

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CONSUMER PROTECTION HOTLINE

The Department of Justice has received 13 written complaints involving Avvo, LegalShield, Legal Zoom, and Rocket Lawyer since 2008. Legal Shield has been the subject of seven complaints; Legal Zoom, four; and Avvo and Rocket Lawyer, one each.

A summary of the complaints follows by year.

2008

- **Avvo:** A California attorney complained that he was listed and ranked on Avvo's website; that the company did business in 19 States, including Oregon; that the website's information was "incomplete, inaccurate, false and misleading"; and that its rating system was "arbitrary and capricious." The attorney challenged the company's claim that the site's information was culled from publicly available sources and complained that the company had ignored his requests to have his listing removed. The attorney alleged that, in fact, the company had changed his listing in such a way that it provided more incorrect information. The attorney reiterated that he did not want to be affiliated with the company and was concerned that the company interfered with his ability to control his marketing strategy.

2009

- **Legal Zoom:** The complainant explained that her spouse's employer offered access to the company's discounted services and that she had visited the company's website after having seen an advertisement featuring one its founders, Robert Shapiro. The complainant did not use the company's services. Nevertheless, she was concerned that the website and advertising left the impression that the company would obtain legal counsel on consumers' behalf or perform a substantive review to ensure that the documents created using its software were legally sufficient, but had fine print stating otherwise.
- **Legal Zoom:** The complainant, an attorney, was concerned that the company's advertisements left the impression that attorneys would be assisting in the preparation of documents, including living trusts.

2011

- **Legal Zoom:** The complainant appears to have been the victim of a telephonic business investment scam. The complainant's attorney provided several documents identifying unauthorized charges on her credit card, one of which was a charge for Legal Zoom. The complainant later received a document from Legal Zoom, who had in turn, received a document from the Oregon Secretary of State. The document advised that a limited liability company had failed to file an annual report.

2014

- **Legal Zoom:** The complainant expressed concern that he was still being billed for a monthly \$17 fee despite having cancelled his services with Legal Zoom several months prior. The complainant later contacted DOJ to report that the matter was resolved.

2015

- **Legal Shield:** The complainant reported that her son had been approached by a friend about Legal Shield and she was concerned that the company was a multilevel marketing scheme. The complainant found it concerning that the company had recently changed its name from Pre-Paid Legal after having been investigated by the Federal Trade Commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission.
- **Legal Shield:** The complainant appears to have been a contractor for the company and was responsible for promoting its services to consumers. The complainant states that she was unwilling to promote the services without first “test driving” the company’s services and alleged that the letters provided by the company’s law-firm partner were of low quality. The complainant was also concerned that the company’s website featured a testimonial from a consumer that stated: “I was owed a refund. My lawyer made sure I got it.” The complainant had the law-firm provider author a demand letter, but unlike the consumer in the testimonial, did not receive a refund
- **Legal Shield:** The anonymous complainant alleged that a local Oregon resident was employed by Legal Shield, had advertised herself as a licensed attorney and real estate broker offering loan modification services.

2016

- **Legal Shield:** The complainant had purchased a membership in order to have a letter written to her landlord. She was dissatisfied because, despite repeated efforts, the law-firm provider was unable to provide an adequate letter. She was concerned that the letters had not been proofread, contained grammatical errors, and contained basic errors of fact. In its response to the complainant, the company acknowledged that the complainant had wanted changes to be made to the letter and that the company had declined to make a change to the last letter because the complainant insisted that the letter contain false information.

2017

- **Legal Shield:** The complainant, a small business owner, purchased a small business legal policy. The complaint alleges that the law-firm provider claims to have a conflict of interest. As a result, the business cannot use its accumulated hours and must pay the bulk of the attorney bill. The complainant was also frustrated because the law-firm provider will only speak to him with respect to legal business, not his employees, a practice that he deems inefficient. His requests for a new provider have gone unheard.
- **Legal Shield:** The complainant alleged that the attorney working on her case had failed to resolve her case and had not provided an explanation for his failure to do so. She was also concerned that the company had not honored her refund requests. In its response,

the company stated that it had provided to promised services, including mailing a letter to the opposing party that had been returned undeliverable, at which point, the complainant advised the provider that the matter had been resolved.

- **Legal Shield:** The complainant purchased a membership in 2014, but was unable to use it because the law-firm provider was unable to provide services to a Spanish speaker. The complainant alleged that he had been told that, upon cancellation, he would receive a refund of all amounts paid, but he had only received a partial refund of the amounts paid. The company declined to give a full refund, explaining that, the complainant had called shortly after purchasing the service and explained that he only spoke Spanish. Before being transferred to the Spanish line, the complainant ended the call. The company reasoned that, had the call been completed, it would have learned about its inability to provide the services earlier and would have cancelled the membership after the first call.
- **Rocket Lawyer:** The consumer reported that, in 2015, he had created an account to use a legal form and agreed to a free trial within a \$39.95 monthly charge if he failed to cancel or downgrade the account. The consumer received no further correspondence, invoices, or payment notifications from the company and did not notice the recurring charges to his credit card until December 2016. The consumer was concerned that the company was not complying with Oregon laws governing automatic renewal contracts and recommended state and federal legislative action to regulate free offers. The company provided the consumer with a full refund.