



# Family law—services and support

The Australian Government is focused on delivering a family law system that supports Australian families. The services outlined below are designed to help resolve family law matters quickly and safely, while looking after your wellbeing. Some of the services are also available to family members and friends of couples experiencing relationship issues.

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIP SERVICES

If you haven't already sought help from a family law service, you may like to contact the **Family Relationship Advice Line (FRAL)**. It is a national telephone service that provides information to help families affected by relationship or separation issues, including advice on parenting arrangements after separation. FRAL can also refer you to the other family law and legal services outlined in the box opposite. You can contact FRAL on **1800 050 321** from 8am to 8pm Mondays to Fridays, and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays (except national public holidays).

The **Family Relationships Online** website [www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au) contains useful information about family relationship issues, and services that are available to help families manage relationship issues. This includes helping families agree on arrangements for children after parents separate. Visit the website to find out about the range of services in your area.

The following programs and services can also provide you with free or low cost assistance. For information on how to access these services contact **Family Relationships Online** [www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au) or call **FRAL** on **1800 050 321**.

- **Family Relationship Centres (FRCs)**—provide families experiencing separation with information, advice and dispute resolution services to help them reach agreement on parenting arrangements without going to court.
- **Family Law Counselling**—helps couples and families manage relationship issues arising from relationship changes, separation and divorce, through counselling, therapeutic intervention, support, information and referral.
- **Family Dispute Resolution Services (FDR)**—is a specialist mediation process conducted by an independent, accredited practitioner or practitioners to help members of families, including separated families, resolve family law disputes.
- **Regional Family Dispute Resolution Services**—is designed to meet the particular needs of regional communities, providing a range of services to help separating families resolve family law disputes.
- **Children's Contact Centres (CCS)**—help children of separated parents establish and maintain a relationship with their other parent and family members through supervised visits or changeover services.
- **Parenting Orders and Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Programs**—the Parenting Orders Program helps separating families to manage disputes about parenting arrangements and increase cooperation and communication, using child focused and child-inclusive interventions with the support of a case worker. Post Separation Cooperative Parenting helps separated parents with education and support, where conflict is affecting their relationships with their children.
- **Supporting Children After Separation Program**—helps children from separating families deal with issues arising from the breakdown in their parents' relationship, and lets children participate in decisions that affect them.

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE AND LEGAL SERVICES

This includes legal aid commissions, community legal centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services, which provide legal help to vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

**Legal Advice Service**—is accessed by calling FRAL on **1800 050 321** and provides free and simple legal advice and information to families going through separation.

**Community Legal Centres (CLCs)** are independent, not-for-profit, community based organisations that provide free legal advice, casework, information and a range of community development services to their local or special interest communities. CLCs determine the extent of help they will provide in individual cases. They may also be able to help you with making an application for legal aid, if appropriate. To locate your nearest CLC, visit [www.naclc.org.au](http://www.naclc.org.au) or call **(02) 9264 9595**.

**Women’s Legal Services Australia (WLSA)** is a national network of CLCs specialising in women’s legal issues. Women’s Legal Services in each state and territory provide advice, information, casework and legal education to women, particularly on family law. Further information on these services is available on the WLSA website—[www.wlsa.org.au](http://www.wlsa.org.au).

**Legal Aid Commissions** are independent statutory bodies established under state and territory legislation that provide legal advice and representation. Commissions determine eligibility for their legal services and the extent of help they can provide in each case. Applications for grants of legal aid are tested against guidelines determined by each Legal Aid Commission. You can find the closest Legal Aid Commission to you through the National Legal Aid website— [www.nationallegalaid.org](http://www.nationallegalaid.org).

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services (ATSILS)** are community based independent organisations that deliver culturally appropriate legal assistance services to Indigenous Australians in each state and territory. ATSILS determine eligibility for their legal services. Information on ATSILS can be found at [www.natsils.org.au/MembersPartners.aspx](http://www.natsils.org.au/MembersPartners.aspx).

**The Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS)** is a free service providing assistance on family law matters to families who have been affected by family violence. You may be eligible for this service if you or a family member has experienced, used, or is alleged to have used, family violence in your relationship and you need legal assistance with a family law, or related child protection or family violence matter. For more information on how to access the FASS, its locations and services, contact your state or territory Legal Aid Commission— [www.nationallegalaid.org](http://www.nationallegalaid.org).

## HEALTH AND SUPPORT SERVICES

To look after your own or someone else’s wellbeing, you can contact one of the following services:

- **Lifeline 13 11 14**—[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)—is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour support and suicide prevention services.
- **Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636**—[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)—provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.
- **Mensline 1300 78 99 78**—[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)—is a national telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with family, relationship, and mental health concerns.
- **Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800**—[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)—a free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.
- **Headspace**—[headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)—provides information and services to young people (aged 12—25) going through a tough time, and to their families who want to support them. Services include local centres, online and over-the-phone support.
- **Qlife 1800 184 527**—[qlife.org.au](http://qlife.org.au)—an anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

The following services assist people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and abuse. Support is also available for those who have been violent to a family member and want help to change their behaviour.

- **1800RESPECT 1800 737 732**—[www.1800RESPECT.org.au](http://www.1800RESPECT.org.au)—provides confidential information, counselling and support services to people who are experiencing or have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse. The service is also available to family members and friends of those who have experienced violence.
- **Aboriginal Family Domestic Violence Hotline 1800 019 123**—is a dedicated contact line for Aboriginal victims of crime who would like information about victims' rights and how to access counselling and financial assistance.
- **Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491**—[www.ntv.org.au](http://www.ntv.org.au)—offers assistance, information and counselling to help men who use family violence and would like help with male behavioural and relationship concerns.
- **Mensline 1300 78 99 78**—[www.mensline.org.au/](http://www.mensline.org.au/)—is for men who are seeking assistance because they have experienced or want to stop using violence. Mensline provides services to all of Australia.
- **Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS)** — [www.nationalfvpls.org/Contact-Us.php](http://www.nationalfvpls.org/Contact-Us.php). provide culturally sensitive assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence and sexual assault. FVPLS work collaboratively with other legal assistance and related support services including court support, child protection, and information and referral services.

## OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The websites of the Family Court of Australia, the Federal Circuit Court of Australia, and the Family Court of Western Australia, contain useful information to help people going through separation or who have family law matters before the courts. Search for “family law matters” at the following websites:

- [www.familycourt.gov.au](http://www.familycourt.gov.au)
- [www.federalcircuitcourt.gov.au](http://www.federalcircuitcourt.gov.au)
- [www.familycourt.wa.gov.au](http://www.familycourt.wa.gov.au)

The **Family Violence Law Help**—[familyviolencelaw.gov.au](http://familyviolencelaw.gov.au)—provides information about domestic and family violence, how it works with the law in Australia (including family law, child protection law and domestic violence protection orders), and where to get help.