

What is CILS?

Indian Rights' Advocates for Over 40 Years

California Indian Legal Services (CILS) is an Indian-controlled, not-for-profit law firm devoted exclusively to the cause of Native American rights.

Founded by California Indian leaders and public interest attorneys in the mid-1960's, CILS boasts many important achievements over the intervening decades, including significant Supreme Court and legislative victories, the creation of the Native American Rights Fund in 1970, and the successful resolution of problems faced by thousands of Indian individuals and families. Governed by a tribally selected Board of Trustees, CILS today remains a valuable advocate and resource for California Indian communities.

No Cost Legal Services

With grants from the Legal Services Corporation, the California State Bar, Legal Services Trust Fund and other federal and state grants, CILS provides no cost legal services to low-income individuals and tribes. CILS also receives funding from tribal contributions, private foundations, individual donations, and other tribal, federal, state, and local grants.

Over the last 40 years, CILS has helped more than 50,000 impoverished Indian families, children, and individuals.

No cost legal assistance may be available for a wide variety of issues involving Federal Indian Law, including child welfare, Indian land issues, students' rights, discrimination, housing, public benefits eligibility, Indian probates, and more.

Serving California Indian Communities

In addition to providing no cost services to qualifying tribes, individuals and organizations, CILS provides low-cost legal services to California Indian tribes that do not qualify for no cost services. CILS has represented nearly every California Indian tribe over our history, on a wide range of legal issues. We maintain four offices throughout California, and employ advocates with years of experience representing tribes and individuals.

Who is eligible for CILS' free legal services?

Because CILS receives federal funds from the Legal Services Corporation, our no cost legal services are generally only available to individuals whose monthly household incomes are below 125% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. For example, in 2009, for one person this amount is \$1,128 a month. For two people it is \$1,518 and for a family of four it is \$2,297. Depending on your situation, there are some limited circumstances in which we may be able to represent you if your income is above these numbers.

Even if we are unable to provide you with no cost representation, we may still be able to help you. Our advocates can often provide you with information about steps you can take to resolve your problem, or give you a referral to another agency or organization that can help. We encourage all community members to call with their questions!

What kinds of assistance does CILS give when we are not able to provide representation?

- * CILS may be able to provide you with detailed information about how to address your problem without the assistance of legal counsel. In some cases, we have comprehensive informational packets that will walk you through what you need to do step-by-step.
- * CILS may be able to provide you with pamphlets or brochures that will help you understand your rights and how to protect them.
- * CILS can refer you to legal or social services organizations in your area that specialize in the issues with which you need assistance. We maintain up-to-date listings of Indian and non-Indian social service providers, legal aid organizations and other sources of legal assistance, as well as state and federal government agencies.

What kinds of cases is CILS not able to accept?

Because of federal regulations, and the limited amount of funding available for free legal services, CILS is able to provide free representation only in those cases involving the special legal rights of Native Americans (see next page for examples of cases CILS may be able to accept).

Some examples of the kinds of cases CILS does not accept:

CILS cannot provide legal representation in criminal matters.

CILS cannot provide legal representation in those cases where the main reason for bringing legal action is to secure monetary damages for accident or injury.

If we believe that the law does not provide any remedy for the harm you believe you have suffered, then we cannot provide legal representation.

Generally, CILS does not provide legal representation in those cases involving a dispute between Indians or between Indian organizations.

What do I do if I believe my request for help has been unfairly denied?

Please contact in writing the office where you initially sought assistance and let them know what your concern is. If your request for assistance is denied, the Directing Attorney of the office will communicate that to you in writing. If you still feel that you were denied services unfairly, you may contact CILS' Executive Director, Devon Lomayesva. Mrs. Lomayesva can be reached in CILS' Central Administrative Office, 609 South Escondido Boulevard, Escondido, CA 92025. If you would like more detailed information about our grievance procedures, you may contact CILS' Central Administrative Office.

How can I find out more about CILS?

For more information about CILS, please visit our website at www.calindian.org, or call your local CILS office (see next page for contact information).

What kinds of individual representation does CILS provide?

CILS is able to provide representation to qualifying individuals in cases that involve issues unique to Native Americans. These may include:

- Use of and access to individual trust allotments
- Will drafting and Probates of Indian land/trust assets
- Parent-student rights committees
- Indian students' rights
- Health care access
- Civil rights related to race or Indian religion
- Indian income related tax benefits and exemptions
- Tribal representation on Indian Child Welfare Act, Guardianships, and Indian custodianships
- Eligibility of Indians for special benefits programs
- Unsealing Indian birth records

For example:

Child Welfare

CILS has succeeded in preventing the break-up of many Indian families by helping Indian tribes challenge custody and placement orders that were obtained in violation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). CILS generally represents the interests of the Tribes in these cases, working to ensure that Indian children are placed in culturally appropriate placements so that the relationship between the Tribe and the child remains intact.

Education

In this zero tolerance era, schools often expel students for the most minor of offenses, denying children needed educational rights and opportunities. CILS attorneys have succeeded in working with school districts to allow numerous Indian students facing suspension or expulsion to return to school and continue their education.

Trust Land and Estate Planning

CILS has helped numerous Indian individuals navigate the complex process of placing land into trust status. Also, through community clinics, CILS has provided education on the American Indian Probate Reform Act, which is vital for Will drafting and estate planning for Indian individuals holding title to Indian trust land and other trust assets.

CILS OFFICE LOCATIONS

Escondido Field Office and Principal Office
 609 South Escondido Boulevard, Escondido, CA 92025
 (760) 746-8941 * (800) 743-8941 * Fax (760) 746-1815

Bishop Field Office
 287 Academy Street, Suite B, Bishop, CA 93514
 (760) 873-3581 * (800) 736-3582 * Fax (760) 873-7461

Eureka Field Office
 324 F Street, Eureka, CA 95501
 (707) 443-8397 * (800) 347-2402 * Fax (707) 443-8913

Sacramento Field Office
 3814 Auburn Blvd., Suite 72, Sacramento, CA 95821
 (916) 978-0960 * (800) 829-0284 * Fax (916) 978-0964

For assistance, please contact your local CILS office. Refer to the box below to determine which office serves the county where you live.

COUNTIES SERVED

Bishop Office	Alpine, Inyo, Kern, Mono, Tuolumne
Escondido Office	Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernadino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Ventura
Eureka Office	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Trinity
Sacramento Office	Alameda, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kings, Lake, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Benito, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Sierra, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, Yuba

**CALIFORNIA
 INDIAN
 LEGAL
 SERVICES**



**BISHOP
 ESCONDIDO
 EUREKA
 SACRAMENTO**