

What is AI?

AI has been all over the news, and you have probably used it yourself. This brochure is about AI chatbots like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude. These chatbots can generate answers, explanations, summaries, or draft documents in response to your questions, based on information they have been trained on or find online.

The attorney-client relationship

The attorney-client relationship is built on trust. Think of it like a journey: you decide where you want to go, and your attorney helps guide you there. You set the goals and make the important decisions, while your attorney explains the law, advises you on your options, and takes the legal steps needed to pursue the outcome you want. By trusting your attorney, you gain an advocate committed to protecting your interests and doing everything professionally and ethically possible to help you achieve your goals.

Why you might want to trust AI

AI can be appealing because it gives quick answers in plain language and may seem like an easy way to understand a legal issue. However, legal problems are often very specific, and an answer that sounds helpful may not apply to your case.



Our Mission

- The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York (LASMNY) is a nonprofit legal aid provider committed to advancing justice and ensuring equal access to legal services for individuals and communities who cannot afford representation.
- We secure basic needs, protect and preserve legal rights, and promote equal access to justice.

About LASMNY

- We are a law firm for low-income people.
- We are not a government agency.
- We provide assistance and representation in civil, *not criminal*, cases.
- Our services are free. We believe everyone has the right to equal justice, regardless of ability to pay.
- Our lawyers are well trained and committed to making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Areas We Serve

We serve the following thirteen counties in the Central New York region: Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and Otsego. We also serve agricultural workers statewide.



Offices

Watertown

215 Washington St. Ste. #202
Watertown, NY 13601

Oswego

335 W. First St. Ste 2
Oswego, NY 13126

Oneonta

189 Main St. Ste. 301
Oneonta, NY 13820

Agricultural Worker Project

(Mailing address only)
P.O. Box 2721
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Utica

120 Bleecker Street
Utica, NY 13501

Syracuse

221 S. Warren St. Ste. #310
Syracuse, NY 13202

Binghamton

105 Court St. 3rd Flr.
Binghamton, NY 13901



AI and Your Legal Case

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Why you should be cautious about using AI for legal work

AI can make up information

Sometimes AI gives answers that sound confident but are false, including fake laws, fake court cases, or incorrect legal rules.

- In one New York family court case, a person used AI for legal research and cited a case that did not exist. Even though he represented himself and said he believed the information was real, the court still ordered him to pay a \$250 fine because he did not verify it.^[1]

AI might not know how the law applies to your case

Applying the law to your case is difficult, and AI can get it wrong. Trusting AI's legal advice puts you at risk of losing your case.

- In 2024, for example, a woman fired her lawyer because she believed AI understood the legal issue better. Using AI, she then submitted 44 court filings, none of which persuaded the court.^[2]

AI might not know local court rules

Did you know that New York has more than 1,240 courts across 62 counties?^[3] The rules you need to follow can be different from court to court. For example, if you want to go to Small Claims Court in New York, your claim can't be for more than \$3,000 in a Town or Village Court. But in a City Court, the limit is \$5,000.^[4]

- AI can have a hard time knowing these rules, especially those that aren't written down online. In Missouri, for example, a Judge fined someone without a lawyer \$10,000 because they filed a brief that didn't follow the court's formatting rules.^[5]

^[1]https://www.nycourts.gov/reporter/current/3dseries/2026/2026_03308.shtml

^[2]https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/resources/law-technology-today/2026/when-is-a-settlement-not-a-settlement-ai/

^[3]<https://www.nycourts.gov/courts>

^[4]<https://webfiles.nycourts.gov/public/2025-10/smallclaimshandbook.pdf>

^[5]<https://www.findlaw.com/legalblogs/practice-of-law/pro-se-litigant-fined-10k-for-filing-ai-generated-reply-brief/>

AI may tell you what you want to hear

AI can only respond based on the facts you choose to include and may agree with you too easily.

- In the 2024 case mentioned earlier, the woman repeatedly relied on AI instead of her attorney. AI reinforced her belief that she could reopen a case that had already been settled, leading her to file numerous unsuccessful motions despite the court repeatedly rejecting her arguments.^[1]

Information you share with AI may not be private

What you tell your attorney is generally protected by special privacy rules, but information you type into an AI tool may not have the same protection. If you share details about your case with AI, that information could possibly be seen, stored, or requested later in the legal process.

- In one case, a person used an AI tool to create documents about his legal defense. The court decided those AI-created documents were not protected like communications with a lawyer and required him to turn them over.^[2]



AI changes its answers

If you ask a question slightly differently, the AI might change its answer. This makes it hard to rely on AI for the right answer. This is especially true in the legal world. A lawsuit's outcome depends entirely on what actually happened. If the AI hears only part of the story, or if a detail is missing, it can give you the wrong answer.

- A study has shown that asking an AI the same question but adding only an extra space at the end can make it change its answer.^[3] That's why providing complete, accurate information matters. Missing details can lead to incomplete, inaccurate, or misleading results.

^[1]https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/resources/law-technology-today/2026/when-is-a-settlement-not-a-settlement-ai/

^[2]<https://www.hrlegalist.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2026/03/1-United-Sthttps://arxiv.org/pdf/2401.03729ates-v.-Heppner.pdf>

^[3] <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2401.03729>

What we ask of you

It's natural to trust an AI answer that sounds confident and confirms what you already believe. But AI may reach the wrong conclusion for the reasons listed above.

1 Please talk to your attorney to get a realistic view of your case.

- Because AI makes mistakes, it's not a good idea to let it set your expectations.

2 Understand the limitations of AI

- If you talk to an AI tool and its advice differs from what we tell you, please remember that AI makes many mistakes.
- Please talk to us if you have doubts about your case.
- Please do not rely on AI to make decisions about your case without speaking with us first.

3 Please do not share confidential case information with AI

- Anything you type into an AI tool may not be confidential and could be obtained or used later in your case.
- If you are unsure whether something is safe to share, please ask us first.

