



**The Association of the Bar of the City of New York**  
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**Media Advisory**  
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**“LAWHELP.ORG/NY”;**  
**Low-Income New Yorkers’ Online Resource**  
**For Free Legal Help**

**What: A Free Legal Information Service,**  
**With New “Going to Court” Feature**

**Where: [www.LawHelp.org/NY](http://www.LawHelp.org/NY)**

The LawHelp.org/NY website—a powerful one-stop, statewide legal-information clearinghouse—has just added a new feature to help people without lawyers navigate the labyrinthine New York court system. For two-and-a-half years, LawHelp has provided low-income New Yorkers quick and accurate referrals to free legal services programs, information on social services, advocacy and government organizations, and community legal education and self-help materials. Visitors to [www.LawHelp.org/NY](http://www.LawHelp.org/NY) will find information in 25 different languages.

“In courts across the country, self-represented litigants are appearing in record numbers,” said Judge Juanita Bing Newton, the UCS Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives. “People need answers to questions like, ‘What do I do if I’m served with a petition by my landlord?’ or ‘Where do I go if I need an order of protection?’”

To help litigants who do not have attorneys, LawHelp (a collaborative project of seven nonprofits) partnered with the New York State Unified Court System (UCS) and the Center for Court Innovation to add a “Going to Court” channel to the website. LawHelp's new court channel makes the court process simpler, more transparent, and more accessible to low-income New Yorkers and their advocates. The UCS Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives provided LawHelp with the data from its CourtHelp website ([www.nycourthelp.gov](http://www.nycourthelp.gov)) and will maintain the new LawHelp channel. Funding for the new channel came from a grant from the State Justice Institute.

The new channel complements the existing “Find a Lawyer,” “Know Your Rights,” and “Find Other Help” channels maintained by the LawHelp Project.

Executive Director for Legal Services for New York City Andrew Scherer, praised this important collaboration between the UCS and the LawHelp project: “Using the LawHelp website as a platform, the UCS has stepped up to the challenge of making the courts easier to navigate. But even though the “Going to Court” channel offers important resources to people representing themselves, it doesn’t do away with the need for real life, flesh-and-blood advocates. The ‘Find a Lawyer,’ ‘Know Your Rights,’ and ‘Find Other Help’ channels on LawHelp.org/NY help people access the limited legal resources available.”

Visitors to [www.LawHelp.org/NY](http://www.LawHelp.org/NY) will find referrals to:

- Free and low-cost legal services
- Information about their legal rights and self-help materials
- Advocacy, government and social services agencies
- Housing
- Family and Juvenile
- Workers’ Rights
- Disability
- Public Benefits

“New York’s poorest face daunting barriers to obtaining legal help,” said City Bar Fund Executive Director Maria Imperial. “Without effective legal counsel and information, low-income people are at risk of eviction, losing access to entitlements, suffering discrimination and other forms of extreme hardship. By helping people find a lawyer and access the court system, LawHelp can provide some relief.”

Mark O’Brien, Pro Bono Net co-director, explained the nuts-and-bolts of the web site: “The system asks users to input their zip code or county/borough and to identify their legal problem. The database then generates information about relevant legal service organizations in the client’s area. The information includes intake procedures, handicap accessibility, languages spoken and other important data. Then the user can move on to find community legal education and self-help materials, court information, and other resources.”

“Unlike the stale listings you find in the phone book, the LawHelp database is constantly updated,” said Anne Erickson, executive director of The Greater Upstate Law Project. “LawHelp is the most relevant and comprehensive legal information resource out there. It already gets 20,000 hits a month. If more individuals and legal and social service organizations knew about it, this resource could save more people a lot of time and grief.” Erickson said, “The service is especially helpful because far too many poor and low income litigants are forced to face their day in court without the assistance of an attorney.”

**A public service announcement about LawHelp is available as a PDF file in ENGLISH and SPANISH. News organizations interested in obtaining a copy to inform their readership about this convenient and free legal resource are asked to call LawHelp Outreach Coordinator Maria Archuleta at (212) 382-4712.**

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LawHelp project is a collaborative project of: The City Bar Fund, Legal Services for New York City, Pro Bono Net, The Legal Aid Society, Volunteers of Legal Service, The Greater Upstate Law Project, and The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York. The LawHelp project is funded by grants from: IOLA Fund of the State of New York, Legal Services Corporation, Charles H. Revson Foundation, New York Community Trust and The State Justice Institute.