



THE ELMA FRANÇOIS

LEGAL CLINIC

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why would I go to the Legal Clinic?

If you or someone you know would like to access legal advice related to gender-based violence or related family matters (e.g. maintenance, divorce), then you may reach out to the Elma François Legal Clinic and gain an initial assessment for services.

2. What is gender-based violence?

Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term that refers to violence directed to a person or community on the basis of their gender. GBV disproportionately affects women and girls and violates their human rights. GBV includes intimate-partner violence (also known as domestic violence), sexual violence, child marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, femicide and any other type of physical, psychological, emotional, or economic violence that happens within an unequal power dynamic and is gender-specific.

3. What should I bring?

- A form of identification: ID, DP, Passport or other official form of identification;
- Proof of address (if available);
- Proof of income, assets and expenses: e.g. pay slip, spousal or child maintenance order, pension grant, social assistance grant, rent receipt, bank statement (if available).

4. What will happen at the Legal Clinic?

You may choose to fill out the Intake Form by yourself remotely or with the Legal Clinic Coordinator in-person or over the phone. After you have submitted the Intake Form, your request for legal services will be considered by the Legal Clinic team, using a standardized assessment criteria. Once your case is determined to be related to gender-based violence and we are equipped to provide the services your case requires, we will arrange ONE pro-bono (free) consultation with a suitable attorney. During this consultation, the attorney will learn about your situation, offer legal advice, and create an action plan as needed. When attending this consultation, you should walk with the documents outlined above, as well as all those you consider relevant to your case.

5. How much does it cost?

The first consultation with a lawyer is completely free. Any costs related to further consultations or activities related to your case will be determined by the attorney.

Please note that an initial assessment will be made to determine whether or not you meet the criteria for admission to the clinic and that your finances (and access to finances) will be taken into account if any fee is applied.

6. What if I cannot afford to get there or I am too scared to travel?

Your wellbeing is important to us. Please let us know what your concerns are via email, phone call or message and we will try our best to come to a solution that makes you feel comfortable.

7. What if I am under 18?

The Elma François Legal Clinic caters to all survivors and victims of gender-based violence. Persons of all ages, including children (under age 18) can access the services of the Clinic. Please note that children can access the services of the Clinic directly or through an adult.

8. Is the Legal Clinic open to men and boys?

Women and girls are our priority clients, however men and boys may also qualify. All potential clients go through a standard assessment to determine whether they meet a minimum criteria.

9. Is the Legal Clinic migrant friendly?

The Elma François Legal Clinic serves survivors and victims of gender-based violence regardless of nationality. We have made several provisions to make our clinic migrant friendly, some of which are listed below. . If you have suggestions or would like to volunteer services in this regard, please email us at legalclinic@womantra.org.

10. What if I do not speak English?

Our Legal Clinic team consists of attorneys and other staff that speak Spanish and Arabic. Please let us know beforehand so we can accommodate you as best we can.

11. Is the Legal Clinic LGBTQ-friendly?

The Elma François Legal Clinic serves survivors and victims of gender-based violence, regardless of sexuality, gender identity or expression.

12. Is the Legal Clinic sex-worker friendly?

The Elma François Legal Clinic serves survivors and victims of gender-based violence, regardless of their employment background.

13. I have a disability, will the Legal Clinic be accessible to me?

The Elma François Legal Clinic serves survivors and victims of gender-based violence, regardless of their abilities. If you feel comfortable, please let us know before your appointment what accommodations you need. We will do our best to make the necessary provisions.

Please note, our current office space is accessed via a staircase. If you would like to meet us at a more accessible location, please indicate so in your appointment request.

14. What if I have to bring my child/children with me?

Please let us know prior to your appointment so we can arrange child-care or a child-friendly meeting location for your appointment.

15. How can I get involved or donate to the Legal Clinic?

If you would like to get involved as a volunteer or intern please send an email to legalclinic@womantra.org including your expression of interest and resume. At this time, we are particularly interested in Spanish-speakers and lawyers who would like to work with us.

If you would like to donate to the Legal Clinic, please send an email to legalclinic@womantra.org

16. How is the Legal Clinic prepared against COVID-19?

The Legal Clinic is taking precautions to keep our clients and staff safe by holding virtual gatherings instead of in person ones when possible, wearing masks, sanitising hands at entrances and exits, and following maximum capacity guidelines.

17. Where can I send suggestions or complaints?

Please send these to legalclinic@womantra.org.

Have an unanswered question?

Send us an email at legalclinic@womantra.org