

Lawyer

Career Description

Lawyers represent clients in civil or criminal trial and present evidence for their defense. They also advise their clients on their legal rights or obligations and counsel them on the best way to proceed according to their legal circumstances. A lawyer conducts research on legal issues and is qualified to interpret laws, regulations, and rulings. They draw up legal documents like wills, deeds, contracts, lawsuits, and appeals. They may also oversee legal assistants or paralegals.

A lawyer can specialize in many different areas of this profession. Lawyers mostly work indoors and in office buildings, however some travel may be required when meeting with clients or attending court hearings.

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Primary Tasks

Lawyers typically do the following:

- Advise and represent clients in courts, before government agencies, and in private legal matters.
 - Communicate with their clients and others.
 - Conduct research and analysis of legal problems.
 - Interpret laws, rulings, and regulations for individuals and businesses.
 - Present facts in writing and verbally to their clients or others and argue on their behalf.
 - Prepare and file legal documents, such as lawsuits, appeals, wills, contracts, and deeds.
- Lawyers, also called attorneys, act as both advocates and advisors.
- As advocates, they represent and argue in support of their client.
 - As advisors, lawyers counsel their clients about their legal rights and obligations and suggest courses of action in business and personal matters.
- Lawyers often oversee the work of support staff, such as paralegals and legal assistants.

Basic Knowledge

- Becoming a lawyer usually takes 7 years of full-time study after high school - 4 years of undergraduate study, followed by 3 years of law school.

Basic Skills

- Analytical, interpersonal, problem-solving, research, speaking, writing, and computer skills.

Basic Abilities

- Reading for long periods of time, writing, computer abilities, sitting, standing, and long work hours.

Some Work Activities

- Criminal law attorneys are also known as prosecutors and defense attorneys.

- Prosecutors typically work for the government to file a lawsuit, or charge, against an individual or corporation accused of violating the law.
- Defense attorneys work for either individuals or the government (as public defenders) to represent and defend the accused.
- Government counsels commonly work in government agencies.
 - They write and interpret laws and regulations and set up procedures to enforce them. Government counsels also write legal reviews on agencies' decisions. They argue civil and criminal cases on behalf of the government.
- Corporate counsels, also called in-house counsels, are lawyers who work for corporations.
 - They advise a corporation's executives about legal issues related to the corporation's business activities. These issues may involve patents, government regulations, contracts with other companies, property interests, taxes, or collective-bargaining agreements with unions.
- Legal aid lawyers work for private, nonprofit organizations for disadvantaged people.
 - They generally handle civil cases, such as those about leases, job discrimination, and wage disputes, rather than criminal cases.
- Lawyers often specialize in a particular area. The following are some examples of types of lawyers:
 - Environmental, tax, intellectual property, family, securities, and litigation.

Education/Training/Credentials

- **Education**
 - 4 years of undergraduate study
 - 3 years of law school.
 - Most states and jurisdictions require lawyers to complete a juris doctor (J.D.) degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA).
- **Licenses**
 - Becoming licensed requires being "admitted to the bar" via licensing exams called "bar exams."
 - To practice law in any state, a person must be admitted to its bar under rules established by the jurisdiction's highest court.
 - After graduation, lawyers must keep informed about legal developments that affect their practices.
 - Almost all states require lawyers to participate in continuing legal education either every year or every 3 years.
- **Salary**

Average Salaries	Memphis	Tennessee	United States
Attorney	\$118,500	\$ 86,061	\$141,890

Professional Organization

- American Bar Association (AMA)
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