

# Missouri Disaster Legal Assistance



## What is Missouri Disaster Legal Assistance (MLDA)?

When a major disaster has been declared in Missouri, MDLA delivers free civil legal assistance on legal matters that result from the natural disaster. The MDLA is a service administered by the four legal aid programs in Missouri.

A major disaster is declared upon request from the Governor of Missouri to the President of the United States based on a natural disaster, such as a tornado or flood. It is up to the President to make the declaration of a major disaster in Missouri. The declaration will define the areas of the state affected by the disaster as well as the types of federal assistance available to individuals affected by the disaster. Also, You may view any current major disaster declarations in Missouri by clicking on the following link. [Disaster](#) **If you click on this link you will be leaving this website.**

## Who is eligible for MDLA?

Individuals and families that meet the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Income Guidelines. If we are unable to assist you because of your income level, we will attempt to refer you to other free legal assistance that may be available to you.

### **What types of legal matters can I get help with?**

The MDLA service provides legal assistance on almost any legal issue caused from a declared major disaster, including: bankruptcy, civil rights, employment law, family law, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) benefit claims, insurance law, landlord-tenant law, real estate law, consumer fraud and scams, as well as wills, trusts, and probate matters. During the initial assessment of your legal issues, you may also qualify for other legal assistance not related to the major disaster.

### **How do I get free legal help through MDLA?**

After the President makes the major disaster declaration you will be able to get disaster legal assistance through the following:

1. You may call the legal aid program that serves the county where you live.
2. Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) sites are setup in various locations throughout the disaster area through coordination of the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the American Red Cross. Normally, a local legal aid staff attorney or volunteer private attorney will be available to assess your potential legal problems. Other volunteer agencies will be available to assist with other problems, such as food, clothing and shelter. MARC site locations will be publicized on TV, radio or newspaper.
3. The American Bar Association (ABA) through The Missouri Bar Young Lawyers Section (MBYLS) will set up a toll-free hotline to provide individuals a direct connection to free legal assistance. All calls made to the hotline are forwarded to attorneys who can provide over-the-phone assistance, and when needed, callers will be referred to lawyers who have volunteered to provide legal representation free of charge. You can view the "ABA YLD Legal Services Manual, Prepared for Lawyers of the Missouri Bar" at the bottom of this page.

The document is in Adobe PDF format.

## **Will my contact and legal assessment with the MDLA hotline be confidential?**

Yes. All information provided through the MDLA service is completely confidential. In fact, attorneys who work with the MDLA service owe the same duties to their disaster-clients as they owe to their paying clients. This means that in addition to keeping information you provide confidential, your attorney is required to competently and professionally represent you and your interests; including pursuing claims for FEMA benefits on your behalf.

If you have questions about the duties and responsibilities your attorney owes you, you may contact:

The Missouri Bar

326 Monroe

Jefferson City, MO 65102-0119

Phone: [\(573\) 635-4128](tel:5736354128)

Fax: [\(573\) 635-2811](tel:5736352811)

## **What should I do if MDLA is unable to help me with my legal problem?**

If one of the Missouri legal aid programs cannot assist you due to funding restrictions, MLDA may refer you to FEMA, SEMA, MBYLS, other disaster organizations or private bar referral services.

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