



ACORN Community Legal Education Series California Indian Legal Services

Bishop · Escondido · Eureka · Oakland · Santa Rosa · Washington, D.C.

Where Can I Get Help With My Family Law Case?

What's in this guide and how can it help me?

This guide can help you if you are involved in a “**support proceeding**” in California. A support proceeding is a court case about:

- child support **or**
- support for a husband or wife (“**alimony**”).

This guide can also help you find free legal aid if you are involved in a support proceeding. A Family Law Facilitator in your county can help you with your case.

This guide explains:

- what a Family Law Facilitator is
- how to find a Family Law Facilitator in your area

What is a Family Law Facilitator?

Each California county has a Family Law Facilitator (FLF).


- The FLF is an attorney, usually a local one, with family law experience.
- The FLF gives free help to “**in pro per parties**” (people who represent themselves) in family law cases.

What kinds of cases can a Family Law Facilitator help me with?

FLFs must help you if your case is about “**support issues**,” such as temporary or permanent child support, or temporary or permanent “**spousal**” support (“**spouse**” means husband or wife). Child support includes health insurance for children. Spousal support includes health insurance for a spouse.

Some of the legal cases that may include support issues are:


- dissolution of marriage (divorce)
- nullity of marriage (annulment)
- legal separation
- non-marital child custody (custody cases between people who are not married)
- paternity actions (finding out who the father is/getting him to pay child support)

 **TIP:** In **some** counties, FLFs can also help you in other family law cases (such as guardianships), even when support is not an issue.

In **some** counties, FLFs can help you with domestic violence cases. But other counties send all domestic violence help cases to their Victim/Witness units.

What does a Family Law Facilitator do?

- Family Law Facilitators do different work in each county.
- Most FLFs can give you information about family law issues.
- Most FLFs have the court forms that you need to establish who the parents of a child or children are.
- Most FLFs have the court forms you need to establish, change, or enforce child support or spousal support.
- Most FLFs will help you fill out the court forms. Some FLFs will only review the forms after you have filled them out to make sure they are in the right format.
- FLFs must help you figure out the right amount of child support owed under California child support guidelines.
- If you need to contact any government or community agencies, FLFs must tell you how to get in touch with them.

 **TIP:** You do not have “attorney-client privilege” with the FLF. This means that the FLF could be required to disclose your secret information to the court.

Does the Family Law Facilitator help both sides in the case?

Yes, the FLF’s help is free to both sides.

- The FLF does not represent either person in court but can give advice to both sides.
- The FLF can sometimes meet with both people together, but usually they meet with each one separately.
- In domestic violence cases, the FLF is required to meet with each person separately.

Are there limits to the help the FLF can give in child support cases?

Yes. If you have custody of the child or children, and the District Attorney is already trying to get child support payments from the parent who does not have custody, you can’t get help from the FLF **unless** you get written permission from the District Attorney.

Where can I reach the Family Law Facilitator for my county?

See the attached, “How Can I Find the Family Law Facilitator for My County?”



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Disclaimer

This information is intended to assist you with your legal problem. Each area of the law is complex and changing. Your case may have special factors that could affect the applicability of this information. CILS does not guarantee that this information is sufficient to resolve your legal problem. If you have any questions, you should seek the advice and counsel of an attorney.

ACORN Community Legal Education Series

The Advocacy, Collaboration, and Referral Network (ACORN) is a project of CILS. ACORN's mission is to expand access to legal resources that increase Indian self-sufficiency. This guide is part of our Community Legal Education Series, providing Indians and Indian tribes with user-friendly information and self-help assistance pertaining to their legal status and rights. ACORN Community Legal Education guides, and more information about CILS and California Indian issues, are available on our website at www.calindian.org.

California Indian Legal Services

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Do you have a legal problem? For assistance, contact your local CILS office:

Bishop: (760) 873-3581, or (800) 736-3582

Escondido: (760) 746-8941, or (800) 743-8941

Eureka: (707) 443-8397, or (800) 347-2402

Oakland: (510) 835-0284, or (800) 829-0284

Santa Rosa: (707) 573-8016, or (866) 251-8016

