

What happens at the interview?

The Means Test

During the interview with a CLAS officer, you will first be asked about your income, savings, property and other assets. This is called a Means Test. You will need to show proof of the means.

The Merits Test

After you have completed the Means Test, CLAS will have to decide whether giving you a lawyer would help your case ("Merits Test"). In order to determine this, a lawyer (called a Lead Lawyer) will ask you questions regarding your case. The Lead Lawyer may also give you some preliminary



legal advice on your matter, as well as preliminary advice on the procedures moving forward with regard to your matter.

It is essential that all information you give to the Lead Lawyer is true, otherwise your application may be rejected, and a police report may be made for giving a false statement. You may also be barred from future assistance.

What happens after my application is accepted?

CLAS will assign a volunteer lawyer who will handle your case. You will be informed of the particulars of the lawyer in writing. You will then be his/her client.

It is essential that you respond to letters and phone calls from the lawyer that has been assigned to you and attend all appointments when asked to do so. If you fail to co-operate with your assigned lawyer or adhere to his/her advice, he/she may apply to Court to discontinue his/her services.

When does CLAS assistance end?

CLAS assistance ends either when your case ends or when CLAS withdraws its assistance or you decide to proceed with your case without the aid of CLAS.

Can I appeal if my application is rejected?

You may make an appeal against the decision by either:

- Emailing to CLAS at CLAS@lawsoc.org.sg citing your application reference number, name and NRIC/Identification number; or by
- Delivering your appeal in writing personally to CLAS.

Please state fully the grounds on which you are making your appeal.

Further enquiries

For further enquiries, please call us during office hours at **6534 1564** or fax us at: **6534 5237**.

You may also email us at: CLAS@lawsoc.org.sg

Website: probono.lawsociety.org.sg

Disclaimer:

The information contained herein only represents general and basic information on CLAS as of January 2016.

The information contained herein is provided as a public service by the Law Society of Singapore, Criminal Legal Aid Scheme. It is derived from sources believed to be reliable and accurate. However, neither the Law Society of Singapore nor its representatives accept any responsibility for errors or omissions therein.

Criminal Legal Aid Scheme

State Courts
Level 5 (office beside Court No. 5)
1 Havelock Square
Singapore 059724

Tel: 6534 1564

Fax: 6534 5237

probono.lawsociety.org.sg

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Need Legal Assistance?

Criminal Legal Aid Scheme

What is CLAS?

The Criminal Legal Aid Scheme (CLAS) was set up in September 1985 as a project run by the Law Society of Singapore. It continues to be administered by the Law Society with a dedicated team of full-time staff with support from members of the public, the legal profession, the Ministry of Law and numerous other donors.

CLAS fulfills one of the purposes of the Law Society which is to provide criminal legal assistance to the poor and needy in non-capital charges.

CLAS is different from the Legal Aid Bureau, which is government-run. The Bureau provides legal aid and advice on civil and not criminal cases.

What type of offences does CLAS cover?

CLAS covers offences under the following statutes:

1. Arms & Explosives Act (Cap. 13)
2. Arms Offences Act (Cap. 14)
3. Computer Misuse and Cybersecurity Act (Cap. 50A)
4. Corrosive & Explosive Substances & Offensive Weapons Act (Cap. 65)
5. Dangerous Fireworks Act (Cap. 72)
6. Enlistment Act (Cap. 93)
7. Explosive Substances Act (Cap. 100)
8. Films Act (Cap. 107)
9. Miscellaneous Offences (Public Order and Nuisance) Act (Cap. 184)
10. Misuse of Drugs Act (Cap. 185)
11. Moneylenders Act (Cap. 188) [Sections 14 & 28]
12. Penal Code (Cap. 224)
13. Prevention of Corruption Act (Cap. 241)
14. Undesirable Publications Act (Cap. 338)
15. Vandalism Act (Cap. 341)
16. Women's Charter (Cap. 353) [Sections 65(8) and 140(1)(i)]
[Section 65(8) – any person who willfully contravenes a protection order]
[Section 140(1)(i) – has carnal connection with any girl below the age of 16 years]

If you are charged with an offence which carries the death penalty, please apply for assistance at the Legal Assistance Scheme for Capital Offences ("LASCO"), administered by the Supreme Court.

Who may apply for CLAS?

Anyone who is in Singapore (including foreigners) who has been charged in Court for an offence under one of the statutes above may apply for criminal legal aid, provided you cannot afford to pay a lawyer to help you. You should inform the Court of your intention to find a lawyer.

How do I apply for CLAS?

You must apply in person at the Pro Bono Services Office located at:

State Courts
Level 5 (office beside Court No. 5)
1 Havelock Square, Singapore 059724

How do I qualify for CLAS?

CLAS provides criminal legal assistance to poor and needy persons who do not have the means to pay for a lawyer.

In order to qualify for legal assistance, an applicant will need to pass both a Means Test and a Merits Test.

Is CLAS free?

If aid is granted, your volunteer lawyer will not charge you any fees for his/her services. However, he/she may ask you to pay for out of pocket expenses such as the costs of obtaining police statements, reports and transportation.

Also, depending on the results of your Means Test, you may need to pay CLAS a co-payment amount before you can be assigned a lawyer. You will be advised how much, if any, you need to pay to CLAS when you are informed of the outcome of your application.

The Means Test

Under the means test, persons with a disposable income of not more than \$10,000 per annum and a disposable capital of not more than \$10,000 may be granted legal aid.

"*Disposable Income*" means your income together with the income (if any) of your spouse, during the period of 12 months immediately before the date of the application, after deducting:

- (a) \$6,000 for the applicant;
- (b) \$6,000 for the working spouse;
- (c) Up to \$6,000 for each dependant;
- (d) An amount not exceeding \$20,000 for rent (if any);
- (e) The applicant's contribution to the Central Provident Fund;
- (f) The spouse's contribution to the Central Provident Fund.

"*Disposable Capital*" means your property, excluding:

- (a) Your clothes;
- (b) Things you need for your work;
- (c) Household furniture;
- (d) The house you live in, but only if it has an annual value of not more than \$13,000 or is a Housing and Development Board (HDB) flat;
- (e) Savings up to \$30,000, only if you are 60 years of age or above;
- (f) Your Central Provident Fund (CPF).



It is essential that all information you give to CLAS is true, otherwise aid may be withdrawn and a police report may be made against you for giving a false statement. You may also be barred from future assistance.

What are the CLAS office operating hours?

The CLAS office is open from 9.00am to 5.45pm on Mondays to Thursdays, and from 9.00am to 1pm on Fridays.

We are closed for lunch from 1pm to 2pm daily and the whole day on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

Please come early to make your application.

What documents should I bring for my application?

You should bring the following documents:

- (a) Your Identity Card/Passport;
- (b) The charges;
- (c) Any cautioned statement made to the police if you have it;
- (d) The latest Court mention/hearing slip(s);
- (e) Any medical or psychiatric reports if you suffer from any medical/psychiatric condition; and
- (f) Any evidence, photographs or other documents relevant to the case.

You should also bring along the following documents to help us determine your financial means:

- (a) Your CPF Contribution History for the last 12 months;
- (b) Your latest Notice of Assessment from IRAS, payslips for the last 12 months or your letter of employment, if you are self-employed or a foreigner;
- (c) If you are aged below 22 and single, both your parents' income documents as set out above in addition to your documents; and
- (d) If you are married, your spouse's income documents as set out above, in addition to your documents.