



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 25, 2020**

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### **Free legal help hotline available for Nebraskans affected by COVID-19**

Nebraskans who have questions or are experiencing legal problems due to the coronavirus/COVID-19 public health emergency now have an easy way to get legal advice and help.

The free COVID-19 Disaster Relief Hotline is available to Nebraskans affected by COVID-19 and in need of legal assistance. Hosted by Legal Aid of Nebraska, working closely with the Nebraska State Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP), this Hotline aims to make key legal assistance easy and accessible.

If you are a Nebraskan facing legal issues related to the virus, or the owner of a small, locally owned business (defined by less than 50 employees, not a franchise) that is currently closed, in risk of permanent closure due to the virus, and where the payment of fees would significantly deplete your resources, the Hotline may be reached at **1-844-268-5627**.

After calling **1-844-268-5627**, callers will be connected to the Hotline voicemail. Callers should leave their name, phone number, brief details of the problem and the assistance needed, and in what county they are located. Callers will receive a call back from experienced Legal Aid staff. Individuals and businesses that do not qualify for Legal Aid's free services will be directly referred to the VLP. VLP will then work to place cases with Nebraska volunteer lawyers who will also provide free legal assistance.

The types of legal issues associated with COVID-19, and focused on by the Hotline, include:

- ◆ Tenants with rent issues, including those facing eviction;
- ◆ Debt problems, including debtors with garnishments or ordered to appear at a debtor's exam;
- ◆ Mortgage foreclosures, including advising on options for delinquent payments;
- ◆ Unemployment insurance denials;
- ◆ Employee rights, including sick leave and wage payments;
- ◆ Government benefits available to low-income persons such as ADC, SNAP, AABD, and SSI;
- ◆ Medicaid and medical insurance claims;
- ◆ Drafting wills, health care power of attorney, and transfer on death deeds;
- ◆ Domestic abuse and safety issues;
- ◆ Elder abuse and exploitation;
- ◆ Access to education; and,
- ◆ Helping small, locally owned businesses with business and employment related matters, including human relations issues, unemployment benefits, and contracts.

More information on these legal issues, including ways you can directly help yourself, are available at <https://www.legalaidofnebraska.org/2020/03/24/covid-19-information-resources/>

If you are a lawyer interested in volunteering your valuable time and expertise to provide legal help during this crucial time, please contact Laurie Heer Dale, Director of the Volunteer Lawyers Project, at [vlp@nevlp.org](mailto:vlp@nevlp.org).

**Legal Aid of Nebraska** ([legalaidofnebraska.org](http://legalaidofnebraska.org)) Legal Aid of Nebraska (LAN) has 8 locations throughout the state and serves all 93 counties is the largest non-profit law firm in the state. The offices are located in Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, Norfolk, Bancroft, North Platte, Lexington, and Scottsbluff. LAN is the only civil legal aid provider offering free services across the state.

**Nebraska State Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project** (<https://nevlp.org/>) VLP is a statewide pro bono program of the Nebraska State Bar Association, created by Nebraska lawyers with a common passion—an unwavering commitment to pursue equal justice under the law for the less fortunate and unrepresented in Nebraska.