



Legal Assistance Request, 2015
Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction

Please review the 2015 Legal Assistance Income Guidelines chart to determine your eligibility to request the U.S. Central Authority's assistance in finding pro bono (free) or reduced fee legal representation for your Hague Convention case in the United States.

Complete and return this application to your Central Authority. Keep a copy for your records.

Table with 3 columns: Household size, PRO BONO Maximum annual income, and REDUCED FEE Maximum annual income. Rows show income limits for household sizes 1 through 8.

Maximum annual income. This means your total annual income, before taxes, from all sources, converted to U.S. dollars.

Household size. Count yourself, the child/ren about whom you have filed a Hague application, and others living with you.

My household size: (The number should not be "1.")

My total annual income (before taxes): (in my currency) OR in US \$

My occupation/employment:

Do you currently have an attorney in the United States for your Hague Convention case (or for a child custody/access case)? NO YES. If YES, attorney's name/phone/email:

Please review the income guidelines and read IMPORTANT INFORMATION (below) before making your request. Consider your income and your assets. It may be faster and easier to find an attorney if you can afford to pay some amount for legal services. Request only one option. I believe that I am eligible to request:

Pro Bono (free) legal assistance OR Reduced fee legal assistance OR A list of full fee attorneys

Signature Date

Print your name Email

Home phone Mobile phone

Legal Assistance Request, 2015: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- The U.S. Central Authority may ask you for additional information to verify your eligibility to request assistance finding *pro bono* (free) or reduced fee legal representation.
- If you are not forthcoming or in error in your self-assessment as determined by a legal aid organization or private attorney reviewing your case, the U.S. Central Authority may limit any further assistance in helping you find legal representation.
- Legal representation may be offered by attorneys in private practice, by attorneys working for legal aid organizations, and by law professors and law students working under their supervision. **There is no guarantee that an attorney will take your case. There is no entitlement to receive legal assistance on a *pro bono* or reduced fee basis in a Hague Abduction Convention case.**
- **Your eligibility for *pro bono* or reduced fee legal assistance:** While we ask you to assess your eligibility for legal assistance based only on gross income, please be aware that attorneys may ask you for more financial information. In order to qualify for free legal assistance from most legal aid organizations, your income **and assets** must be below a certain level. Legal aid organizations also consider program priorities in deciding whether to accept a case. Private attorneys may ask about your assets and request additional financial information from you to decide whether to offer you *pro bono* (free), reduced fee, or full fee representation.

Be prepared to provide information about your assets, including but not limited to bank accounts, stocks, bonds, your house, and other real and personal property.

- **Attorney fees:** Legal aid organizations provide free legal assistance. Private attorneys may represent you *pro bono* (for free) or charge fees for their services. Fee arrangements are strictly between you and the attorney. The Department of State plays **no** role in the setting, negotiating, collecting, or anything else related to fees. If you would like general information about reduced fees, please visit the Department of State website, http://travel.state.gov/abduction/incoming/legalaid/legalaid_5394.html.
- **Costs and expenses:** Litigation often includes costs and expenses in addition to attorney fees. Ask attorneys about any costs and expenses associated with your case that you may be expected to pay. The Department plays no role in the construction or negotiation of fees or costs.

Legal aid organizations usually cover some or all of the costs and expenses associated with your Hague Convention case. Most private attorneys will expect you to pay costs and expenses even when they provide their legal services *pro bono* (for free) or for reduced fees. You should expect to pay costs and expenses in full fee cases.

Costs and expenses may include, but are not limited to, filing fees, service of process on the other party, phone calls, travel expenses, document duplication, translations, and expert witnesses. For appellate cases, trial transcripts may be an additional expense. Costs and expenses may be as much as \$1000 or more, and may vary depending on the particular case. Courts may waive filing fees and service-related costs based on need. You may be able to recover the costs and expenses you paid, and attorney fees, if a court orders your child returned to his/her country of habitual residence.

- The “2015 Legal Assistance Income Guidelines” are based on Legal Service Corporation (“LSC”) maximum income levels for individuals eligible for legal assistance. LSC typically updates the guidelines annually to reflect annual amendments to Federal Poverty Guidelines. The guidelines are published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 45 CFR Part 1611, Appendix A. The Federal Register notice of the 2015 income guidelines (80 FR 5485, Feb. 2, 2015) is available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/02/2015-01892/income-level-for-individuals-eligible-for-assistance>. *The tables on the chart are for the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia. Special tables for Hawaii and Alaska are available on the website.