



Young Lawyers Division



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR CALIFORNIA FIRE SURVIVORS

August, 26 2021 — A legal hotline is now available for survivors of the fires in California in Lassen, Nevada, Placer, and Plumas Counties (additional counties may be added) under DR-4610-CA. Disaster survivors facing legal issues related to the fires and who are unable to afford a lawyer may call the hotline at **415-575-3120**. Callers may also leave a message.

This service is provided by the Disaster Legal Assistance Collaborative (DLAC), which is a statewide collaborative of legal aid agencies, bar associations, law firms, and other supporters.

The type of legal assistance available includes:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other government benefits available to disaster survivors;
- Assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims;
- Help with home repair contracts and contractors;
- Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in the disaster;
- Assisting in consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures;
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems;
- Counseling on landlord-tenant problems. You may also contact:
- Legal Services of Northern California disaster assistance: 1-800-660-3458 or email disasterhelp@lsnc.net. If you have access to the internet, we encourage you to go to ca.freelegalanswers.org, where low-income people can get free legal advice online.

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Major Disaster Declaration

On August 23, 2021, a Major Disaster Declaration was issued for the state of California, making federal funding available to individuals and business owners in Lassen, Nevada, Placer, and Plumas for the incident starting July 14, 2021 and continuing.

To register with FEMA, and if eligible, apply for federal and state disaster assistance, register online at DisasterAssistance.gov or via smartphone or Web-enabled device at m.fema.gov. Applicants may also call 800-621-3362 or 800-462-7585 (TTY) seven days a week from 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Pacific Time. Applicants should be prepared to provide basic information about themselves, insurance coverage, and any other information to help substantiate the loss.

Please note that if you are eligible for an Individual Assistance grant you are not required to pay back the grant to FEMA. There is no income threshold for Individual Assistance grants, but you may be referred to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for a low interest disaster loan to assist in your recovery. These low interest disaster loans for homeowners and businesses from the SBA must be repaid.

In addition, there is information available at:

www.disasterlegalservicesca.org – This is a statewide website with legal resources by those affected by disasters, including FAQs, handbooks, links to forms, and other important information, as well as information for lawyers who would like to volunteer.

www.LawHelpCA.org – This statewide website, hosted by the Legal Aid Association of California, provides information about common legal issues in addition to disaster relief information. It also has an updated directory of pre-screened organizations that offer free or low-cost legal advice and representation.

www.disasterlegalaid.org – This national website, a collaborative effort of Lone Star Legal Aid, the American Bar Association, the Legal Services Corporation, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, the Texas Legal Services Center and Pro Bono Net, provides information on legal issues related to disasters to the low and moderate income public.

www.uphelp.org – United Policyholders (UP) is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) consumer advocacy group that specializes in helping disaster survivors with insurance claim issues. UP also trains case managers and legal aid lawyers to assist clients with insurance and recovery matters, and for help with flood, wind, hurricane and auto insurance questions.

Background

When the President declares a major disaster, FEMA, in cooperation with the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, establishes or utilizes an existing toll-free number for

disaster survivors to request legal assistance. Funding for the toll-free line may come from FEMA under the authority of Section 415 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 100-707). The American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division in turn partners with state bars, local bar associations and other legal organizations to recruit volunteer lawyers in affected areas to handle survivors' cases.

Hotline Partner Members

The following organizations have joined forces to establish a hotline for fire survivors to request free legal assistance, and to provide coordination for volunteer attorneys.

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division – The ABA YLD is the largest national organization of young lawyers, provides leadership in serving the public and the profession, and promotes excellence and fulfillment in the practice of law. Its parent organization, the ABA, is the national voice of the legal profession and the largest voluntary professional membership group in the world.

Federal Emergency Management Agency – FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The Disaster Legal Assistance Collaborative (DLAC) is a coalition of organizations and law firms in Northern California working together to offer free legal services to the communities in the aftermath of natural disasters. Survivors of disasters such as wildfires face a wide variety of legal and financial needs ranging from insurance claim assistance to requests for government programs such as FEMA assistance. DLAC provides a statewide hotline, Free Legal Answers (an online legal question and answer platform), and the statewide website disasterlegalservicesca.org. For a full list of DLAC member agencies, go to <https://disasterlegalservicesca.org/about-the-team/>