

# Obtaining Legal Assistance

Individuals, including married couples, can file bankruptcy without an attorney (“*pro se*”) but we strongly recommend that you obtain legal counsel. Bankruptcy laws can be very confusing, and you will be expected to follow the same rules and procedures that an attorney would if you represent yourself. Failure to do so could result in dismissal of your case or other sanctions. The following resources are available to you if you wish to retain an attorney and are interested in learning about qualifications for receiving *pro bono* (free) or reduced fee legal representation:

## The Florida Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service

<https://www.floridabar.org/public/lrs/>

## The Bankruptcy Pro Bono Resource Locator

American Bankruptcy Institute

<http://bankruptcyresources.org/content/resources?state=FL>

## FloridaLawHelp.org

<https://floridalawhelp.org>

## Florida Free Legal Answers

<https://florida.freelegalanswers.org>

## Legal Services of North Florida

[www.lsnf.org](http://www.lsnf.org) or find the location nearest you at [www.lsnf.org/contact](http://www.lsnf.org/contact)

Locations in Fort Walton Beach, Panama City, Pensacola, Tallahassee, and Quincy

## Three Rivers Legal Services

[www.trls.org](http://www.trls.org)

901 NW 8th Ave., Ste. D-5, Gainesville, FL 32608  
(352) 372-0519

## The Northern District of Florida Bankruptcy Pro Bono Initiative

(866) 944-6421

***Assistance from these organizations may be based upon the availability of resources and/or your income. Aid and/or legal representation from these entities is not guaranteed.***

## U.S. Bankruptcy Court Northern District of Florida

### Mailing Address:

U.S. Bankruptcy Court  
110 E. Park Ave., Ste. 100  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

### Court Locations and Hours:

#### Tallahassee

U.S. Bankruptcy Courthouse  
110 E. Park Ave., Ste. 100  
Tallahassee, Florida

#### Pensacola

Winston E. Arnow Federal Bldg.  
100 N. Palafox St., Ste. 154  
Pensacola, Florida

#### Gainesville\*

U.S. Courthouse  
401 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Gainesville, Florida

*\*Court location only; office is not staffed*

#### Panama City

*The U.S. Courthouse in Panama City is closed indefinitely due to damage from Hurricane Michael (11/2018).*

#### Office Hours

Offices are open to the public  
Monday – Friday, excluding federal  
holidays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

#### Telephone:

(850) 521-5001 [Tallahassee]  
(866) 639-4615 [Toll Free]

#### Website:

[www.flnb.uscourts.gov](http://www.flnb.uscourts.gov)

***Employees of the Clerk's Office are not permitted to assist you in preparing the petition, schedules, or other documents, nor may they provide you with legal advice or attorney recommendations.***

*This information is intended to answer frequently asked questions and is not to be interpreted as legal advice or to serve as a complete guide as to what is required to be filed, provided, or completed in your case. This information is subject to change without notice. Please review the Court's website for the most recent information and forms.*

## **Non-Attorney Petition Preparers**

If you file bankruptcy *pro se*, you may be offered services by non-attorney petition preparers. By law, petition preparers can only enter your information into the bankruptcy forms. They are prohibited from providing legal advice, explaining answers to legal questions, or assisting you in a bankruptcy court. A petition preparer must sign all documents they prepare for you and include their printed name, address, and social security number on the documents. They must also provide you a copy for your records. Petition preparers cannot sign documents on your behalf or receive payment for court fees.