

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What types of cases won't the ACLU of Georgia take?

The ACLU Foundation of Georgia (ACLU-GA) handle matters that arise inside of Georgia only. Although there are exceptions, it does not generally assist in the following types of cases.

- **Criminal defense or post-conviction appeal**
- **Family law/child custody** - The ACLU-GA generally does not provide assistance in family law cases involving disputes about divorces, child custody, parenting time, or visitation.
- **Property disputes or building code issues**
- **Tax problems**
- **Landlord-tenant issues** - The ACLU-GA does not generally get involved in disputes between tenants and their private landlords, unless the issue involves discrimination prohibited by statute or ordinance.
- **Complaints about Lawyers or Judges**
- **Denial of workers' compensation or unemployment benefits** - The ACLU-GA generally does not get involved in individual benefits cases, unless the issue involves discrimination prohibited by law or statute.
- **Employment** - The ACLU-GA usually cannot help when employees believe they were fired unjustly or were otherwise treated unfairly at work. This is especially true when the employer is a private company rather than a government agency. But when workers can show that they were fired or mistreated because of their race, gender, ethnic background, religion, disability or any other basis that violates anti-discrimination statutes, there is stronger legal protection.

What area does the ACLU Foundation of Georgia cover?

The ACLU-GA only handles matters that arise in Georgia.

How does the ACLU decide to offer assistance?

Generally, the ACLU-GA can offer assistance to only a small fraction of those who request it. Our office receives thousands of requests for assistance per year and, unfortunately, we do not have the resources available to assist everyone. The ACLU-GA looks for situations taking place in Georgia involving civil rights and civil liberties issues, in which the ACLU's assistance may have a strong chance of making positive changes for a potentially significant number of people with the same, or similar, issue.

How does the ACLU intake process work?

Each complaint is reviewed by staff to determine whether it constitutes a civil liberties problem the ACLU-GA may be able to help. There are many factors that go into determining whether we may be of assistance at any given time, including availability of staff, resources and timing.

If the ACLU-GA is able to offer you assistance after your initial intake, they will contact you to gather more information about your situation. If your situation is time sensitive, please continue to look for help elsewhere while we review your complaint. Your local bar association may have a lawyer referral service or similar program that may provide you with attorney referrals in your county. Please refer to the [Georgia Bar Association](#) website for more information.

If the ACLU-GA is not able to offer you assistance, we will similarly contact you by phone, mail, or email. In either case, because of our small size and the large volume of complaints that we receive, it will take at least a few weeks to let you know of our initial decision.

Has the ACLU agreed to represent me once I submit my complaint to the intake system?

No. Submitting a complaint to the intake process does not guarantee that the ACLU-GA will provide legal assistance or advice. Hundreds of requests for assistance are submitted each month, and there are many cases and problems of unfairness and injustice which the ACLU-GA is simply unable to handle.

If I already have an attorney, can I get legal advice from the ACLU-GA?

Ethical obligations limit the ACLU-GA's ability to discuss legal issues with people who are represented by other lawyers. If you already have an attorney, please have your attorney contact the ACLU Foundation of Georgia if they feel that a constitutional issue is present and would like assistance from the ACLU-GA.

Can the ACLU tell me if I have a good case?

When the legal team reviews a case, they are looking not only for legal merit, but for other things that would make a case a worthwhile investment for ACLU-GA's limited resources. They do not take cases that are primarily factual disputes, have little bearing on the rights of others, or do not involve a civil rights or civil liberties issue. Their failure to take a case does not necessarily mean they think it lacks legal merit.