

How to Find the Right Lawyer for You and Your Business



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Every small business eventually confronts the question of [how to find the right lawyer](#). As you grow, you're likely to find yourself in need of business lawyer services like incorporating, signing leases on a new office or storefront, dealing with taxes, and handling employees. If you've never hired a business lawyer before, you may have no idea where to start. These steps can help.



What Is a Business Lawyer?

General business lawyers handle business formation, contract writing, and more. But in many fields of the law, [lawyers tend to specialize](#). You might

find a lawyer to handle:

- Real estate: buying, selling, and leasing real property
- Employment: issues regarding laws about the employer-employee relationship
- Taxes: planning for taxes and dealing with tax agencies
- Litigation: when a dispute turns into a lawsuit

Your first step is figuring out what kind of lawyer handles your situation. If you're looking for help leasing an office, you'll need different kinds of expertise from someone who's defending against an employment lawsuit.

How to Find a Business Lawyer

Even if you know what you're looking for, you also need to know where to find a lawyer. [The American Bar Association](#), [the State Bar of California](#), and many others recommend asking people you trust for recommendations. Even if you end up with the names of people who practice in a different area of law, they may be able to refer you to someone with the right expertise.

You can also try attorney referral services. Most state and local bar associations offer this service (sometimes for a fee) and may also help you find a lawyer according to where you live and what kind of legal matter you have. Several online directories include reviews from other users. Often, these also include any publicly available information about ethical complaints against the lawyer.

Meeting With Potential Lawyers

Once you have identified some possible business lawyers, think about how to choose the right lawyer from that list. It's important to meet or at least talk on the phone, with several before hiring one. As [the ABA notes](#), "you're the one doing the hiring." This person may work closely with you and learn sensitive things about your business, so you should make sure they're someone you get along with and trust.

Bring two kinds of information to your meetings with potential lawyers. First, bring information about your business or your case, which the business lawyer will need in order to understand your situation and make recommendations. [The Contra Costa County \(California\) Bar Association suggests](#) that you write down notes before the meeting, outlining what you know about the situation and what you don't know. The association also recommends that you bring all documents related to the matter.

Second, arm yourself with a list of questions. Some will be related to your business concerns. Other questions are likely to apply to nearly any matter, including:

- How long have you practiced this kind of law? [The ABA proposes](#) that you ask this question to find out how much experience the lawyer generally has, as well as in the specific type of law that's relevant to your case.
- How will I get updates about my case? Finance website [Investopedia suggests](#) that you ask not only how often you'll hear from the lawyer, but also who in their office is the point of contact. This is something you'll especially want if the case is making you anxious.
- What are the attorney's fees, and what do they include? Remember, you're the client, and you are entitled to that information before you make a commitment. [The Federal Trade Commission notes](#) that you may be charged extra for court fees, copies of documents, and other incidentals, so you can avoid unpleasant surprises if you clarify that at the outset.

As you speak to the business lawyer, listen for "red flags." [You should be able to expect](#), at minimum, clear communication and expertise in the area of law you're interested in. Beware of lawyers who avoid answering questions about fees, make big promises, or rush through the meeting.

Knowing what to expect can take some of the stress out of finding a lawyer for the first time. With a little knowledge about how to hire the right lawyer for your business, you can feel confident that you're putting your financial future in good hands.

[Get help finding the right lawyer for your business.](#)

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