

About Victoria Legal Aid services

As well as advice about visas and immigration law, we can also help you with other legal problems. Our lawyers can help with crime, family breakdown, family violence, child support, immigration, social security, mental health, discrimination, guardianship and administration, tenancy, debt, and traffic offences.

Our free legal services include:

- information over the phone
- seminars and workshops
- advice at most courts and tribunals, or by appointment.

If you want ongoing help from a lawyer, you can apply for a grant of legal assistance.

Getting a grant will depend on your financial situation and your legal problem. You can use a grant to:

- pay a lawyer to give you advice, help reach agreement, or speak for you in court
- go to our family dispute resolution service.

Call us to find out how we can help you.

Who else can help?

You can also get legal advice at the Refugee Immigration Legal Centre. Tel: 9483 1140 or visit www.rilc.org.au

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Tel: 9326 6066 / Web: www.asrc.org.au

There are also services that may be able to help you with housing, food, clothing, financial assistance and counselling.

Australian Red Cross

Asylum Seekers Assistance Scheme

Tel: 8327 7883 / Web: www.redcross.org.au

Asylum Seeker Project - Hotham Mission

Tel: 93268343 / Web: www.hothammission.org.au

Legal Information Service

This is a free and confidential phone advice service. Contact us for free information about the law and how we can help you. You can speak to someone in English or ask for an interpreter. You do not have to give your name, address, or any other details.

Open Monday to Friday, 8.45 am to 5.15 pm

Telephone 9269 0120

Country callers 1800 677 402.

Victoria Legal Aid regional offices

Open Monday to Friday, 8.45 am to 5.15 pm

Bairnsdale	5153 1975
Ballarat	5329 6222
Bendigo	5448 2333
	Country callers 1800 254 500
Broadmeadows	9302 8777
Dandenong	9767 7111
Frankston	9784 5222
Geelong	5226 5666
	Country callers 1800 196 200
Horsham	5381 6000
	Country callers 1800 177 638
Morwell	5134 8055
Preston	9416 6444
Ringwood	9259 5444
Shepparton	5823 6200
Sunshine	9300 5333
Warrnambool	5559 7222

All our offices are accessible to people with a disability.

Victoria Legal Aid public law library

Open Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm
350 Queen Street, Melbourne

Victoria Legal Aid website

www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

Refugees and protection visas

Victoria Legal Aid



 **Victoria Legal Aid**
Lawyers And Legal Services

If you think you are a refugee how can Victoria Legal Aid help?

Our lawyers can give you advice to help you learn more about whether you could be considered a refugee under Australian law. Victoria Legal Aid is independent from government. Our help is free and confidential.

What does it mean to be a 'refugee'?

You may be a refugee if you are a person who has good reason to feel at risk of serious harm in your own country. You need to be able to show that you face persecution because of things such as your race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, or membership of a social group.

You must also show that your own country is unable or unwilling to protect you.

How do I apply for 'refugee' status?

You need to apply to the Australian government if you think you are a refugee. The government will decide if you meet its rules about who is a refugee. These rules follow the United Nations' Convention. The government will also look at your health and character before it makes a decision.

If the government agrees that you are a refugee it will then provide you with a 'protection visa'. A protection visa means you have permission to stay and live in Australia.

Because the laws about refugees are complicated, and can change, it is always a good idea to speak to one of our lawyers first.

If you arrived here without a visa, or with false documents, get legal help straight away.

How do I get a protection visa?

To apply for a protection visa you need to fill in an application form and explain why you cannot go back to your home country.

Refugees and protection visas

Victoria Legal Aid

A Victoria Legal Aid lawyer may be able to help you to apply for a protection visa.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is the Australian government department that will look at your application. The application fee is \$30. Family members who are with you can usually be included on your application.

There are other visas as well as protection visas. Our lawyers can give you advice about whether it would be better for you to apply for another visa.

Because the visa system can be complicated, it is a good idea to phone us on 9269 0416 and talk to one of our lawyers.

How can Victoria Legal Aid help?

We give free legal advice and information sessions on refugee law and some other immigration matters.

We can also give you advice about whether you are able to work while you are waiting for the government's decision about whether you will be given a visa. In some situations we can help you arrange an appeal or a review if the government has refused a visa application.

You can ring 9269 0416 to talk about your situation and make an appointment.

Victoria Legal Aid may be able to give you more legal help. This will depend on your case and your financial details.

Other ways we can help

Victoria Legal Aid is also able to give advice about whether you can stay in Australia if you have been sponsored to come here by an Australian partner and that relationship has broken down. You may be able to get permanent residence if you have experienced family violence or have a child or children from a relationship with the person who sponsored you. Family violence can include physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse.

Please contact us on 9269 0416 for free and confidential advice about your rights.

If I have an appointment with Victoria Legal Aid, what do I bring?

Please bring your passport (if you have one) and any immigration documents from your home country. If you need an interpreter please let us know and we can arrange this. This service is free.

If there are family members you want to include in your application they should also come to your appointment. You need to bring along their documents and details too.

Confidentiality

We treat any information you give us as private, unless the law says otherwise. Your story and the legal advice you get from us are confidential.