

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for 'Choose your own Assigned Solicitor' Programme

1. What is the 'Choose your own Assigned Solicitor' Programme about?

The Legal Aid Bureau (LAB), a department of the Ministry of Law, offers applicants the option to choose their preferred Assigned Solicitors (AS) for civil divorce proceedings.

2. Who can take part?

You can participate in the Programme if you wish to start civil divorce proceedings against your spouse and have not commenced proceedings yet.

If your spouse has already started divorce proceedings against you, you cannot participate. Nonetheless, LAB can still provide legal aid for your divorce proceedings if you pass the means and merits test. Please file your Notice to Contest at the Courts' E-filing Service Bureau (located at the State Courts) within 14 days of being served the court documents. Thereafter, you may come to LAB for legal aid.

3. How can I participate?

Step 1: Register your case on our Applicant Portal (the "Portal")

Register on the Portal and complete the mandatory financial questionnaire, which acts as a preliminary means test. Book an appointment via the OneMinLaw Portal to meet with our Counter Service Officers (CSOs).

Step 2: If eligible, approach your preferred AS

If eligible, our CSOs will provide you with the list of AS in the Programme and the Programme letter. Contact your preferred AS from the list within the next 3 days to make an appointment to discuss your case. If the AS agrees to represent you, he/she will gather information on your case from you and submit the application to LAB on your behalf.

Step 3: Pass the means and merits test

After your application is submitted, LAB will contact you for means testing. If you pass the means test, LAB will assess the merits of your case. You must pass both the means and merits tests before your assignment can be confirmed, and you will be notified of the results. You may need to pay an initial contribution before your AS starts work on your case.

4. Can I choose any AS?

The AS you wish to appoint must be on the panel for the Programme.

5. How will this Programme benefit me?

You will benefit from a more efficient process— you will not need to provide a statement on your case to LAB first, and your AS will be assigned to you more quickly.

6. What if I cannot find or do not have a preferred AS within 3 days of registration via the Applicant's Portal?

You will need to make another appointment via the OneMinLaw Portal to open a file for your case. A lawyer will be assigned to you if you pass the means and merits tests. Should you have further queries, please call us or submit an online enquiry form at go.gov.sg/contactminlaw.

7. I need legal aid for a civil case that is not divorce. Am I still eligible for this Programme?

No. This Programme is only for applicants wishing to start civil divorce proceedings against their spouse, have not commenced proceedings yet, and whose spouse have not started divorce proceedings against them.

For other civil matters, you can still apply for legal aid with LAB and a lawyer will be assigned to you if you pass the means and merits tests.

8. How are the AS on the panel selected?

They are existing LAB's AS who have expressed interest to participate in the Programme.

9. Can I choose more than one AS?

You can only have one AS to represent you in your case. If you wish to change your AS, please let us know of your request and your reasons by contacting us at 1800-2255-529 or submitting an online enquiry form at go.gov.sg/contactminlaw.

10. How much time does my AS have to submit my application after registration?

Please ask your selected AS to submit your legal aid application on your behalf within 1 month of your date of registration via the Applicant's Portal.

11. What happens after my AS submits my application for legal aid?

An officer will contact you to assess your eligibility. You will need to pass the means test first, before being assessed for merits test, i.e. whether you have a reasonable case to bring to court. If aid is granted, your case will be assigned to your AS. LAB will notify you of the outcome.

12. How much do I have to pay for the AS's services?

You will generally pay a contribution and out-of-pocket expenses to LAB. The cost is the same whether you participate in this Programme or not. Refer to link (<https://lab.mlaw.gov.sg/legal-services/are-all-the-legal-services-free/>) for more information about contribution payable.



13. What documents do I need to bring to the AS at my first appointment?

Please bring along all documents relevant to your case. They may include:

- Marriage Certificate Children's Birth Certificate
- Court documents e.g. Expedited Orders, Personal Protection Orders, Maintenance Orders, if applicable
- Information on your spouse's NRIC number and last known modes of contact i.e. contact number and address
- Latest HDB / bank mortgage statement of account, if applicable
- Latest CPF Public Housing Statement, if applicable
- Programme Letter

Please ensure that you have access to your SingPass account. You can contact call the SingPass Helpdesk at +65 6335 3533 or submit an online enquiry at this link (go.gov.sg/contactminlaw) if you have issues accessing your account.

14. If I am represented by my lawyer as a private client and would like to apply for legal aid now, can I be assigned the same lawyer under the Programme?

If you have commenced proceedings, you will not be eligible for this Programme. However, you can still apply for legal aid by making an appointment via the OneMinLaw Portal first, and request for your current lawyer, if your lawyer is on our panel.

15. Do I need to inform LAB that I want to participate in this Programme?

There is no need for formal notification. LAB will be made aware of your participation when your AS submits your legal aid application.

16. Who should I contact if I have queries or feedback on this Programme?

You may contact us at 1800-2255-529 or submit an online enquiry form (go.gov.sg/contactminlaw).

