

5.02 | IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO REPRESENTING MYSELF?

Most people who sue or are being sued hire a lawyer familiar with the law and the court's rules. A lawyer can accept your action for an hourly rate or on contingency under which you agree to pay a percentage of recovery as the fee if you win your action, and no fee (but sometimes costs and expenses) if you do not. The lawyer likely will screen your action to make sure you have a reasonable chance of winning. Some laws may require the other side to pay for your lawyer if you win. Other laws may require you to pay for the other side's lawyer if you lose.

If you want to have a lawyer represent you but you cannot afford one, you may contact Florida Legal Services at (407) 801-4350. Its staff can explain the options for obtaining legal services for free or at a reduced rate. The Florida Bar also has a lawyer referral service you may contact at (800) 342-8011 or <https://lrs.floridabar.org/>. Referral services do not guarantee a lawyer for you; they will merely try to refer you to lawyers who may consider – in their discretion and under their terms – serving as your lawyer.

Depending on where you live, you might also consider contacting one of the following referral services or legal-aid organizations. Some of the organizations offer free legal help, free clinics in various subjects, and ask-a-lawyer events. If you do not see your area, you can go to www.lsc.gov and enter your county, and it will provide a list of services or organizations in your area.

This court is not affiliated with any of these services or organizations and merely provides them as a possible source of help for you. This list is not exhaustive; there might be other organizations that can help you.

Fort Myers

Lee County Legal Aid Society
(239) 334-6118
www.leecountylegalaid.org

Florida Rural Legal Service Inc.
(239) 334-4554
(800) 277-7680
(888) 582-3410
www.frls.org



Jacksonville

Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc.

(904) 356-8371

(866) 356-8371

www.jaxlegalaid.org

Jacksonville Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service

(904) 399-5780

www.jaxbar.org/page/LawyerReferralServ

Three Rivers Legal Services, Inc.

(866) 256-8091

www.trls.org

Ocala

Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida

(352) 629-0105

<https://clsmf.org>

Orlando

Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida

(407) 841-7777

<https://clsmf.org>

Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association

(407) 841-8310

www.legalaidocba.org

Orange County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service

(949) 440-6747

(877) 257-4762

www.lrisoc.org



Tampa

Bay Area Legal Services, Inc.

(813) 232-1343

(800) 625-2257

www.bals.org

Gulfcoast Legal Services

(941) 746-6151 (Bradenton)

(727) 821-0726 (St. Petersburg)

(727) 443-0657 (Clearwater)

(941) 366-1746 (Sarasota)

www.gulfcoastlegal.org

St. Michael's Legal Center

(813) 289-5385

www.stmichaelslegalcenter.com/seeking-assistance

Hillsborough County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service

(813) 221-7777

<https://hillsbarlrs.com>

You can also move the court to ask a lawyer to represent you. But unlike in a criminal matter, you do not have a right to counsel in a civil action. Asking a lawyer to represent you is reserved for extraordinary circumstances, and a lawyer can say no.

