

GOAL: Access Help with Family Legal Documents

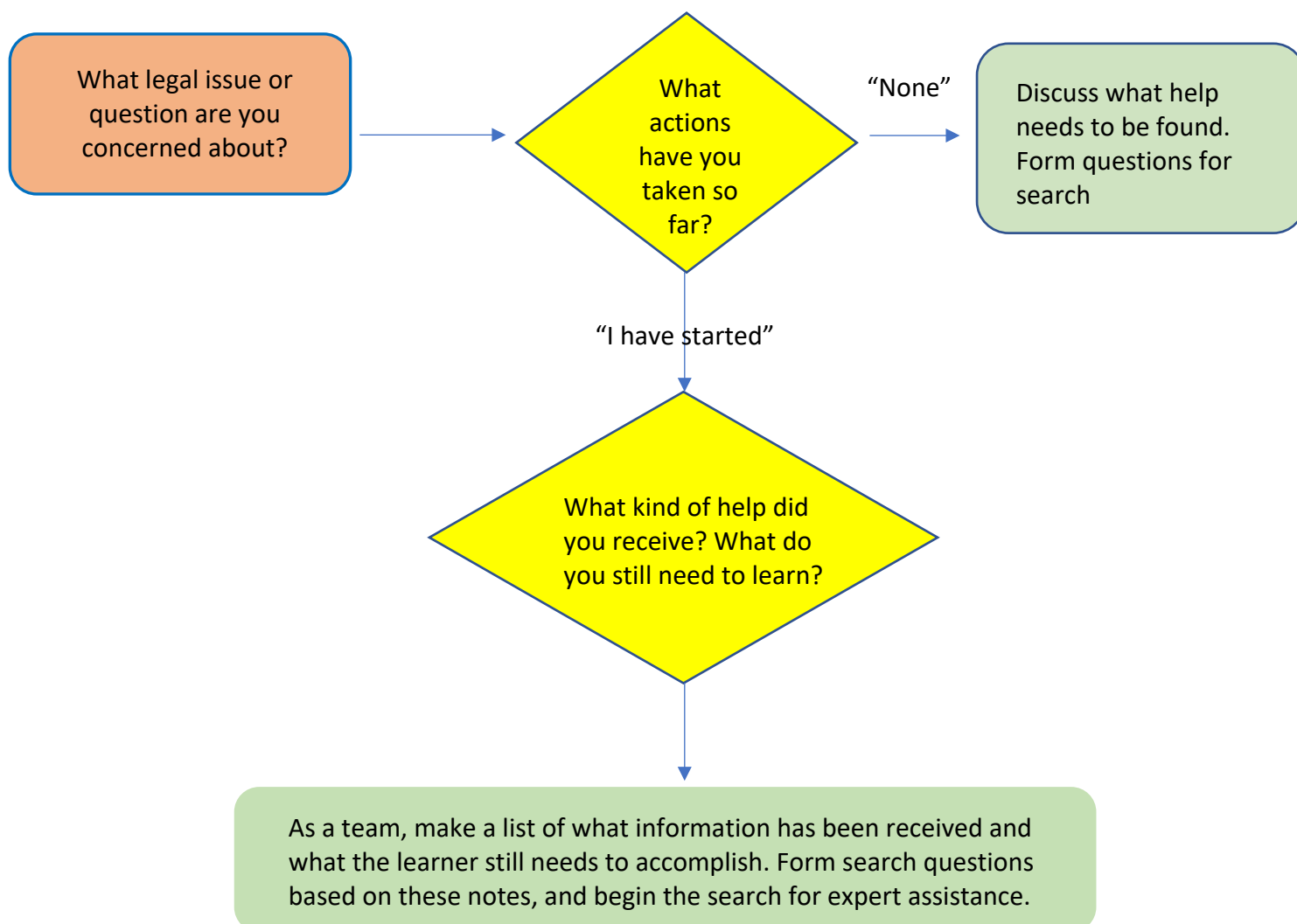
INTRODUCTION

Any goal involving the understanding and use of legal documents will be complex and multi-faceted, involving expertise that most of us do not possess. For this reason, it's important to do some searching, online or within the community, in order to find the expert assistance your learner needs.

GUIDEPOST I: Where to Start

- Before your search for information and assistance begins, it's important to know the right questions to ask. In a conversation with your learner, **discover** more information about the legal issue and any previous help they have received. You might say to your learner, "Since you know best what kind of help you need, let's discuss the legal issue and documents that you have questions about."

A simple discovery process might look something like this:



GUIDEPOST II: What You Will Learn

- After you and your learner create a list of objectives and then formulate the appropriate questions to ask a professional, you can begin the search for assistance.

HELPFUL WEBSITES & ORGANIZATIONS:

[Law Help CALIFORNIA](#)

- **OFFICIAL AND FREE** LawHelpCA is California’s official and free legal resource.
- **RELIABLE** information about common legal issues, written by reputable sources on 16 general topics and over 140 specific subtopics
- **UPDATED** directory of legitimate and pre-screened organizations that offer free or low-cost legal advice and representation

[Legal Aid Foundation Los Angeles--Family Law](#) – Includes a list of self-help topics and referrals for those with low or limited income.

[Bay Area Legal Aid](#) – Provides free legal advice and referrals for low-income clients.

- These Legal Aid organizations, and others like that throughout the state provide FREE legal assistance and referrals to participating lawyers.

[California Family Legal Aid & Pro Bono Services](#) – A list of family law professionals from around the state—searchable by city and county.

[How to Find a Pro Bono Family Attorney - WikiHow](#) – A step-by-step, illustrated overview of how to obtain family law assistance. Includes tutorials on subtopics covering specific family legal needs.

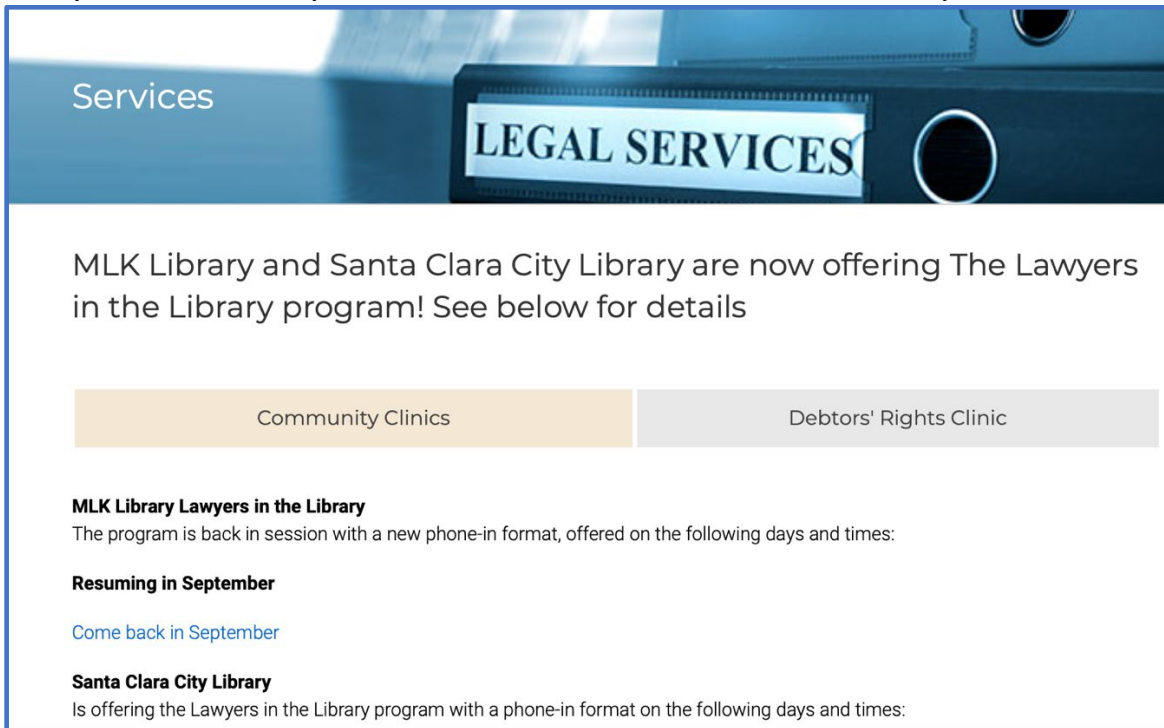
[What to Know Before Hiring a Pro Bono Family Lawyer, \(brides.com\)](#) – Includes subtopics relating to specific family legal needs, and live online chat with an attorney.

Note for Tutors: As you work with your learner to help them find the information they need, please be careful not to allow your own opinion to influence the direction they take in resolving legal issues. Your job is to teach how questions are asked, and how information is read and understood. If your learner asks for your opinion, remind them that they should really refer their questions to a legal expert.



LIBRARY RESOURCES:

- Many libraries in California now offer free legal consultations through the *Lawyers in the Library* program sponsored by the *Pro Bono Project* (see link below). These consultations are by appointment only, and clients are usually asked for a brief description of their needs so that the lawyers can be better prepared to help. Check with your local library to find out if this service is offered near you.



Services

LEGAL SERVICES

MLK Library and Santa Clara City Library are now offering The Lawyers in the Library program! See below for details

Community Clinics Debtors' Rights Clinic

MLK Library Lawyers in the Library
The program is back in session with a new phone-in format, offered on the following days and times:
Resuming in September
[Come back in September](#)

Santa Clara City Library
Is offering the Lawyers in the Library program with a phone-in format on the following days and times:

[Pro Bono Project - Lawyers in the Library](#) – link to website

GUIDEPOST III: How You Will Learn – Multisensory Strategies

You might begin your instruction by reviewing a website which provides information on family legal issues. Make sure you and your learner keep good notes concerning which websites you have visited and reviewed—they all tend to look alike after a while.

1. READING AND COMPREHENSION PRACTICE

- One useful method for helping your learner locate, read, and understand web-based information is the **KWL Chart**. It's easy to use and only takes a minute to prepare. Here's the process:
 - Draw a KWL Chart on paper or whiteboard (see example below).
 - Discuss the legal topic which your learner is seeking information on. As a team, write what the learner already knows about the topic in the first (K) column.

- Discuss what information the learner wants to know about the topic--the questions they want answers to. Write their ideas in the second (W) column of the chart.
- Explain that, as they review the website, the learner will make notes about what they learned--the possible answers to their questions--in the third (L) column (Give the learner an individual copy of KWL chart to record their own ideas as they read).
- The learner reviews the website, making notes in the third column (L) about what they have learned.
- Then, your learner shares their notes with you, discussing what they have learned and any remaining questions they have about the topic.

KWL Chart - A Guided Teaching and Learning Sequence

Topic _____		
What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned

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- Use a variety of instructional strategies to help your learner read and understand web-based information.
 - Ask your learner to briefly preview a webpage they will be reading and **predict** what kind of information they expect to find. They can make notes on their predictions and check back later to see if they were correct.
 - Ask you learner to **skim** the webpage information before reading and pick out words which are unfamiliar and would be a challenge to read and understand on their own.

- When your learner comes across unfamiliar word or phrase, add them to a list of new vocabulary or a vocabulary card set.
- When reading information on the site, you and your learner can use an **echo-reading technique** in which you read a portion of the webpage and they reread the same portion right after you.

You can see from this sample website that, depending on the reading level of your learner, legal vocabulary can be difficult. However, the techniques outlined above can help your learner understand and locate the information and help they need.

The screenshot shows the LawHelpCA.org website interface. At the top, there are language options: English | Español | Tiếng Việt | 한국어 | 拼音 | Русский | Filipino(Tagalog) and a 'Take a Site Tour' link. A search bar is located in the top right. Below the header is a navigation menu with 'FIND LEGAL INFORMATION', 'SEARCH FOR LEGAL HELP', 'ORGANIZATIONS', 'ABOUT US', and 'ABOUT LIVECHAT'. A 'QUICK EXIT' button is also present. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home / Legal Directory / Families and Kids'. The main heading is 'Families and Kids'. A dark grey box contains a COVID-19 notice: 'Many local laws and courts have been affected by COVID-19. Please use the search for legal help tool to find a legal aid organization or self help center near you for accurate information and more support.' Below this, it says 'Pick a specific issue are looking for information about:' followed by a list of legal issues: Adoption, Child Abuse/Neglect, Child Support, Childcare, Kinship, and Foster Parent Assistance, Custody/Visitation, Divorce and Spousal Support/Alimony, Domestic Violence, Guardianship, Juvenile Delinquency, Name Change, Other Family or Juvenile Issues, Paternity, Reproductive Rights, Restraining Orders, Rights of Grandparents, and Youth Rights & Emancipation. To the right, there is a 'SEARCH FOR LEGAL HELP' section with a form to 'Find a lawyer or court program based on your needs using our interactive tool.' The form has three dropdown menus: 'CHOOSE YOUR LOCATION', 'CHOOSE YOUR LEGAL TOPIC', and 'CHOOSE YOUR LEGAL PROBLEM', followed by a 'GET HELP' button. Below the search section are two red buttons: 'COVID + FIRE RESOURCES' and 'SCAM ALERTS'. At the bottom right, a 'Most Viewed Resources' section lists: 'How to File a Wage Claim', 'Where to File a Case', 'Landlord-Tenant Frequently Asked Questions', 'Representing Yourself', and 'CalFresh Eligibility Information'. The footer contains 'Site Tools' (Log in, About Us, Accessibility, Disclaimer, Legal Directory, Site Tour), a statement 'LawHelpCA is provided as a public service by:', and logos for The State Bar of California (ACCESS TO JUSTICE), LAAC (Legal Aid Association of California), and LiveChat, along with the LSC logo.

➤ **How to study new vocabulary**

- Using index cards, ask your learner to write an unfamiliar word or phrase on one side of the card. Ask your learner to say the letters aloud as they write the new word.
- On the opposite side of the card, help your learner locate a definition of the word (use a dictionary, Wikipedia, or a glossary). Your learner can write the definition, or take even more ownership of the new word by using it in their own sentence written on the back side of the index card.
- The new vocabulary can be studied by the learner away from the tutoring session. Then, the spelling and meaning of the words can be reinforced and practiced during upcoming tutoring sessions and new vocabulary cards can be added as needed.

2. WRITING PRACTICE

Ask your learner to keep a journal about the goal—family legal issue.

- The journal can include their new vocabulary list.
- The journal might also include personal notes about what they have learned concerning their legal questions and documents.
- Ask your learner to write any unanswered questions they may have about legal issues in their journal. You can use these questions to plan future tutoring lessons.

3. INDEPENDENT PRACTICE (Homework)

- Ask your learner to review the vocabulary cards they have created so they can improve word recognition and learn the meaning of the new words. Make sure to check and reinforce this activity in the next tutoring session.
- Ask your learner to review the personal notes they have made in their journal. If some of the information is still not clear to them, you can address that in a future session.

GUIDEPOST IV: What Worked, What Didn't, What Can You Use?

At the conclusion of the instructional session, spend some time reviewing with your learner what they learned that day and planning what they'd like to work on in future sessions.

- Say something like, "Let's think about what we learned today and how you can use it on your own to answer your family legal questions. Which tutoring activities worked well today, and which did not work so well. We can then plan what we'd like to work on in our next session."

Here's some examples of specific questions you might ask:

1. How did searching on the website go today? Did you find the information you need? If not, what can we work on next time to make our search for information more successful?
2. What useful information did you learn today about your family legal issue?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. What can you review and practice on your own to help you reach your goal?
4. What do you want to practice together in our next meeting?

Milestones

Initial Effort – The ultimate goal of Accessing Help with Family Legal Documents is discussed and the learner has formed the questions that need to be answered by legal professionals. Following the lead of your learner, you are beginning to work on the search for the most appropriate legal assistance.

Making Progress – You and your learner are exploring websites and local organizations which provide help with family legal issues. New vocabulary is being learned and reinforced in the tutoring sessions. The learner is more comfortable forming legal questions that need to be answered.

Goal Accomplished – Your learner has found the assistance they need to help complete their necessary family legal documents.