

The Modest Means Project

Information for Volunteer Attorneys

I. INTRODUCTION

The Modest Means Project is a revival of the original Modest Means Project operating in Maricopa (1995), Pima (1998), and Yuma (1998) Counties through the efforts of the State Bar of Arizona's Young Lawyers Division. The current Project pays tribute to those who inspired and led the way for the continuation of services to those who have no voice in our legal system.

This resource is designed to provide an overview of the Modest Means Project's goals, policies and procedures. If you have any questions, please contact:

For general questions about the Modest Means Project, please contact:

Kass Urias
Arizona Bar Foundation
Kass.Urias@azflse.org

For questions about the Modest Means attorney registration process, please contact:

Fabiola Perez
State Bar of Arizona
Fabiola.Perez@staff.azbar.org

On behalf of the citizens of Arizona who will be assisted by this Project - thank you for your time, expertise, and assistance.

II. PURPOSE OF MODEST MEANS PROJECT

The Purpose of the Modest Means Project is to provide low-cost legal assistance to people who cannot afford the expertise of an attorney at standard rates, but who cannot qualify for free legal services due to income qualifications or case type restrictions. The Project serves those whose income is less than or equal to 250% of the federal poverty guidelines. The Modest Means Project has a set rate of \$75.00 per hour. Attorneys participating in the Modest Means Project agree to offer brief advice or unbundled services to Modest Means Project eligible clients at a cost to the client of no more than \$75.00/hour.

III. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

This Project operates as a partnership between the Arizona Bar Foundation and the State Bar of Arizona. For input, questions, or information on Modest Means Project operations, please contact Foundation staff member Kass.Urias@azflse.org.

IV. MODEST MEANS PROJECT ATTORNEY RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Becoming a Modest Means Project Attorney

Attorneys wanting to participate in the Modest Means Project are required to complete an application for participation online. Qualifications for attorneys to participate in the Modest Means Project include:

- must be members in good standing with the State Bar of Arizona and understand that the Foundation will inquire with the State Bar of Arizona about the applicant's good standing and discipline history,
- must attend the Foundations of Ethics/Modest Means CLE seminar,
- must maintain malpractice insurance on their own, as part of a firm/organization policy, or with an approved application through the Arizona Bar Foundation, and,
- must maintain proper records and documentation of Modest Means services provided.

B. Client Eligibility

The Arizona Bar Foundation maintains the online and telephone processes which provide Modest Means Project Referral Lists to eligible applicants. All applicants deemed "eligible" by the automated online and telephone system are determined using an honor system. The information entered into the system is not verified during the application process and no formal paperwork or documentation is required to be an eligible client. If an attorney discovers that the Modest Means client

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exceeds the eligibility criteria of at or below 250% of Federal Poverty Guidelines, the attorney may inform the client of their ineligibility and terminate the relationship with the client.

2026 Federal Poverty Guidelines

ANNUAL Household Income					MONTHLY Household Income				
Household/ Family Size	100%	150%	200%	250%	Household/ Family Size	100%	150%	200%	250%
1	\$ 15,960	23,940	31,920	39,900	1	\$ 1,330.00	1,995.00	2,660.00	3,325.00
2	\$ 21,640	32,460	43,280	54,100	2	\$ 1,803.33	2,705.00	3,606.67	4,508.33
3	\$ 27,320	40,980	54,640	68,300	3	\$ 2,276.67	3,415.00	4,553.33	5,691.67
4	\$ 33,000	49,500	66,000	82,500	4	\$ 2,750.00	4,125.00	5,500.00	6,875.00
5	\$ 38,680	58,020	77,360	96,700	5	\$ 3,223.33	4,835.00	6,446.67	8,058.33
6	\$ 44,360	66,540	88,720	110,900	6	\$ 3,696.67	5,545.00	7,393.33	9,241.67
7	\$ 50,040	75,060	100,080	125,100	7	\$ 4,170.00	6,255.00	8,340.00	10,425.00
8	\$ 55,720	83,580	111,440	139,300	8	\$ 4,643.33	6,965.00	9,286.67	11,608.33

* For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,680 for each additional person

The [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) are updated annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The above guidelines are to provide you with an example of a participant's income who is at 250% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

C. Services Provided through the Modest Means Project

Modest Means Project attorneys will provide eligible clients:

- **Legal advice** on how to best handle a legal matter on their own (pro se)
- **Limited Scope Representation**

Modest Means Project attorneys may provide eligible clients:

- **Full representation**, if the attorney maintains the \$75 per hour fee with the client and communicates to the client the services are beyond the standard scope of the Modest Means Project.

D. Modest Means Service Delivery

Each Modest Means Project eligible client will receive information and contact information for Modest Means Project attorneys. It is the responsibility of the client to contact the Modest Means attorney to schedule an appointment.

At the time of initial contact, the Modest Means attorney should gather the information necessary to check for conflict. Conflict checks must be concluded prior to the scheduled appointment. If a conflict is discovered, the client should be notified and told to contact another Modest Means eligible attorney on the list they were provided with.

At the time of initial contact, if the Modest Means attorney discovers that the client should not be eligible for Modest Means because the client's income or household size is greater than 250% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, the attorney may inform the client and not schedule an appointment.

Each appointment scheduled with a Modest Means attorney should be for one hour. The fee is restricted to \$75.00 for the one-hour appointment.

During the scheduled one-hour appointment, the Modest Means attorney may interview the client and screen the case for merit. If the Modest Means client has a problem that does not merit legal assistance or falls outside of Project guidelines, the attorney should inform the client of this fact.

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If a Modest Means client requests an attorney appear on their behalf, it is the attorney's decision whether they appear.

V. OVERVIEW OF MODEST MEANS PROCESS

The Modest Means Project operates using different means of technology for online and telephone eligibility screening of potential Modest Means Project clients. The screening uses unique identifiers to determine the eligibility of Modest Means Project clients and generates a Modest Means Project attorney profile list that is specific to the applicant.

Application for Modest Means Project Services

Arizonans can apply for the Modest Means Project online or via telephone to assess eligibility. Both the online application and telephone application are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The online application is located on the AZLawHelp.org website and includes a series of questions to determine an applicant meets the Modest Means Project eligibility criteria. If an applicant is eligible for the Modest Means Project, they are directed to a form on the website which asks for their contact information and the area of law they are seeking help. An email is sent to the Modest Means eligible client which includes information about the Modest Means Project, a unique Project code specific to the application submitted, and a randomized list of attorneys participating in the Modest Means Project under the requested area(s) of law.

The telephone application may be accessed by calling (866) 637-5341. An automated system on the (866) number guides callers through a series of questions to determine if the applicant meets the Modest Means Project eligibility criteria. If a caller is eligible for the Modest Means Project, they are provided with a Modest Means code and asked to enter the code into a form on the AZLawHelp.org website where they will be directed to the online form requesting their contact information and area of law they are seeking help. An email is sent to the Modest Means eligible client which includes information about the Modest Means Project, a unique Project code specific to the application submitted, and a randomized list of attorneys participating in the Modest Means Project under the requested area(s) of law. For Modest Means eligible callers without access to the internet or email, a voicemail box is provided for callers using the telephone system. Arizona Bar Foundation staff are responsible for monitoring the voicemail box and mailing a printed copy of the Modest Means list to the eligible caller.

Modest Means Project Referral Lists

Once an attorney participating in the Modest Means Project has met all the requirements for participation, the attorneys' name and contact information, including their name, telephone number, spoken languages, hours of operation, and accepted payment methods, will appear on the Modest Means Referral List provided to individuals deemed eligible for the Project. All information on the Referral List is approved and provided by the Modest Means Project attorney.

For the Modest Means Client

Once an eligible applicant receives a Modest Means Project referral list, it is the responsibility of the individual to review and follow the Project guidelines provided with the referral list. It is also the responsibility of the potential Modest Means client to provide the Modest Means Identification number to the Modest Means attorney providing services.

For the Modest Means Attorney

Attorneys participating in the Modest Means Project agree to assist eligible individuals with a one-hour meeting for a fee of \$75. In that meeting, Project attorneys are expected to offer only brief advice or limited scope representation. A Project attorney may offer full representation to the Modest Means client, but it is not the expectation of the Modest Means Project that full representation will be provided. If full representation is requested, the Modest Means Project attorney can agree to offer representation beyond the scope of the Project's one-hour consultation commitment but must maintain the fee of \$75 per hour. The Modest Means Project does not require attorneys to provide free legal services.

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VI. TYPES OF CASES

Currently, the Modest Means Project provides eligible clients with referral to the following areas of law:

Statewide:

Bankruptcy	Consumer	Criminal Misdemeanors	Employment
Family	Guardianship – Adult & Juvenile	Housing - Foreclosure	Housing – Landlord/Tenant
Immigration	Mediation	Wills & Trusts	

Cases In Maricopa County:

Consumer Law Appeals Family Law Appeals