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Legal aid

Verified 26 January 2022 - Directorate of Legal and Administrative Information (Prime Minister), Ministry of Justice

Legal aid is the State's responsibility for your legal costs. It is granted to people with low incomes and low wealth (savings and real estate). To qualify for assistance, you must complete the application form and provide proof of your income and assets. The application must be filed with the legal aid office responsible for your domicile, before or after the beginning of the procedure.

This page provides information about requests **introduced since 21 January 2022**. If you applied for legal aid before January 21, 2022, it will be processed according to the rules in force in 2021.

What's that about?

Legal aid is the State's assumption of the costs of legal proceedings.

This assistance is intended for persons who wish to assert their rights in court but who do not have the means to finance the costs associated with the legal proceedings. Examples:

- Remuneration of court officials (lawyer, bailiff, notary, ...)
- Costs related to acts ordered by the judge (expertise, social investigation, ...)

You can apply for legal aid regardless of your position in the judicial process (civil party, witness, witnesses assisted, accused, indicted, convicted, ...).

You will be entitled to legal aid if you meet the conditions for the award.

The aid you receive may be total or partial.

Conditions for granting aid and aid rates

To obtain legal aid, you must meet the following 3 conditions:

- Do not have legal protection insurance that covers all your legal costs
- Be of French or European nationality, or habitually reside in France (a short stay is excluded)
- Have a reference tax income and a property and real estate value below certain ceilings

You can simulate the amount of legal aid through the following online service:

Estimate the amount of legal aid (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R59382>)

Reference Tax Income and Tax Home

reference tax income (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F13216?>

The lang=en) taxable.

is the total of all income of a taxpayer, whether or not

This income is calculated at the tax household level. There is a difference between the family home, which is all people who live together, and the tax home, which is all people who file the same tax return. Members of the tax household are listed on a single tax notice. Examples: married or married couples, parents and minor children, parents and connected adult children.

On the other hand, persons who live in a couple without being married or in a position of disadvantage are not part of the same tax home because they have to file their income tax returns separately.

The reference tax income taken into account when considering the application for legal aid is that of your tax home. If there are more than one person in your tax home, the maximum limits should take into account the income of all these people. But if you apply for legal aid for a dispute-related proceeding involving a member of the tax household, the income cap review will be individualised.

Property and real estate value

Moveable assets are all moveable assets, i.e. your financial savings and valuable assets: jewellery, cars, furniture, etc. All your personal property is

taken into account when considering the application for legal aid.

The real estate is all real estate: land, flat, house, etc. Only part of your real estate is taken into account when considering the application for legal aid. Your principal residence and the real estate necessary for your professional activity are excluded from the value taken into account.

If your tax home is made up of more than one person, the property ceilings that must not be exceeded take into account the personal and real estate assets of all those people. But if you apply for legal aid for a dispute-related proceeding involving a member of the tax household, the review of the property limit will be individualised.

Aid ceilings and rates

You can get legal aid if your income and the value of your property and real estate do not exceed the ceilings shown below.

Legal aid will be total (100%) or partial (55% or 25%) depending on the size of your income and the composition of your tax household.

You're alone in your tax home

You can benefit from the total legal aid (100%) if your tax reference income and the value of your property and real estate do not exceed the following limits:

Reference Tax Income: **€11,580**

Value of movable heritage: **€11,580**

Property Value: **€34,734**

If the value of your estate exceeds one of the two property limits, you cannot benefit from legal aid (neither total nor partial).

If your tax reference income exceeds the income limit, you may not be eligible for full legal aid, but you may be eligible for partial legal aid.

This means that your reference tax income does not exceed the limits for the allocation of partial legal aid.

There is a ceiling for legal aid at the rate of 25% and another for legal aid at 55%.

Support rate based on your income

Reference Tax Income	Legal aid rate
Less than or equal to €11,580	100%
Between €11,581 and €13,688	55%
Between €13,689 and €17,367	25%

If you do not have a reference tax income, the limit is double your taxable income for the last 6 months, after deducting a 10% allowance.

Your tax home is made up of several people

Tax shelter for 2 people

You can receive full legal aid if your tax reference income and the value of your property and immovable assets do not exceed the following limits:

Reference Tax Income: **€13,664**

Value of movable heritage: **€13,664**

Property Value: **€40,986**

If the value of your estate exceeds one of the two property limits, you cannot benefit from legal aid (neither total nor partial).

If your tax reference income exceeds the income limit, you may not be eligible for full legal aid, but you may be eligible for partial legal aid.

This means that your reference tax income does not exceed the limits for the allocation of partial legal aid.

There is a ceiling for legal aid at the rate of 25% and another for legal aid at 55%.

Support rate based on your resources

Maximum Annual Resources	Support
Less than or equal to €13,664	100%
Between €13,665 and €15,772	55%
Between €15,773 and €19,451	25%

If you do not have a reference tax income, the limit is double your taxable income for the last 6 months, after deducting a 10% allowance.

Tax shelter for 3 people

You can receive full legal aid if your tax reference income and the value of your property and immovable assets do not exceed the following limits:

Reference Tax Income: **€15,748**

Value of movable heritage: **€15,748**

Property Value: **€47,238**

If the value of your estate exceeds one of the two property limits, you cannot benefit from legal aid (neither total nor partial).

If your tax reference income exceeds the income limit, you may not be eligible for full legal aid, but you may be eligible for partial legal aid.

This means that your reference tax income does not exceed the limits for the allocation of partial legal aid.

There is a ceiling for legal aid at the rate of 25% and another for legal aid at 55%.

Rates of care according to your income

Annual Resources	Support
Less than or equal to €15,748	100%
Between €15,749 and €17,856	55%
Between €17,857 and €21,535	25%

If you do not have a reference tax income, the limit is double your taxable income for the last 6 months, after deducting a 10% allowance.

Tax home for 4 people

You can receive full legal aid if your tax reference income and the value of your property and immovable assets do not exceed the following limits:

Reference Tax Income: **€17,064**

Value of movable heritage: **€17,064**

Property Value: **€51,187**

If the value of your estate exceeds one of the two property limits, you cannot benefit from legal aid (neither total nor partial).

If your tax reference income exceeds the income limit, you may not be eligible for full legal aid, but you may be eligible for partial legal aid.

This means that your reference tax income does not exceed the limits for the allocation of partial legal aid.

There is a ceiling for legal aid at the rate of 25% and another for legal aid at 55%.

Support rate based on your resources

Maximum Annual Resources	Support
Less than or equal to €17,064	100%
Between €17,065 and 19,172	55%
Between €19,173 and €22,851	25%

If you do not have a reference tax income, the limit is double your taxable income for the last 6 months, after deducting a 10% allowance.

Tax shelter for 5 people

You can receive full legal aid if your tax reference income and the value of your property and immovable assets do not exceed the following limits:

Reference Tax Income: **€18,380**

Value of movable heritage: **€18,380**

Property Value: **€55,137**

If the value of your estate exceeds one of the two property limits, you cannot benefit from legal aid (neither total nor partial).

If your tax reference income exceeds the income limit, you may not be eligible for full legal aid, but you may be eligible for partial legal aid.

This means that your reference tax income does not exceed the limits for the allocation of partial legal aid.

There is a ceiling for legal aid at the rate of 25% and another for legal aid at 55%.

Support rate based on your resources

Maximum Annual Resources	Support
Less than or equal to €18,380	100%
Between €18,381 and €20,488	55%
Between €20,489 and €24,167	25%

If you do not have a reference tax income, the limit is double your taxable income for the last 6 months, after deducting a 10% allowance.

Tax home for 6 people

You can receive full legal aid if your tax reference income and the value of your property and immovable assets do not exceed the following limits:

Reference Tax Income: **€19,696**

Value of movable heritage: **€19,696**

Property Value: **€59,086**

If the value of your estate exceeds one of the two property limits, you cannot benefit from legal aid (neither total nor partial).

If your tax reference income exceeds the income limit, you may not be eligible for full legal aid, but you may be eligible for partial legal aid.

This means that your reference tax income does not exceed the limits for the allocation of partial legal aid.

There is a ceiling for legal aid at the rate of 25% and another for legal aid at 55%.

Support rate based on your resources

Maximum Annual Resources	Support
Less than or equal to €19,696	100%
Between €19,697 and €21,804	55%
Between €21,805 and €25,483	25%

If you do not have a reference tax income, the limit is double your taxable income for the last 6 months, after deducting a 10% allowance.

Tax home for 7 people

You can receive full legal aid if your tax reference income and the value of your property and immovable assets do not exceed the following limits:

Reference Tax Income: **€21,012**

Value of movable heritage: **€21,012**

Property Value: **€63,035**

If the value of your estate exceeds one of the two property limits, you cannot benefit from legal aid (neither total nor partial).

If your tax reference income exceeds the income limit, you may not be eligible for full legal aid, but you may be eligible for partial legal aid.

This means that your reference tax income does not exceed the limits for the allocation of partial legal aid.

There is a ceiling for legal aid at the rate of 25% and another for legal aid at 55%.

Support rate based on your income

Reference Tax Income	Support
Less than or equal to €21,012	100%
Between €21,013 and €23,120	55%
Between €23,121 and €26,799	25%

If you do not have a reference tax income, the limit is double your taxable income for the last 6 months, after deducting a 10% allowance.

Exceptions

They concern victims of crime and terrorism, victims of domestic violence and minors.

Victims of crime and terrorism

Legal aid shall be granted to the victim of criminal and/or terrorist acts and his or her beneficiaries without examining the condition of income and assets.

Victim of domestic violence

If you are a victim of domestic violence, legal aid may be granted on an interim basis for an emergency procedure. But then you have to justify that you meet the income and wealth requirements for legal aid. If not, you will be required to repay the legal aid you received on an interim basis.

Minor

General case

The situation is different if it is minor or not.

Unreleased Minor

Legal aid shall be granted on a provisional basis to minors who are to participate in judicial proceedings. But there will be a subsequent check on whether or not parents meet the income and resource requirements for legal aid. If this is not the case, the parents will have to repay the legal aid which the minor received on an interim basis.

Minor

Legal aid shall be granted on a provisional basis to minors who are to participate in judicial proceedings.

In the case of a neglected minor, there is no verification of whether or not the parents meet the income and resources requirements for legal aid.

Minor requesting to be heard by Family Court

Legal aid shall be granted unconditionally to minors who request to be heard by the Family Court.

Procedures to qualify for assistance

You may receive legal aid for different legal proceedings, but it will not be granted in the following 2 cases:

- The procedure that you wish to initiate seems inadmissible or unfounded
- You ask for help after the judicial proceedings have been closed

Procedure in France

Legal aid may be granted in the following cases:

Civil proceedings (divorce, insurance claim...)

Criminal procedure (proceedings before the Correctional Court or the Court of Assisi ...)

Administrative procedure (appeal against a refusal of a building permit or an administrative penalty...)

Foreigner procedure

France does not grant aid for a case in a foreigners court.

However, if you are a French citizen residing, among others, in Quebec, Tunisia, Morocco or Algeria, you can benefit from legal aid under the same conditions as the nationals of those countries. You may apply in accordance with the procedure in force in the country concerned

If your dispute is decided by a court in another State of European Union (except Denmark and the United Kingdom from 1st January 2021), the aid may be granted to you by the same State, but only in civil and commercial matters. The aid will then be granted to you in accordance with the procedure in force in the country concerned.

In this case, you must use a specific form and send it to the French Ministry of Justice, which will be responsible for sending your request to the country concerned.

Application for legal aid in the European Union (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R39974>)

You can consult the list of foreigners for which there is an agreement with France on legal aid on the website of the Ministry of Justice.

Charges Supported

If you have a legal protection contract that covers all the costs of the procedure, you are not entitled to legal aid.

The level of support for costs varies depending on whether legal aid is granted in full or in part.

If you receive 100% support

All your expenses are covered, except the right to plead **€13** due in some jurisdictions and to pay your lawyer.

Amounts committed prior to the aid application are not refunded.

If you receive partial help

The State shall pay part of the remuneration of lawyers and public or ministerial officers (bailiffs, notaries, etc.) according to the rate of the partial aid granted.

On the other hand, the State shall fully pay the other costs relating to the proceedings or acts for which partial legal aid has been granted (costs of expertise, social investigation, etc.).

For your lawyer's fees, you must sign an agreement to set additional fees.

Model supplementary fee agreement in case of partial legal aid (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R37879>)

FYI

In all cases, the aid does not cover the costs you may be ordered to pay by the judgement (for example, damages or fines).

Choice and payment of lawyer

Choice of lawyer

If you are entitled to legal aid, you can choose your lawyer.

In criminal matters, you must be assisted by a lawyer. If you don't know a lawyer or if the lawyer you contacted refuses to defend you, the Bar Association will appoint you a lawyer ([https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F2153?](https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F2153?lang=en)

You can change your lawyer if you already have legal aid. You must report this change to the legal aid office that provided you with the assistance.

FYI

You are also free to appeal to any legal professional chosen by you: bailiff, expert, etc.

Lawyer Payment

Total legal aid

Your lawyer's fees are paid in full according to the legal aid scale.

Partial legal aid

Your lawyer's fees are not fully covered and the legal aid scale does not apply. The lawyer can ask you to sign a fee agreement for the part of the fee that is not covered by the legal aid.

How do I apply?

Legal aid may be requested prior to the submission of the application or during the proceedings.

You can also request legal aid after the end of a procedure, for example to enforce the court decision.

You must use the cerfa form n°15626, to be downloaded or removed from your town hall or the court.

Application for legal aid (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R1444>)

Please note that the form and its notice do not contain the rules applicable to applications submitted since 1st January 2021.

The following information is not included in the form and in the package leaflet:

Changes to form information

- If you are a beneficiary of the active solidarity income (RSA) or the solidarity allowance for the elderly (Aspa), you must now declare your assets and resources in the form.
- You no longer need to report the resources of people you live with without being married or married: companion or companion, person you are staying or hosting, roommate.

Changes to package leaflet information (list of attachments)

- You must always include your last tax notice with your application.
- If you are opposed to a member of your tax household (wife, child, parent, etc.), you must also include your financial records of the last 6 months with your application. For example, pay slips, return-to-work allowance notification from Pôle emploi.
- If your situation has changed compared to your last tax return (divorce or new dependant, loss of employment, retirement, ...), you must also attach to your application the proof of your resources of the last 6 months. For example, pay slips, return-to-work allowance notification from Pôle emploi.
- If you do not have a tax notice, you must include your last 6 months' worth of resources with your application. For example, pay slips, return-to-work allowance notification from Pôle emploi.

If you have a legal protection contract that does not cover the costs of the lawsuit, you must attach a certificate of non-acceptance.

If your contract allows partial coverage, you must include details of the fees already covered.

Certificate of non-coverage by the insurer (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R39717>)

You can get help filling out the form at a law and court house (or access point to the law) near you.

Where to apply?

where to apply :

The legal aid office competent to process your application is dependent on the court that has to examine the case.

Trial or appeal

You must file the application with the appropriate legal aid office for your home.

If you do not have a domicile, you can submit your application to the competent legal aid office for the body that issued you a certificate of domicile.

The Legal Aid Office is responsible for deciding on applications for admission to legal aid for cases brought before the courts of first and second instance. Examples: judicial tribunal, administrative tribunal, court of appeal, administrative court of appeal.

You will find the relevant office for your home in the annexe to the decree of 7 December 2020 establishing the list and jurisdiction of the legal aid offices:

Court of Cassation

You must file your application directly with the Court of Cassation.

Council of State

You must file your application directly with the Conseil d'Etat.

National Court of the Right to Asylum

You must file your application directly with the National Court of Asylum.

FYI

If you do not have a stable home, you can do a [residency \(https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F17317?\)](https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F17317?residency) before you file.

Redress in case of refusal

If you refuse legal aid, you can appeal against the decision.

You can make the appeal yourself or with a lawyer.

An appeal may be brought against a decision to refuse legal aid outright or against a decision to grant partial aid, if you have requested the full aid.

The appeal must be lodged within 15 days of notification of the decision.

You must indicate in the appeal the reasons for challenging the decision taken. Example: an error about the number of people in your household or the amount of your resources.

The appeal shall be addressed to the legal aid office which issued the decision, by registered mail with___.

You must attach a copy of the contested decision.

The department that issued the decision will forward your request to the competent authority to consider the appeal. The competent authority to consider the appeal is the court that is responsible for examining the case for which you have requested legal aid.

Competent authority to consider the appeal on the basis of jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Review Authority
General case	1 st chairperson of the court of appeal on which the court responsible for the case or the court of appeal responsible for the case
National Court of the Right to Asylum (CNDA)	President of the National Court of Asylum
Administrative Tribunal	President of the Administrative Court of Appeal on which the Court is responsible
Administrative Court of Appeal	President of the Administrative Court of Appeal
Council of State	Chairman of the Legal Section of the Council of State
Court of Cassation	1 st president of the court of cassation
Dispute Tribunal	President of the Conflict Tribunal

Once the appeal is reviewed, the decision is yours notified by mail.

If this new decision does not suit you, you will have no further recourse. ☹ The decision is final.

Please note

An appeal by a lawyer to the president of the administrative court of appeal or the president of the litigation section of the Conseil d'État must be

Statute and miscellaneous references

- Law No. 91-647 of 10 July 1991 on legal aid (<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000537611>)
Access to legal aid
- Decree No. 2020-1717 of 28 December 2020 implementing Law No. 91-647 of 10 July 1991 on legal aid (<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000042748211>)
Legal aid summary decree
- Decree No. 91-1266 of 19 December 1991 on legal aid (<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/LEGITEXT000006078419>)
Resource conditions: section 1
- Decree No. 91-1266 of 19 December 1991 on legal aid: Article 98 (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexteArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000006496405&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006078419>)
Resource Cap
- Decree No. 2019-1064 of 17 October 2019 on various legal aid provisions (<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000039241275&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id>)
- Decision of 30 December 2020 on the content of the application form for legal aid and the list of documents to be attached to it (<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000042845493>)
- Circular of 15 January 2018 on the conditions of resources for admission to legal aid (PDF - 385.3 KB) (http://www.textes.justice.gouv.fr/art_pix/JUST1801298C_VF.pdf)

Online services and forms

- Calculate legal aid rights (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R43903?lang=en>)
Online service
- Application for legal aid (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R1444?lang=en>)
Form
- Certificate of non-coverage by the insurer (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R39717?lang=en>)
Form
- Application for legal aid in the European Union (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R39974?lang=en>)
Form
- Application for Legal Aid - Non-profit Legal Persons (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R47004?lang=en>)
Form
- Application for legal aid to be completed by the lawyer appointed and appointed (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R47006?lang=en>)
Form

FAQ

- Can legal aid be withdrawn? (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1475?lang=en>)
- Legal aid: can there be a remedy in case of refusal? (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31623?lang=en>)
- How do I get a free lawyer? (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F20706?lang=en>)
- Without a permanent or fixed domicile (homeless): how do i get a home? (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F17317?lang=en>)

Additional topics

- Judicial actors (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N279?lang=en>)
Service-Public.fr
- Legal fees: cost of a trial (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1816?lang=en>)
Service-Public.fr
- European Union countries (http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_fr.htm)
European Commission
- List of supporting documents for a legal aid application (PDF - 44.9 KB) (<https://www.justice.fr/sites/default/files/Aide%20juridictionnelle%20-%20liste%20des%20pi%C3%A8ces%20justificatives.pdf>)

Ministry of Justice

Changes in the application for legal aid as of 1 January 2021 (<https://www.justice.fr/reforme-aide-juridictionnelle-2021>)

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Ministry of Justice