

Justice in Motion — Our legal online resources continue to expand

By Sarah Glorian

Northwest Justice Project maintains the website www.washingtonlawhelp.org in collaboration with legal services partners. We continue to expand its capabilities.

Due to limited resources, Northwest Justice Project can only assist a fraction of the people in need of legal services. We regularly pursue grants to increase our ability to provide services in other meaningful ways. The website is intended for the public to use to advocate for themselves. Legal issues can be confusing and intimidating, but many can be navigated with little or no lawyer assistance.

The website has hundreds of downloadable materials, such as family law, domestic violence/anti-harassment, consumer, housing, government benefits, health, elder law, youth and education law, immigration, employment, veterans, Native American, civil rights, etc. Many of the materials are translated into other languages. Click on “Spanish / Español” at the top of the webpage, the website switches to Spanish.

For example, in family law, mandatory forms must be used to navigate the legal process. The materials assist in figuring out which forms need to be used and how to fill them out. Samples of the forms are online and you can also download these forms for FREE at the Washington court website at <http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms/>.

We maintain the website and its content and do our best to keep the materials up to date. Many of the materials have a date on them indicating when they were last updated. If it is an older date, it may mean nothing if the law has changed, or it may mean we have not yet updated the material. The materials are typically written in easy to understand, non-lawyer language. We have not authored all the materials. If you find something on the website that appears out of date, please submit your comment or question by clicking the “Feedback” link at the top right.

Through our grants, we continue to collaborate with our partners to expand the interactive options and YouTube / video portions of the website, as well as recently reconstructing the entire website itself. We will also be launching a Facebook page in the immediate future to keep client communities and partners apprised of important issues and events.

We have a variety of YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/user/NWJusticeProject/videos?view=0>) and video (<http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/video-collection>) links, with more on the way, which currently include:

- Landlord/tenant issues (security deposit, eviction, tenant screening, repairs, etc.)
- What to do if you are charged with a crime or stopped by the police
- Auto loan modification
- Juvenile record sealing
- Legal help for veterans
- Mental healthcare
- Debt collection
- Bankruptcy basics
- Family law (child support hearings, paternity, dissolution)
- Language access
- Foreclosure mediation, etc.

Similarly, we continue to expand our self-help interactive options <http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/lhi-interviews> that walk you through how to draft certain documents, which currently include:

- Domestic violence order for protection
- Divorce (no minor children of the marriage) — filing and/or completing by agreement or default
- Identity theft
- Sealing juvenile records
- Demand letter for return of a rental security deposit

In closing, do not put your head in the sand and ignore a problem, especially if it is legal in nature. There are often limited periods of time in which you can respond to protect your legal rights. We often get calls from clients when because they waited too long, their legal remedies

are no longer available. If you are not sure you have a legal problem, check out www.washingtonlawhelp.org or contact Northwest Justice Project to find out if you are eligible for our services:

For cases including youth (Individualized Education Program and school discipline issues), debt collection cases and tenant evictions, please call for a local intake appointment Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at (360) 533-2282 or toll free (866) 402-5293. No walk-ins, please.

For all other legal issues, please call our toll-free intake and referral hotline commonly known as "CLEAR" (Coordinated Legal Education Advice and Referral) at 1-888-201-1014, Mondays through Fridays 9:10 a.m. to 12:25 p.m. If you are a senior, 60 and over, please call 1-888-387-7111; you may be eligible regardless of income. Language interpreters are available. You can also complete an application for services at <http://nwjustice.org/get-legal-help>.

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