

Consulting With an Attorney Before Filing Bankruptcy

It is strongly recommended that anyone considering filing bankruptcy consult with an experienced bankruptcy attorney. Many attorneys will provide you with a free initial consultation. When you file without an attorney, you are essentially acting as your own attorney. Keep in mind that the court, the U.S. trustee, and case trustees are all forbidden by federal law from giving you legal advice.

If you cannot afford an attorney, there are options for free or lower cost assistance:

- The **Oregon State Bar** has a Lawyer Referral Service which will direct you to an attorney who has agreed to provide limited consultation at reduced rates. Call (503) 620-0222 or toll-free in Oregon at (800) 452-7636. The Bar also offers Legal Information Topics, provided as a public service.

Visit online at www.osbar.org/public

- The **Legal Aid Services of Oregon** (<http://lasoregon.org/services/>) is a statewide organization that provides access to legal help to low-income clients. LASO has field offices in Albany, Bend, Klamath Falls, Newport, Pendleton, Portland, Roseburg, and Salem. Not all offices help with all issues. LASO sponsors an informational bankruptcy clinic for residents of the counties listed below. Those who meet LASO's income guidelines may also be able to have a volunteer lawyer represent them for free. For more information, call:
 - (503) 244-4086 or (800) 228-6958 for the following counties: Clackamas, Columbia, Hood River, Multnomah, Wasco, Washington, and Yamhill
 - (541) 385-6950 or (800) 678-6944 (Central Oregon Office) for the following counties: Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson
 - (541) 276-6685 or (800) 853-1115 (Pendleton Regional Office) for the following counties: Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, and Wheeler
- **Lane County Legal Aid/Oregon Law Center** serves Lane County residents. Call (541) 485-1017 ext. 340.
- **OregonLawHelp.org** is an online guide to legal resources and legal information for low-income persons. To find articles, forms, courts, where to find legal help, and more, see: oregonlawhelp.org.

Legal Assistance After Filing – The Pro Bono Program

Program Information

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Oregon, with support and assistance from the Debtor-Creditor Section of the Oregon State Bar, maintains a Pro Bono Program for parties who cannot afford an attorney. Representation is provided at no cost to approved applicants by a panel of volunteer attorneys.

Representation will be either for a limited number of hours or for a specific purpose such as appearing at a settlement conference or filing or responding to a complaint in an adversary proceeding. Please clearly explain in your application why you need legal representation so that the court can assign a Pro Bono Panel attorney who will best meet your needs.

Applying for Assistance

To apply for assistance, file an *Application for Assignment of Pro Bono Counsel* (Local Bankruptcy Form 9010.1). Parties who are not debtors must also submit a *Supplemental Application for Assignment of Pro Bono Counsel for Nondebtors* (Local Bankruptcy Form 9010.2). Local Bankruptcy Forms are available on the court's website at (www.orb.uscourts.gov/forms) and at either the Eugene or Portland court locations.

Applications must be filed with the clerk by mail, in person, or using the court's Public Document Upload system (www.orb.uscourts.gov/webform/public-document-upload).

The application will be entered on the case docket and forwarded to the Bankruptcy Judge assigned to preside over your case. The Judge will review the application and enter an order either granting or denying your request. If the application is granted, a Pro Bono Panel attorney will be asked to contact you to discuss how best to provide representation in your case. Should the attorney have a conflict of interest which prevents them from representing you, the attorney will notify the court, and another panel attorney will be contacted.

Approval of your application does not guarantee that a panel attorney will be able to represent you. If the court is unable to match you with a suitable panel attorney, you will be notified.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the program, please visit the Court's website (www.orb.uscourts.gov/pro-bono-program) or contact the Pro Bono Program Administrator by phone at (541) 431-4008.