



American Samoa Legal Aid

LSC | America's Partner
for Equal Justice
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION



FREE DISASTER TRAINING & PUBLIC WORKSHOP TO ASSIST TROPICAL STORM GITA SURVIVORS IN AMERICAN SAMOA

Pago Pago, March 29, 2018 – American Samoa Legal Aid, the American Samoa Bar Association, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD), and other organizations are organizing to help provide free legal and recovery assistance to people affected by Tropical Storm Gita. A representative of the YLD DLS program will be in Pago Pago, American Samoa to provide disaster legal services training and a public workshop on the following dates:

- **Volunteer Attorney Training** – Wednesday, April 4, 2018, Noon to 1:00pm at the American Samoa Legal Aid office in Pago Pago. Training is limited to attorneys interested in volunteering with the DLS program and members of the American Samoa Bar Association.
- **Public Workshop** – Wednesday, April 4, 2018, 3:00pm to 4:00pm at the American Samoa Legal Aid office in Pago Pago. This workshop is open to the public; however, space is limited. Please RSVP with ASLA Office Manager Arasi Fa'amausili by calling 633-3300/01.
- **Social Service Provider Training** – Thursday, April 5, 2018, Noon to 1:00pm at the American Samoa Legal Aid office in Pago Pago. Training is to educate social service providers of the assistance available through the Disaster Legal Services program.

Please note, the registration deadline to register for FEMA benefits is May 1, 2018. Individuals and families affected by Tropical Storm Gita are strongly encouraged to apply for disaster assistance at the Disaster Recovery Center or online. Some of the legal assistance available through the DLS program includes:

- Appealing denials of FEMA applications
- Making property insurance claims
- Replacing other important legal documents destroyed in the hurricane
- Helping with consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems or landlord/tenant issues

Background

When the President declares a major disaster, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, establishes a toll-free number for disaster survivors to request legal assistance. Funding for the toll-free line comes from FEMA under the authority of Section 415 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 100-707). The American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division partners with state bar associations and other legal organizations to recruit volunteers in affected areas to handle survivor's cases.

Survivors should be aware that there are limitations on disaster legal services. For example, assistance is not available for cases that will produce a fee (i.e., those cases where attorneys are paid part of the settlement by a court). Such cases are referred to a local lawyer referral service.

Partner Organizations

The following organizations collaborate to assist disaster survivors through the DLS program:

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division – The ABA YLD, the largest national organization of young lawyers, provides leadership in serving the public and the profession, and promotes excellence and fulfillment in the practice of law. Its parent organization, the ABA, is the national voice of the legal profession and the largest voluntary professional membership group in the world (http://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers.html).

American Red Cross – The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. The American Red Cross, through its strong network of volunteers, donors and partners, is always there in times of need. We aspire to turn compassion into action so that all people affected by disaster across the country and around the world receive care, shelter and hope; our communities are ready and prepared for disasters; everyone in our country has access to safe, lifesaving blood and blood products; all members of our armed services and their families find support and comfort whenever needed; and ...in an emergency, there are always trained individuals nearby, ready to use their Red Cross skills to save lives (<http://www.redcross.org/>).

American Samoa Legal Aid – ASLA provides free civil legal assistance to low income persons in the types of cases listed in the ASLA Priorities such as Minor Guardianship, Name Change, Small Estates, Domestic Violence, Home Foreclosure Defense etc. ASLA is in the process of adding legal assistance to victims of disasters to its Priorities. ASLA does not provide legal assistance for defendants in criminal cases (<https://www.aslegalaid.org>).

American Samoa Bar Association – ASBA is the licensing body and the official bar association for all of those who practice law in American Samoa. The American Samoa Bar Association serves to promote justice, the rule of law, and the interests of the legal system. We do this through public education,

legislative review, promoting the judiciary, and advocating the rule of law. We also offer a legal scholarship to a student that shows exemplary academics and a desire to promote the rule of law in American Samoa (<http://www.asbar.org>).

Legal Services Corporation – LSC is an independent nonprofit established by Congress in 1974 to provide financial support for civil legal aid to low-income Americans. LSC promotes equal access to justice by providing funding to 133 independent non-profit legal aid programs in every state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories. LSC grantees serve thousands of low-income individuals, children, families, seniors, and veterans in 813 offices in every congressional district. Read more about the vital role legal aid plays in a just America (<https://www.lsc.gov/>).

National Disaster Legal Aid – NDLA is a collaborative effort of Lone Star Legal Aid, the American Bar Association, the Legal Services Corporation, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, the Texas Legal Services Center and Pro Bono Net, provides information on legal issues related to disasters to the low- and moderate-income public (www.disasterlegalaid.org).

United Policyholders – UP is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) consumer advocacy group that specializes in helping disaster survivors with insurance claim issues. UP also trains case managers and legal aid lawyers to assist clients with insurance and recovery matters, and for help with flood, wind, hurricane and auto insurance questions (www.uphelp.org).

Contact:

Andrew VanSingel
Disaster Legal Services Coordinator
American Bar Association
Young Lawyers Division
Andrew VanSingel
(616) 293-4729
vansingelDLS@gmail.com

Fainuulelei Alailima Utu
Executive Director
American Samoa Legal Aid, Inc.
Letialua Building, Second Floor
P.O. Box 5984
Pago Pago, AS 96799
(684)633-3300/01
Fautu@aslegalaid.org