



FINDING AND USING LEGAL HELP

A Resource Guide

If you've come upon a domestic, financial or other matter you can't handle alone, it makes good sense to seek the advice of a reputable attorney. But if you're like most people, you probably don't know where to go to get a referral or how to use an attorney once you've found one. This guide will tell you how to get a referral, what to do before the first appointment and what you can expect from an attorney.

Ask Friends for Referrals

Ask friends or coworkers for the names of attorneys they can recommend. A satisfied client is the attorney's best advertising. If you can't obtain a referral through social contacts, call the bar association of the biggest city near you. Not all attorneys are members of the local bar association, and membership in it or the American Bar Association is not an indication of the skill of a particular attorney. The local bar association is a good place to start, however, if you have no other referrals.

A Free Consultation

Most attorneys will give a potential client a free consultation. The attorney can help you determine what kind of help you need or refer you to someone else who might be more appropriate for the type of problem you have.

Before Your Appointment

If you've kept notes with specific dates and incidents, gather them together. The attorney will ask you many specific questions to determine how best to help you. If you don't have notes, sit down and write out the sequence of events. Gather together and attach any related paperwork. The more information you can provide at your first meeting, the easier it will be for the attorney to help you.

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of help you need.**

The First Appointment

The attorney can help you determine if you have a legal problem and help you understand the laws of your state. Once he or she has reviewed your situation, the attorney can decide the best course of action to relieve or solve your problem.

Fee Arrangements

If you decide to hire the attorney, your financial agreement with the attorney should then be presented to you in writing so that it's clear to both parties. The agreement should also spell out the type of work to be done and the estimated amount of time it will take to do it.

Finding a Solution

Your communication with your attorney is confidential. Be prepared to be honest about the situation and cooperative with the attorney. Together you'll find a solution to your problem.