

If you're 60 or over, call your local legal aid office:

Eastern CT	800-413-7796	Western CT	800-413-7797
Hartford Area	860-541-5000	Bridgeport Area	800-809-4434
Stamford Area	800-541-8909	New Haven Area	203-946-4811

If you're under 60, call SLS for help:

**Statewide
Legal Services
of Connecticut, Inc.**

Statewide Legal Services
1-800-453-3320
860-344-0380

Search our website for help:



www.ctlawhelp.org

Family

LEGAL SERVICES

SELF-HELP SERIES

Can't Afford to Pay Court Fees? *Ask for a Fee Waiver*

November 2017



We offer free legal help in many areas, including

- welfare,
- SNAP (food stamps),
- divorce,
- child support,
- domestic violence,
- bankruptcy,
- special education,
- nursing home care,
- health insurance,
- eviction,
- foreclosure,
- and more.

See the reverse side for more about legal services.

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Can't afford to pay court fees? Ask for a fee waiver

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If you're under 60, call us for help:



Statewide Legal Services

1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380

Search our website for help:



www.ctlawhelp.org

If you're over 60, call your local legal aid office.

Connecticut Legal Services

www.ctlegal.org

Bridgeport

1000 Lafayette Blvd 203-336-3851
Suite 950

New Britain

16 Main Street 860-225-8678

New London

125 Eugene O'Neill Dr.
Suite 120 860-447-0323

Stamford

20 Summer Street 203-348-9216

Waterbury

85 Central Avenue 203-756-8074

Willimantic

1125 Main Street 860-456-1761

Greater Hartford Legal Aid

www.ghla.org

999 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
860-541-5000

New Haven Legal Assistance Association

www.nhlegal.org

205 Orange Street
New Haven, CT 06510
203-946-4811

Consumer Law Project for Elders

Free legal assistance to people 60 and over throughout Connecticut who have money/debt problems.

1-800-296-1467

This booklet was produced by Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Statewide Legal Services.

The information in this booklet is based on laws in Connecticut as of 11/2017. We hope that the information is helpful. It is not intended as legal advice. For advice on your situation, call Statewide Legal Services or contact a lawyer.

What can the court decide?

The court can approve or deny your application.

- If the court approves your application, you will not have to pay certain fees. The clerk can tell you which ones.
- If the court denies your application, that means the court thinks you have enough money to pay your fees. If you do not agree with the court's decision, ask for a hearing.

What if the court denies my application?

You can

- ask the court clerk for a court hearing, or
- call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320.

What is a fee waiver?

The court charges fees for some of its services, including filing some court papers. If you have a court case but you can't afford to pay the court costs and fees, you can ask the court for a fee waiver. If the court gives you a fee waiver, you may not have to pay fees to

- file your court forms,
- have a marshal serve court papers on the other person in your case,
- go to a parenting education program,
- get certified copies of court documents, or
- get court services such as transcripts or recordings.

Who can get a fee waiver?

You can probably get a fee waiver if

- you don't make very much money or you have a lot of expenses; or
- you get help from the government, such as
 - welfare (TFA or SAGA);
 - food stamps (SNAP);
 - SSI (Supplemental Security Income);
 - state supplement (AABD/Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled, for example).

How do I ask for a fee waiver?

You can ask the court for a fee waiver by filling out a court form and filing it with the court.

- If you have a **family law** case, fill out the form called *Application for Waiver of Fees* (#JD-FM-75).
- If you have a **housing, small claims, or other civil case**, fill out the form called *Application for Waiver of Fees* (#JD-CV-120).

It is highly recommended that you get the form at the Judicial Branch website and fill it out using a computer. The form is a fillable PDF and it will do all of the math calculations for you. Make sure to save your work as you go.

You can also print the fee waiver application from the Judicial Branch website or get one at the courthouse and fill it out by hand. If you have to fill out the form by hand, start with two or more blank copies of the form. You can use the extra copies to practice.

Can I get help filling out the application?

Yes. You can ask someone at the Court Service Center for help.

How do I fill out a fee waiver form?

First, fill out the top of the form:

You must list the

- name of your case (your last name vs. the last name of the other person);
- judicial district;
- court address; and
- docket number, if you have one.

Tip: You can ask the clerk if you need help with the docket number or other information at the top of the form.

You must also list

- your name (under “Name of applicant”),
- your address,
- your phone number, and
- type of case (“proceeding”).

What should I do with my completed application?

1. Take your completed application to the court clerk, along with any court papers that you listed on your application.
2. Ask the court clerk to notarize your application (you can ask a notary or lawyer to do this, if you prefer).
3. The clerk (or notary or lawyer) will ask you to swear that the information you gave is true, and you will then sign your application.
4. Make a copy of the completed, signed form. Give the original to the court clerk and keep the copy for your records. You may need it later at your hearing.

What happens after I give my application to the clerk?

The courts have different processes. Ask your court clerk these questions:

- What happens next?
- Do you need any other papers about my income or support?
- How long will it take the court to decide?
- How will I find out the court’s decision?

5. Liabilities/Debts	<p>Type of Debt: List every person or company you owe money to. Also include overdue items such as utility bills, tax bills, personal and student loans, credit cards, store credit cards, and medical bills you have not paid.</p> <p>Amount owed: List the amount you owe on the date you fill out this application.</p> <p>Monthly Payment: List your average monthly payment. If you have not made payments, write "0" on this line.</p> <p>Important! Do not include payments for any item you listed above in Assets.</p>
Total liabilities	<p>Add all amounts in the Amount Owed column, and list that total amount in the box.</p> <p>Add all amounts in the Monthly Payment column, and list that total amount in the box.</p>
Page 2	<p><i>Do not write anything on page 2.</i> The court fills out this page.</p> <p>Check your information on page 1 to make sure what you wrote is correct.</p> <p>If you also have to fill out a separate <i>Financial Affidavit</i> for your court case, make sure your information is consistent. That's not easy to do because the <i>Application for Waiver of Fees</i> asks for monthly information, and the <i>Financial Affidavit</i> asks for weekly information. So you will have to make math calculation adjustments to one of the forms.</p>

Fill out the rest of the form:

Important: You must list your **monthly** income and expenses.

- If your income or expenses are **weekly**, multiply the weekly number by 4.3.
- If your income or expenses are **yearly**, divide the yearly number by 12.

If a question does not apply to you, write "none" or "0."

If you say "0" for your *Total Monthly Income or Expenses*, meaning you don't have any income, use the blank lines at the bottom of page 1 to explain how you are supported. For example, you might say, "I live with my mother and she pays the bills."

<i>The numbers below are in the same order as the numbers on your application form.</i>	
1. Dependents	Dependents are who live with you and depend on you for food, clothing, shelter, etc. Usually that means children under age 18, a disabled or stay-at-home spouse, or elderly parents. Do not count yourself.
2. Monthly income	If your income is not the same every month, write your average monthly income. To do that, take your income for 1 year and divide it by 12. You can find that information on your pay stub.
A. Gross monthly income (before deductions)	List your average monthly income before taxes and other deductions.
B. Net monthly income (after taxes & deductions)	List your average monthly take-home pay (your income after taxes and other deductions).
C. Other income	List the source and average monthly amount of any other income you get. Also list public assistance such as welfare, child support, social security, unemployment, or other public benefits.

Total monthly income (B+C)	Add B and C and list that amount in the box. Do not add box A.
3. Monthly expenses	List the average monthly amount for each expense.
A. Rent/mortgage	List the average monthly amount.
B. Real estate taxes	If you own your home and didn't include your monthly taxes with your mortgage on the line above, list them here.
C. Utilities	List the average monthly amount for your electricity, gas, water, etc.
D. Food	List your average monthly costs for groceries only. Don't list SNAP (Food Stamp) benefits if you get them.
E. Clothing	List the average monthly amount.
F. Insurance	List average monthly amounts for your car, life, home, health, and dental insurance. <i>Exception:</i> Do not include home insurance here if you listed it as part of your mortgage expense above.
G. Healthcare expenses	List your average monthly costs for medical and dental bills for services, equipment, copays, and prescriptions. Don't list insurance costs here.
H. Transportation	List your average monthly costs for public transportation, car repairs, gas, oil, etc. Do not list car insurance or car payments.
I. Childcare	List your average monthly costs for childcare. Include nursery school, baby-sitters, and afterschool care costs you pay so you can work.
J. Other	List your average monthly costs for other expenses you have not already listed. This may include children's activities, school uniforms, books, lunches, diapers, laundry, haircuts, cleaning supplies, toiletries, church donations, toys, movies, etc. Also include any child support or alimony that you pay.

Total monthly expenses	Add all expenses (A – J) and list that total amount in the box.
4. Assets	Assets (property) are things you own that you could sell and get cash for. <i>Examples:</i> Cars, furniture, cash, savings account, etc. Estimated Value: How much you think you could get if you sold that item today. Loan Balance: How much you still owe, such as for a car or furniture that you are still paying for. Equity: How much money you would have left after selling it and paying off the loan. <i>Example:</i> If you could sell your car for \$3,000 (its estimated value), but you still owe \$2,000 (loan balance), the equity would be \$1,000.
A. Real estate	List the <i>Estimated Value</i> , <i>Loan Balance</i> , and <i>Equity</i> for your real estate, motor vehicles, and any other personal property, such as jewelry, furniture, or appliances.
B. Motor vehicles	
C. Other personal property	
D. Savings account balance	Write the total balance of all your savings accounts. If you don't have any, write "0."
E. Checking account balance	Write the average monthly balance of all your checking accounts after your bills are paid. If you don't have any, write "0."
F. Cash	List how much cash you have.
G. Other assets	Describe anything else you own and list its value.
Total assets	Add all amounts in the Equity column (A – G) and list that total amount in the box.