

F.A.Q.: Legal Resources in Frederick, MD

Disclaimer: Please be advised the State's Attorney's Office does not provide legal advice. Please contact one of the below resources for legal counsel. (links provided)



1. What is the role of the State's Attorney?

State's Attorney's Office serves as the government's legal representative, responsible for investigating crimes, charging suspects, and prosecuting cases in court. Their primary mandate is to seek justice—not merely to convict—while representing the public interest, ensuring public safety, and protecting the constitutional rights of all individuals.

2. Where can the public access legal information?

Circuit Court Law Library - The Frederick County Circuit Court Law Library is open to anyone who can make use of its materials and services. Judges, attorneys, paralegals, students, residents, and visitors to Frederick County are welcome. Public access computers and printers are available in the library to provide access to the Internet and to WestLaw, an online legal research tool.

<https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/2688/Circuit-Court-Law-Library>

3. Where can I receive free family legal advice?

Free In-person Family Law Clinic: Maryland Judiciary **410-951-7777**

<https://www.courts.state.md.us/legalhelp/webinars>

4. Where can I apply for a lawyer if I can't afford one?

Public Defenders Office: Apply for a Lawyer:

<https://opd.state.md.us/apply-for-a-lawyer>

<https://opd.state.md.us/frederick>

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5. Who handles misdemeanor and civil court cases?

District Court of Frederick, MD

Hears landlord/tenant cases, replevin actions, traffic violations, criminal cases classified as misdemeanors and certain felonies, and civil cases in the amount of \$30,000 or less. The District Court does not conduct jury trials.

<https://www.mdcourts.gov/district/directories/frederick>

6. Where can I ask for assistance with my civil court case?

MD Legal Aid

We advocate with and for Marylanders experiencing poverty to achieve equity and social justice through free civil legal services, community collaboration, and systems change.

<https://www.mdlab.org/>

7. I am a Frederick City employee. Where can I seek legal counsel?

City of Frederick, MD LEGAL Department

This office responds to the legal needs of the City government and supports the Mayor and City staff in the implementation of policies and procedures. Because of the nature of the City Attorney's role, we cannot represent or provide legal advice to individual citizens, groups, etc. We are therefore unable to respond to individual requests for legal advice or representation.

<https://www.cityoffrederickmd.gov/205/Legal>

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8. Where can I find information on a court case in MD?

FIND MY CASE: MD Judiciary Case Search

<https://casesearch.courts.state.md.us/casesearch>

9. What kind of lawyer handles business or contract legal agreements?

Business or Contract Legal Agreements: not Under Prosecutor's Office:

A prosecutor (such as a District Attorney, Assistant State's Attorney, or federal prosecutor) is a public official who represents the government in criminal cases. Their mandate is to uphold public safety and prosecute violations of criminal law, not to handle private civil matters.

Here is why prosecutors do not handle business or contract agreements:

- **Criminal vs. Civil Jurisdiction:** A prosecutor's role is strictly criminal. Business disputes, breach of contracts, and contract drafting are civil matters that are handled by private, civil attorneys.
- **Public vs. Private Interest:** Prosecutors act in the public interest, whereas contract disputes are private disputes between individuals or businesses.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** In many jurisdictions, prosecutors are prohibited from maintaining a private practice to prevent conflicts of interest between their public duty and private business dealings.

Exceptions to the Rule:

- **Criminal Misconduct:** If a contract dispute involves criminal activity—such as fraud, forgery, or theft—a prosecutor may investigate the case, but their goal is to secure a conviction for the crime, not to enforce the contract.
- **Corporate Agreements:** In specific, high-level white-collar cases, prosecutors may enter into "non-prosecution" or "deferred prosecution agreements" with corporations to avoid an indictment, but this is a tool for resolving criminal liability, not for litigating standard civil contract disputes.