

### What is LawHelpMN?

LawHelpMN is Minnesota's online source for free legal aid referrals, know-your-rights information and a variety of self-help tools. The website is maintained by Legal Services State Support. LawHelpMN was launched in 1999 and now serves about 200,000 visitors each year.

LawHelpMN provides easy-to-understand information in 19 legal topic areas, ranging from what constitutes domestic violence; issues related to housing rights, public benefits and children; and the needs of special populations such as immigrants. LawHelpMN also provides referrals to local legal aid organizations that can help. Many of these resources are available in languages other than English.

LawHelpMN's newest features are **Legal Information** and **Find Legal Help widgets** and a new **Library template** that can be used to adapt LawHelpMN for use specifically in library contexts. These features were developed by Pro Bono Net in partnership with Central Minnesota Legal Services and Legal Services State Support, with funding from the LSC TIG program. After a pilot phase in Ramsey County, these features will be available for other partners to use.

### What are the LawHelpMN content widgets?

Widgets are online applications that allow a content feed from one site to easily be added to another website, blog or intranet. They are offered by many federal agencies to distribute alerts and timely information more broadly. See FEMA's widgets as an example: <http://www.fema.gov/widgets>.

Adding a LawHelpMN widget to your webpage means that your users will have access to up-to-date, credible legal self-help and referral information directly from your own website. LawHelpMN offers three types of widgets:

- **A browsable resource widget:** allows to the user to select a topic and subtopic within the widget to view resources in a specific legal area of their choice.
- **A one-subtopic resource widget:** displays a result set that has been pre-filtered with resources for one subtopic, for example foreclosure resources for tenants.
- **A browsable organization widget:** allows the user to enter their zip code and select a topic and subtopic within the widget to view organizations providing services for that issue in their local area.

Once you have added the widget to your website, there is no technical maintenance required on your end. As content is added to LawHelpMN, the updates are reflected in real-time where the widget has been embedded on your website.

### What are some examples of how widgets can be used?

LawHelpMN widgets are very flexible and can be customized to show LawHelpMN content that is most meaningful to your users. For example, widgets can be created for:

- “Hot topic” or seasonal resources, such as information about utilities and heating help in the winter, or information about tax credits and free filing options during tax season
- Resources authored by your program that have been posted to LawHelpMN
- A list of do-it-yourself legal forms
- Resources in languages other than English
- A list of legal aid programs or clinics in your service area

### **Sounds great! How can I get one?**

A LawHelpMN admin can work with you to generate the widget based on your preferences. Administrators can select from a variety of filters to customize the feed of content that displays on your website. Filters are multi-select and include:

- Channel
- Category
- Tags
- Coverage (county)
- Language
- Authoring Organization
- Module Type (e.g. PDF, PowerPoint, etc.)

The widget generator tool also allows a LawHelpMN admin to configure many widget display attributes such as the size, font and styling. Once you and the LawHelpMN admin have decided on the characteristics of the widget, you will be provided with a snippet of HTML code needed to embed the widget on your website, blog or elsewhere. No special technical expertise is required to add the widgets to your website. They can be added to most types of websites by a content manager or webmaster simply by copying and pasting the code into the HTML view of your webpage.

### **What is the LawHelp library template?**

The LawHelp Library template supports the creation of a mini-site that adapts LawHelpMN content specifically for use by library patrons or librarians assisting individuals with legal questions. The site supports one or more customizable feeds of content from LawHelpMN.org, as well as the creation of editable pages and sections for additional information the library partner(s) may want to provide that would not typically be available on LawHelpMN.org. The site design is co-branded for the participating library(s) and LawHelpMN.org. See [www.RamseyCountyLawHelp.org](http://www.RamseyCountyLawHelp.org) as an example. The template will be available for other libraries to use after a pilot stage with three library partners in Ramsey County.

### **Have questions, suggestions or need help?**

Contact [State Support email]