



Who is eligible to receive no-cost military legal assistance?

We provide legal assistance services to those persons eligible under COMDTINST 5801.4 (series):

- (1) Members of the Armed forces who are on active duty (including reservists on active duty or scheduled deployment);
- (2) Members and former members entitled to retired or retainer pay or equivalent pay;
- (3) Officers of the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service who are on active duty or entitled to retired or equivalent pay;
- (4) Dependents of members and former members described in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) above; and
- (5) Other persons authorized by the Judge Advocate General.

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U.S. Coast Guard Training Center (TRACEN) Cape May Legal

Legal Assistance Services

Notary Public

A notary public is a public officer constituted by law to serve the public in non-contentious matters usually concerned with estates, deeds, powers-of-attorney, and foreign and international business. A notary's main functions are to administer oaths and affirmations, take affidavits and statutory declarations, witness and authenticate the execution of certain classes of documents, take acknowledgments of deeds and other conveyances, protest notes and bills of exchange, provide exemplifications and notarial copies, and perform certain other official acts depending on the jurisdiction.

Basic Estate Planning & Living Wills

A will is a legal document you use to dispose of your property at your death, and may also name people to do important jobs, such as administrator of your estate or guardians for your children. If you die without a will, the intestacy law of the state where you were domiciled at death will determine who should receive your property. Not everyone needs to create their own will, however. Many military members do prepare a will when they are married or have young children. Our Legal Assistance Office is available to help you determine if you should prepare a will or codicil (a change to your will, in whole or in part).

A living will, also known as an advance medical directive, is a legal document that a person uses to make known his or her wishes regarding life prolonging medical treatments in the event they are not able to speak for themselves due to persistent unconsciousness. A living will does not become effective unless you are incapacitated and when your ultimate recovery is hopeless; until then you'll be able to say what treatments you do or don't want. For situations where you are incapacitated and therefore not able to speak for yourself, you may also choose to have a health care power of attorney, also known as a durable power of attorney or health care proxy. A health care power of attorney is a legal document that gives someone else the authority to make health care decisions for you in the event you are incapacitated.

Landlord-Tenant Law

Landlord-tenant disputes are common in the renting process, and many could be avoided if both parties were aware of their rights and responsibilities. Individual state laws cover many aspects of the landlord tenant relationship, from security deposits, duties to repair, and landlord access to rental property, etc. The Legal Assistance Office is available to assist eligible persons facing a landlord-tenant dispute.



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Legal Assistance Services, cont.

Power of Attorney (POA)

A power of attorney is a written instrument authorizing one person to act on behalf of another in certain legal matters. For example, you might grant or give a POA to a spouse, authorizing your spouse to act as your agent to sell your car, ship your household goods, or obtain medical care for your child. A general POA allows your agent to do any and all things that you could legally do yourself. A special (or limited) POA lists the particular act or acts that the agent is authorized to do and limits the agent's authority to only those acts. POAs are not without the potential for abuse; accordingly, this office will not execute powers of attorney lasting over one year.

Family Law

As a broad area of the law, family law generally concerns domestic relations and family-related matters such as marriage, civil unions, domestic partnerships, adoptions, paternity, guardianships, domestic abuse, surrogacy, child custody, child abduction, the dissolution of marriage and associated issues. Due to the intricacies involved in this area of law, as well as a limited military legal assistance mandate, our Legal Assistance Office is available to help with uncontested divorce filings and uncontested/step-parent adoption proceedings, as well as to provide advice concerning benefits and entitlements to current or former military spouses.

Volunteer Income Taxation Assistance (VITA)

During the tax return season (January through April 15th), we provide assistance with federal and state personal income tax returns. Basic tax advice is available year-round.

Service Member Civil Relief Act (SCRA)

The SCRA is intended to ease the economic and legal burdens on military personnel during their active service. The SCRA provides protection to active duty, Reserve and National Guard members called to active duty for 20 days or more, and addresses civil, judicial and administrative proceedings, interest rates on pre-service loans, eviction, mortgage foreclosure, cell phone service contracts, and residential and automobile rental agreements. Contact the Legal Office to determine what protections, if any, the SCRA may be able to provide for your family.