



Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. Small Claims Court Clinic

WHAT

At the Small Claims Court Clinic, a joint project with the Put Something Back Project, private volunteer attorneys give free legal advice to people who want to bring or defend a Small Claims Court case. A volunteer attorney meets one on one with each client in order to give advice about their Small Claims Court case, from initiating or defending the claim, all the way through trial. The Clinic is held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the offices of Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. All clients are seen by appointment.

WHY

Small Claims Court can help people quickly and easily fix disputes involving \$5,000.00 or less without an attorney going to court with them. Advice on how the system works and what is needed to prove the case can provide claimants with the tools they need to successfully bring or defend their case.

HOW

The Clinic provides guidance and advice on Small Claims cases including:

- Unpaid wages,
 - Unreturned security deposits and other landlord-tenant problems involving money,
 - Broken contracts,
 - Used car purchases.
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WHO

LSGMI provides free civil legal services to the neediest individuals within our community. Our clients are primarily women, children, seniors, and the working poor. In many cases, we are the safety net preventing these individuals from becoming homeless or dependent on welfare. On a daily basis, our team of attorneys, who are organized into legal specialty units and projects, provides high quality representation to clients with problems relating to housing, health care, education, disability benefits, family issues, and employment.

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Small Claims Court Clinic Typical Cases

- Susan came to LSGMI after her landlord refused to return her \$1,300 security deposit. When Susan moved out at the end of her lease, she left the apartment in good, clean condition with no damages. She asked the landlord to send her security deposit to her new address, but never received it. At the Small Claims Court Clinic, Susan met one-on-one with a volunteer private attorney who advised her that she would need to file a small claims lawsuit against her landlord in order to get her deposit back, and helped her complete her Statement of Claim and Summons. The attorney also advised Susan how to have the court filing fee waived because she was indigent, and what to do at her pre-trial conference and her trial. As a result, Susan successfully obtained a judgment against her former landlord for the full amount of the security deposit.
- Mary came to LSGMI for assistance with wage theft because she had not been paid for the last month of her work for a local courier service. Mary requested repeatedly to be paid, but was told no. At the Small Claims Court Clinic, a volunteer private attorney advised Mary on her legal options for seeking payment. The attorney helped Mary complete her Statement of Claim and Summons, and advised her how to prosecute her lawsuit in order to get the wages she was owed. As a result, Mary successfully obtained a judgment for one month's wages.

For further information, please contact attorney Mandy Mills mmills@lsgmi.org

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