. For additional resources that may help with 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 ultimately decide not to submit the form. Below, we describe the process step-by-step. You can also look at our frequently asked questions for more information about how our process works.

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 retelling 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 prefer 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, LGBTQI+ 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 Legal Network who work in the state where you live or where this happened.

You should expect a response from us within the 10 days after you submit the form, although on some occasions we may take a little longer. Our response will include a short list of attorney names and their contact information, 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.

The Legal Network for Gender Equity (Legal Network) is housed and administered by the National Women's Law Center Fund, LLC, an affiliate of the National Women's Law Center (NWLC). NWLC is a legal advocacy organization that fights for gender justice – in the courts, in public policy, and in our society – working across the issues that are central to the lives of women and girls. NWLC attorneys represent a limited number of individuals and organizations in legal matters with the potential to impact the law more broadly. Your request for legal help will be reviewed by NWLC staff. In some instances, NWLC staff may contact you about your situation to discuss engaging with NWLC in advocacy or litigation. However, NWLC typically only takes on a few matters each year. If NWLC is unable to take your case, as will be the norm, NWLC still may be able to connect you to private attorneys through the Legal Network. Please note that contacting us to request legal assistance does not create an attorney-client relationship with NWLC or with any attorney in the Legal Network.

What should I expect during a legal consultation?

Preparation & Expectations

After receiving the attorneys' information, you are responsible for contacting the attorneys. Some legal claims may have strict filing deadlines. 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 sample 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 an attorney will agree to represent you. 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.
- Provide information about your legal rights during the first consultation.
- Let the Legal Network know if they end up representing you.

Attorneys in our Legal Network are licensed and must meet their state's standard for malpractice insurance. We also consider whether they have been disciplined by a state bar or by a court in the past. 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-and-materials-for-attorneys/>. The Legal Network provides the names of attorneys only for your information. By providing contact information of attorneys, the Legal Network for Gender Equity, the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund, and NWLC are not endorsing, approving, vouching for, or recommending the attorneys or groups listed.

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 are ready, then you can 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 the situation or pursuing a legal case?
- 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 working to improve our process. 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.