

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Legal Network for Gender Equity Attorneys

## How does the Legal Network for Gender Equity work?

When someone contacts us about sex harassment or other sex discrimination in the workplace, education, or when accessing health care, we provide them with the names and contact information of **three Legal Network attorneys** who practice in the person's geographic area.

If we send your contact information to an individual seeking legal help through the Legal Network, we will advise you **by e-mail** that we have done so.

The individual may then contact the attorneys on the list provided to them by the Legal Network. We advise them that, if they do so, they should indicate that they received the attorney's information from the Legal Network.

## What are my commitments to individuals connected to me through the Legal Network?

As a Legal Network attorney, you agree that:

- You or another attorney at your office will respond to individuals connected to you through the Legal Network within **five business days**.
- You or another attorney at your office will **provide an initial free legal consultation, either by phone or in person**, to individuals connected to you through the Legal Network. (See below for additional information about what we expect from legal consultations.)
- You will alert your office staff that you have joined the Legal Network for Gender Equity, so they can identify and direct relevant e-mails and calls to you.
- You will do your best to treat people connected to you through the Legal Network in a respectful, empathetic, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered manner.

Note that we regularly get feedback from people who have been connected to attorneys through the Legal Network, both through responses to our periodic surveys and through other means. If they let us know they contacted you and it went well, we will do our best to tell you. When we hear that someone did not get a consultation or was not treated appropriately, we will do our best to share that feedback, as well.

## What do we mean by "initial consultation"?

We expect that:

- Individuals will be able to speak with you or another attorney at your firm.
- You will talk them through what options, legal and otherwise, may be available to address their situation. Note that we do not screen individuals or their requests for help, other than to determine that the situation they have described involves sex harassment or other sex discrimination in the workplace, education, or when accessing health care. Therefore, people connected to you through the Legal Network may not have timely or well supported legal claims, and you will have to explain that to them.

# FAQs for Legal Network Attorneys

- If they are dealing with issues outside of your area of expertise that you cannot assist with, such as securing unemployment benefits or restraining orders, you will point them towards referrals or other resources. [Here](#) is a list of resources we have compiled for individuals seeking help from the Legal Network; these resources may be helpful as reference in your consultations, as well.
- You or your office will provide reasonable accommodation when requested to facilitate an initial consultation with an individual with a disability connected to you through the Legal Network. If you cannot provide the requested accommodation, please let us know.
- Note that when we are connecting individuals with Legal Network attorneys, we are considering where individuals reside and/or where the conduct at issue occurred, together with the states where attorneys have indicated they are licensed to practice. Thus, we may well connect attorneys with individuals who are in a state where the attorneys are licensed to practice, but not where the attorneys' offices are located.

## What are my obligations to the Legal Network for Gender Equity?

As a Legal Network attorney, you agree to:

- Attend annual training on trauma-informed advocacy. This training may include any of the webinars on trauma-informed advocacy developed for the Legal Network, all of which are available [here](#).
- Provide us with brief updates when you consult with or agree to represent an individual connected to you through the Legal Network.
- These updates should be brief and should not include privileged or confidential information.
- E-mail your updates to the Legal Network team at [legalnetwork@nwlc.org](mailto:legalnetwork@nwlc.org).
- Determine whether your participation in the Legal Network for Gender Equity complies with your applicable state laws and professional responsibility rules.
- Notify us if your bar status, relevant qualifications or areas of legal practice, or contact information change. You may do this by e-mailing the Legal Network team at [legalnetwork@nwlc.org](mailto:legalnetwork@nwlc.org).
- You also agree and acknowledge that by providing information about you to an individual who contacts the Legal Network for Gender Equity or TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund seeking legal information or assistance, the National Women's Law Center Fund LLC is not entering into an attorney-client relationship with that individual or agreeing to be your co-counsel should you represent him or her.

## Does the Legal Network screen request legal help?

The Legal Network team reviews requests for legal help solely to determine whether the situation described in the request involves sex harassment or other sex discrimination in employment, education, or when accessing health care. We do not otherwise screen or evaluate requests for legal help; for example, we do not assess whether the situation involves timely or well-supported legal claims. Thus, part of your initial consultation may involve explaining to the individual whether they do or do not have timely or viable legal claims.

## How many individuals will be connected to me for initial consultations?

The number of individuals connected to you for initial consultations will vary based on your location, the number of other Legal Network attorneys in your geographic area, and the issue areas in which

# FAQs for Legal Network Attorneys

you practice. If you find you are receiving too many requests for consultations or have other questions or concerns, contact us at [legalnetwork@nwlc.org](mailto:legalnetwork@nwlc.org) and we can make adjustments accordingly.

## Can I advertise my membership in the Legal Network for Gender Equity?

Yes! You may publicly identify yourself as a member of the Legal Network for Gender Equity, and we welcome you to encourage your colleagues and attorneys in your personal networks to consider joining the Legal Network, as well. Please note, however, that membership in the Legal Network does not mean that NWLC, the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund, or the Legal Network have otherwise endorsed or partnered you or your firm, and any public statements about your membership in the Legal Network should not misrepresent the involvement of NWLC, the Fund, or the Legal Network with you or your firm. If you have any questions about this, please contact our team at [legalnetwork@nwlc.org](mailto:legalnetwork@nwlc.org). with you or your firm, and any public statements about your membership in the Legal Network should not misrepresent the involvement of NWLC, the Fund, or the Legal Network with you or your firm. If you have any questions about this, please contact our team at [legalnetwork@nwlc.org](mailto:legalnetwork@nwlc.org).

## Am I eligible for funding from the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund to support my legal representation of individuals connected to me through the Legal Network?

If you decide to represent an individual in a legal matter that involves workplace sexual harassment or related retaliation (including defense against defamation claims filed or threatened because a person spoke up about workplace sex harassment), the case may be eligible for funding from the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund to cover attorney's fees and/or costs. Although funding is not guaranteed, the Fund does give priority to applications for workplace sex harassment matters in which the attorneys and clients were connected through the Legal Network.

You can learn more about the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund [here](#) and find the criteria and application for funding for legal matters [here](#).

## May I charge a client for the time it takes to fill in the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund funding application?

No. Most individuals using the Legal Network to find representation cannot afford to pay the regular rates for legal services. Therefore, you should not charge potential clients for filling out an application for funding from the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund. The application is intended to be short and straightforward and should not require significant time to complete.

## Does an individual have to have signed a retainer agreement before I may apply for funding for work on their case?

No. You may apply for funding before you have been retained as counsel. For example, TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund funding can be used to cover a retainer amount or attorney's fees for time you spend investigating a matter or consulting with an individual before entering an attorney-client relationship. However, TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund funding cannot be used to repay a client for a retainer fee or other payments the client has made to you.

## If I receive support from the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund, will the Fund have influence over the case's legal strategy or media?

No, the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund does not in any way control the legal strategy or decision-making for cases that it funds.

## What resources are available for dealing with media or helping survivors share their stories?

If you decide to take a case that involves workplace sexual harassment or related retaliation and you or your client would like assistance with the media (i.e., either generating or responding to press), you may be able to receive assistance from a public relations/media professional through the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund. This media assistance may be available to individuals not pursuing litigation; however, individuals must be represented by an attorney to be eligible for the Fund's media assistance. Indeed, providing legal advice to individuals seeking to share their stories publicly is another valuable way you can support survivors of workplace sexual harassment. You can find more information on the Fund's media assistance [here](#).

## What training materials or other resources are available to help Legal Network attorneys with trauma-informed legal advocacy?

Great question! We are continuously adding to our training materials and resources about trauma-informed legal advocacy, and we hope you will find these resources useful. We invite you to review the following:

- Legal Network webinars on trauma-informed advocacy. For example, you may find our 2022 three-part series on trauma-informed legal advocacy, developed in partnership with the Network for Victim Recovery of DC, here: [Part I](#); [Part II](#); and [Part III](#). And you may find recordings and materials from all the past Legal Network webinars, many of which address trauma-informed advocacy and advocacy for specific communities, on the NWLC website [here](#).
- Tip Sheet on “Enhancing Legal Advocacy Through a Trauma-Informed Approach,” developed by Olga Trujillo and Caminar Latino in connection with our 2018 Legal Network webinar on trauma-informed legal advocacy. Access this tip sheet and related resources on representing survivors of gender-based violence experiencing trauma by going to the “download files” box on the NWLC website [here](#).
- Quick tips from the Legal Network team on trauma-informed advocacy, available for download [here](#).
- Test your knowledge about trauma-informed advocacy with this [short quiz](#) developed by the Legal Network team!