

<http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/>

Background information

Accessing Free Legal Assistance

TrustLaw is the Thomson Reuters Foundation's global pro bono service. We connect non-profits and social enterprises with law firms that can provide free legal assistance.

We are the biggest pro bono network in the world and we believe that no legal matter is too small: since 2009, we have helped more than 5,000 organisations ranging from small local charities, to community-based social enterprises, to large non-profit organisations, saving the sector more than \$135million in legal fees.

What we can help with

We can facilitate free legal assistance for both non-profits and social enterprises with their day-to-day corporate matters. Here are some examples of legal challenges that we can help with:

- **Governance**
 - Is your legal structure the most appropriate for your current operations and activities, and is it the most tax-efficient?
 - Are your governing documents (articles of association, constitution) up to date?
- **Accessing finance**
 - Do you actively fundraise or receive government grants? Do you have a clear fundraising policy?
 - Are you aware of your organisation's financial reporting obligations as a non-profit or social enterprise?
- **Contracts**
 - Do you collaborate with external partner organisations? Do you have good template partnership agreements?
 - Are your website Terms & Conditions up to date?
 - Do you supply or distribute products or services?
- **Intellectual property**
 - Does your organisation use externally developed written materials, and do you have permission to use them?
 - Do you produce original resources or works that you want to protect?
- **Employment**
 - Do you have an HR policy or staff handbook?
 - Have your employment contracts recently been reviewed by lawyers?

We can also facilitate free legal research to support and inform our members' advocacy efforts to achieve unprecedented legal and policy reforms and strengthen the rule of law. We have helped change legislation to support victims of violence, assisted advocacy efforts to combat sex discrimination and supported legal reform activities to strengthen the rights of the LGBT community. [Past reports are available online here.](#)

Offer Under Enhance

Applying and using the TrustLaw service is entirely free of charge. The Lloyds Bank Foundation partners with the Thomson Reuters Foundation to facilitate free legal assistance for its grantees through referrals to the TrustLaw programme. As the Lloyds Bank Foundation is an official referral partner of this programme, if referred by the Foundation, your application will be fast tracked by TrustLaw. Your grant manager can send you a link to the TrustLaw programme application form

How do I know if this provider is right for my charity?

As described above, TrustLaw can provide support on a wide variety of legal issues from protecting an organisation's intellectual property, draft contracts, partnership agreements, employment contracts or to decide on the best legal structure for the organisation or complex legal research when trying to influence policy or change laws on a particular matter .

Trustlaw welcomes a wide range of projects, however there are certain requests that it will not accept. These include:

- Legal assistance for individuals, including matters related to visa/individual migration cases
- Requests for pro bono assistance on behalf of a third party
- Litigation, disputes and disagreements
- Urgent assistance. There is a minimum one month waiting period before we can connect you to a lawyer.
- Translations of documents

Input Needed

It is simple and free to become a TrustLaw member and access free legal assistance.

- Once you have applied and are accepted as a member, you can log in to the TrustLaw online portal and submit a request for assistance - just a few

lines will suffice. As part of the request submission, you will be asked to book a call with one of our lawyers.

- During the call, you will discuss with a TrustLaw lawyer what your legal need is, and they will draft it in so that it can be shared with our network of 1,000 legal members.
- Following the call, the project request will be finalised and shared on the web portal. After one week of the project being on the web portal (or two weeks if the project is a large legal research work), TrustLaw will advise if you have had any offers of assistance from a legal team.
- You select which legal team you would like to work with, and we introduce you to the legal team to start work on the project.
- If you have not had any offers of assistance after one week, TrustLaw will continue to seek free legal assistance until your project is connected with a legal team.
- Following the introduction to the legal team, TrustLaw will check in with you and the legal team to ensure the legal project is progressing and provide support if required.
- At the end of the project you will be asked to provide feedback to TrustLaw about using the TrustLaw service and the advice received.