

Free ABA web advice proves popular with users, lawyers

The American Bar Association web program [ABA Free Legal Answers](#), which gives income-eligible users the ability to pose civil legal questions to volunteer attorneys, surpassed 200,000 total questions in January, doubling the number of its inquiries in less than two years.

Last month, ABA Free Legal Answers surpassed 200,000 questions and 10,000 volunteer attorneys participating nationwide.

Launched in 2016, ABA Free Legal Answers serves as a virtual legal advice clinic by providing a no-cost way for eligible participants to obtain basic guidance on civil legal matters. Through January, 45 states have committed to participate, and the service has handled 200,592 inquiries, or more than double the 100,000 questions reached in March 2020. Last month, it also surpassed the 10,000 mark for the number of attorneys participating nationwide.

“For those who cannot afford an attorney and have nowhere else to turn, Free Legal Answers serves as a critical resource,” ABA President Reginald Turner said. “Sadly, hitting the milestone of 200,000 questions underscores the need for expanding free and affordable civil legal services. We are proud of the more than 10,000 volunteer lawyers nationwide who are helping to meet these important legal needs and urge other attorneys to step up and offer assistance as well.”

The rapid increase in the number of questions during the past two years tracks the emergence of COVID-19 in the U.S. in March 2020. In the first few months of the pandemic, ABA Free Legal Answers responded by temporarily increasing its question limit per client while many states changed their eligibility guidelines by raising their income/asset cap. The higher caps remain in a dozen states today.

Legal guidance is limited to noncriminal matters and takes place entirely online. Roughly 40% of questions relate to family and children-related legal matters; 15% deal with housing and homelessness; and 10% involve consumer/finance.

Residents of Texas, Florida, Indiana, Illinois and Tennessee have generated the most questions, with the highest number of participating attorneys coming from Florida, Tennessee, Illinois, Texas and North Carolina. Nationwide, more than 43,400 hours of pro bono legal service were submitted with 10,288 volunteer attorneys registered to participate. A total of 11,752 veterans and 15,365 seniors have submitted questions through January.