



## INFORMATION FOR UNREPRESENTED INDIVIDUALS

### Who is my lawyer?

You do not have a lawyer. You'll get a public defender, but you have to wait until one is available. Your paperwork says the Oregon Public Defense Commission (OPDC), the agency in Oregon responsible for public defense, so that OPDC staff know you need a lawyer and do not have one. OPDC is not your lawyer and cannot give you legal advice.

### Why don't I have a lawyer yet?

Oregon doesn't have enough public defenders for everyone who needs them. Today, there's no one available to be your lawyer, but this can change every day. You'll get a lawyer as soon as one is available.

### How do I get a lawyer if I can't afford to hire one?

When you went to court, they added you to the list of people who need a lawyer. To stay on the list, come to all your court dates. Keep your contact information updated with the court or pre-trial supervision agency so they can find you when a lawyer is available. OPDC is working with the court to find a lawyer for you. Your lawyer will contact you when they have been assigned.

### Do I Still Need to Go to Court?

Yes. If you miss a court date, the judge may issue a warrant for your arrest. A warrant can delay finding a lawyer for you.

### Do I Still Need to Follow the Court's Orders?

Yes. Violating court orders can lead to your arrest. The judge might have made conditions for you to stay out of jail. These can include people you can't contact and places you can't go. Violating these conditions can lead to your arrest and being held in jail.

### Can I talk about my case with other people?

Anyone other than your lawyer might have to talk in court later about things you tell them. What they remember could be used against you later. If the police want to talk to you, you can say you want a lawyer. You don't have to answer their questions.

**If you are in custody:** Jail phone calls and visits are recorded and can be used against you in court. Your cellmates may be called to testify about statements you make to them. They may try to use what you tell them against you or to help their own case. Be aware that it can be hard to keep anything private while in custody. This includes documents or notes about your case.

### What should I do with information I want to tell my lawyer?

Think about writing down details like where you were, who you were with, and what happened while it's still fresh in your mind. Make a list of important people and information for your case. Note your court dates, check-ins with pre-trial officers, and contact details for anyone you think may have information about your case. Your lawyer might find all of this helpful when they start working on your case.

**Oregon Public Defense Commission**

198 Commercial St. SE, Suite 205, Salem, OR 97301 • 503.378.3349 • [www.oregon.gov/opdc](http://www.oregon.gov/opdc)