

# Giving Legal Information

 CLEO (Community Legal Education Ontario/ Éducation juridique communautaire Ontario)

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## What is legal information?

Legal information is general information that can help people understand their legal rights, how legal processes work, and how to get more help. It can be shared with the general public through the web, print materials, media, or workshops, or given to someone looking for help with a legal problem. A community worker who is not legally trained can give legal information.

## If someone asks me for legal information, what should I do?

Many community workers are asked for help by people who have legal problems. Often, it's not clear to workers what they can say that is helpful but does not cross the line into legal advice.

Community workers can feel comfortable:

- pointing someone to reliable information on a website or pamphlet
- suggesting they attend a legal information workshop
- referring them to licensed legal professionals or other services that can help them

But people often ask for more specific help or information. You can manage expectations by explaining that you are not a lawyer and by describing the scope of the information you can provide. You can also refer the person to professional legal supports.

## General tips on what to say in response to specific questions:

- If a person is asking about how to deal with their situation and you know that a particular law or rules might apply, you can tell them this and point to the rules.
- If they're asking for help with completing a form, you can help them fill it out as long as they tell you what to say and you just write it down
- If they want to know whether they're using the right form, you can help them read the instructions on the form and look for other information that might be helpful in understanding whether it's the right form
- If they want you to explain what a letter from a lawyer means, or what a legal document means, you can read the document to them out loud, or translate it to their language. You can help them understand the letter or document by explaining legal terms or other complicated words or phrases in plain language.



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