

These are questions you may ask before you hire a lawyer. They should help you select a lawyer who can meet your needs. The questions apply primarily to litigation matters. They are, of course, only suggestions and you may have many more questions tailored to your specific situation.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU HIRE A LAWYER

1. What is your education, work experience and area of specialty?
2. After explaining my case fully to you, how can you help me and what are the risks of successfully or unsuccessfully resolving my legal problem? (I understand there are no guarantees and you cannot make specific promises about any outcome.)
3. Is the solution I have in mind regarding my legal problem really necessary or are there other alternatives (such as mediation or collaborative law).
4. How many clients or cases have you handled, or what experience or knowledge do you have, involving a problem like mine?
5. How successful have you or others been handling a problem like mine (or am I fighting an uphill battle)?
6. How do you approach resolving conflicts with persons adverse to my position: what is your style that works?
7. Who will also be assisting in my case?
8. How will my case disrupt my personal life?
9. Do you honestly have time with your busy caseload to help me with my case and how long do you think my case will last?
10. What can I do to hold down or control costs or fees and what do you foresee would increase your estimate of how much my case would cost?
11. How and when will you notify me of the status of my case?
12. May I see your retainer fee agreement? (This should answer all your questions about what services your lawyer will offer, what the lawyer will charge for fees and costs, when and what is billed, how often you will be billed, whether your lawyer has malpractice insurance, whether the fee is refundable or not, late charges and interest on unpaid balances, termination of services and if your file will be returned to you without charge. If not, ask.)