

SHAKHAN & WILKERSON

**legal
brochure**



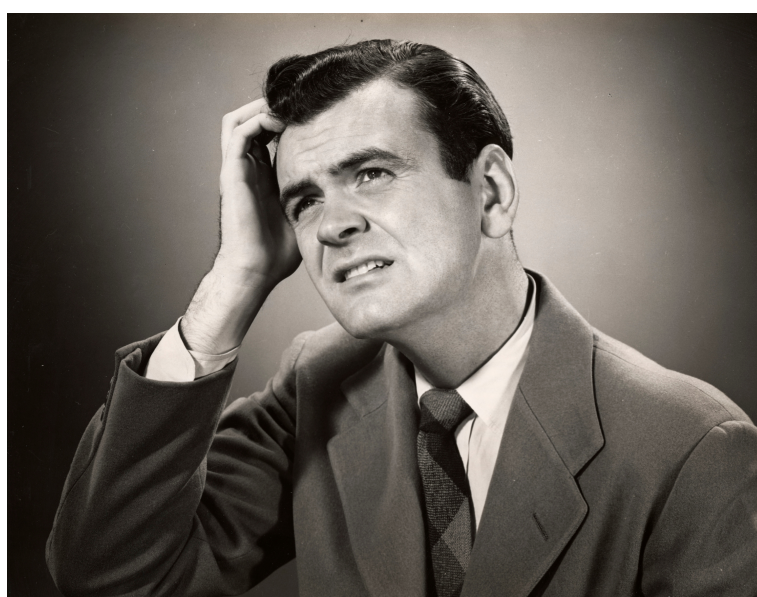
Hiring an Attorney: For Dummies



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Of course, you're not dumb, but embarking on the arduous task of finding the perfect lawyer can certainly make one feel that way. Who do you select in a cacophony of newspaper, radio, television, print media, and internet advertisements all clamoring "pick me" and vying for your undivided attention; and to be brutally honest, your money? Well weary traveler today is your luck day. We've provided you with a road map to help you traverse a terrain that may be a bit unfamiliar to you. Because let's face it, you're a very busy person, and who has the time to do unassigned homework. No worries though, we've taken it upon ourselves to do some of the heavy lifting for you.

Step # 1 What Kind of Lawyer do I Need



Finally, you've decided to pull the trigger and get some professional assistance with your legal issue. But before beginning your search for a local barrister you must first determine what kind of lawyer you need.

Like doctors, there are many types of attorneys. You wouldn't go to an ear, nose and throat guy if you were experiencing heart palpitations; well, selecting a specialized lawyer is no different. There are all kinds of attorneys my friends: there are divorce lawyers, child custody lawyers, family law attorneys, bankruptcy attorneys, criminal defense attorneys, personal injury attorneys, patent attorneys, and the list goes on and on. Focus on the lawyer that practices the kind of law for which you need legal assistance.

Still unsure? We can help. Give us a call at (833)-GA-FAMILY.
We can help you narrow your practice list down.

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Step # 2 Research, Research, Research



Now that you've narrowed the field it's time to drill down your list of potential attorneys a tad bit more. But don't fret however, you can cull the herd a bit more by doing just a wee more research. It just so happens that your answers may only be one phone call or text away.

Some experts strongly recommend enlisting the aid of your friends and family network. Another great excuse to reach out and touch someone, right? Friends and family are one of the best resources for lawyer referrals. Frequently, colleagues, co-workers, family and even other attorneys are a fantastic way to find the perfect lawyer for your case. So, give your cousin Clyde a call today.

However, if your friends and family list is small, finding the best lawyer for your case still does not have to become an online scavenger hunt when there is a plethora of online lawyer databases that can make this task a cinch. Attorney databases and directories such as AVVO, Justia, Martindale, Lawyers.com, Superlawyers.com, and even your local and state bar associations are excellent attorney referral sources.

Many of these databases offer no-cost client resources and are an excellent well spring of information that will aid you in making a more informed hiring decision. Information such as attorney disciplinary records, lawyer reviews, practice and specialty areas are available for your perusal.



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Step # 3 Ask Questions



Now that you've found your guy or gal, do you know what questions to ask? Here are just a few that we recommend:

First, lets talk dinero; and we mean money, not Robert the actor:

- There are financial related questions you should definitely ask, such as is there an initial consultation fee? While some attorneys do not charge for a consult, others do. Ask up front!
- How does the attorney structure his or her fees?
While some attorneys and firms charge by the hour (billable hours) others may charge a one-time upfront fee (flat fee/lump sum). Ask.
- Is there a retainer fee? Many law firms that charge hourly require an upfront payment that they then bill against. Inquire about this initial fee.
- What fees and services are included in your payment? In many civil cases there may be a filing fee. There may also be a service fee for delivering the complaint and summons to an opposing party. There may also be court reporter fees, printing fees, etc. Ask your lawyer what your payment covers.



Don't forget to also ask professional and experience related questions:

- A great question to ask an attorney is how long have they been in practice?
- Or, how much experience do they have with cases similar to yours?
- Another important question to consider is has the attorney ever been sanctioned or subject to disciplinary action.

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Finally



R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Aretha Franklin couldn't have sung it any better. When selecting a lawyer, you should feel comfortable enough with your attorney to honestly and transparently share all the facts of your case. Remember, there should be a mutual respect, reciprocity, and a degree of professionalism and standard of care that inspires you to make this important hire. Remember, they represent your interests and are addressing the court or other parties on your behalf.



Do you Need More Help Finding the Perfect Lawyer?

We have a great network of attorney friends, arbitrators and mediators. Give us a call. We can probably help you find the perfect lawyer for your case.

(833)-GA-FAMILY

What if I can't Afford an Attorney

Many legal assistance programs offer inexpensive or free legal services to those that meet specific criteria or fall within special income-based guidelines. Contact your local bar association or legal aid office for a list of pro bono resources. Often, they are staffed with helpful lawyers and an army of volunteer lawyers ready to assist you.

What if I am Accused of a Crime and cannot Afford an Attorney

If you are accused of a crime, the U.S. Constitution guarantees you the right to be represented by a lawyer in any case in which you could be incarcerated for six months or more. Consult with a court officer regarding your case.

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