



PILA

PRO BONO REFERRAL
SCHEME

Our Work

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW ALLIANCE

- PILA is a public interest law network that seeks to bridge the gap between the legal community and civil society and, in doing so, promote the use of the law to advance social change
- We are a project of FLAC. a vehicle through which FLAC supports the development of public interest law and litigation in Ireland.
- The centerpiece of our work is the Pro Bono Referral Scheme, a programme which supports organisations to obtain pro bono legal assistance where they do not have the requisite financial resources or expertise.



Our Impact

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW ALLIANCE

In 2020, PILA:

- Directly assisted **210 social justice organisations**.
- Took on almost **200 new legal advice** and **litigation referrals** from partner NGOs.
- Facilitated **4 Law Reform Working Groups**, tackling issues such as disability rights, Traveller discrimination, and barriers to public interest litigation.
- Ran **9 Legal Education Sessions**, training almost **400 NGO staff**.



Pro Bono Referral Scheme

What kind of organisations does PILA work with?

- The Scheme is open to social justice organisations that work for the benefit of marginalised and disadvantaged people in Ireland.

What legal assistance is available to partner NGOs?

- NGO partners can receive help on any legal need for which they do not have resources or in-house expertise. Our one exception is that we do not assist with internal organisational conflicts.
- Once a particular legal need has been identified, we invest time in understanding the specific legal question to be answered before referring the matter to a pro bono barrister, solicitor, or law firm with suitable skills.
- An ongoing relationship is not created with the legal professional. For further legal assistance, the organisation can submit a fresh request to PILA.

Types of Assistance

NGO'S CAN OBTAIN FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE WHERE THEY DO NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES OR IN HOUSE EXPERTISE, IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:



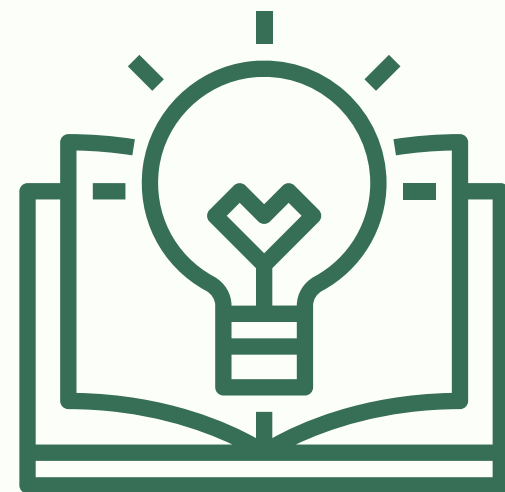
Legal
Advice



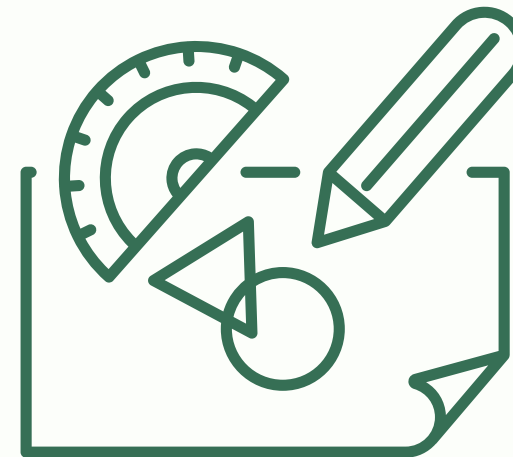
Law Reform
Working Groups



Strategic Litigation
Support



Legal Education
Sessions



Impact
Project

Accessing the Scheme

✓ INITIAL ENQUIRY

- Send an email to danielle.curtis@flac.ie, outlining in brief, the nature of your query.

✓ FOLLOW UP CALL

- PILA will schedule a follow up call, if needed, to discuss your referral in further detail. PILA will then request that you make a formal request using our Pro Bono Referral Memo.

✓ QUERY ASSESSMENT

PILA will assess whether your query can be put through as a referral. PILA consider the following:

- Is it a social justice organisation?
- Do they have a campaigning or law reform focus?
- Does the organisation have the resources to cover its legal costs?
- Is it a purely policy or legal issue?
- Does the request have a wider public interest or is it a private law matter?
- Is this an issue where one lawyer can provide a legal opinion or is a more substantial piece in which a number of lawyers / NGOs should be involved in the matter?

Accessing the Scheme

✓ REFERRAL

- PILA will then refer the query to the Alliance.

✓ MATCHING

- PILA sends an email of introduction between the lawyer/law firm and the NGO sharing the contact details, reiterating key dates, and attaching any documents.
- It is for the NGO and lawyer to develop a working relationship. In some cases e.g. Impact Projects, PILA takes a more hands-on role in assisting the development of this relationship. PILA remains on hand to both parties.
- If the NGO requires further assistance, they must submit a fresh query to the Referral Scheme.

✓ MONITORING

- We periodically monitor the impact of the referral and seek feedback from both the NGO and the lawyer.
- NGOs are asked to complete an impact assessment form



Aoife Kelly-Desmond

Managing Solicitor

Mercy Law Resource Centre



Eithne Lynch

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A&L Goodbody



Thank You!

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