

Referrals

(A resource for community advice offices and community-based paralegals brought to you by NADCAO, from the Paralegal Manual published by the Education and Training Unit and the Black Sash.)

Paralegals often play an important role by linking people with a problem to an appropriate agency that is more qualified and better trained to deal with the problem. This could be a government department or it could be a private welfare agency, NGO, religious body, etc.

Examples of assistance agencies that you may refer a client to include child welfare organisations, organisations against women and child abuse, trade unions for labour issues, the maintenance officer at the court, community development workers for issues linked to local governance, etc.

Paralegals should build up a data base of agencies and contact people as part of their referral service.

Always give the person a covering letter when you refer him or her to another organisation. Explain why you are referring the person to them and what work, if any, you have done on the case. Advise the person to come back to you if the agency refuses or is unable to help.