



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM

Ways to Save on Legal Fees

There are many ways to hold down the cost of legal services. Here are a few.

Do Some Work Yourself

Help out. You can do a lot of work yourself. For example, you could help gather documents needed to sensibly deal with a problem, line up witnesses for a trial, or write the first couple of drafts of a contract. The idea is to make the best use of your lawyer's time, not have them spend it doing routine tasks.

Read everything you can about your legal area. Materials published by trade associations and nonprofit public interest groups are only a few of the many places you may be able to learn more about legal developments that bear on your problem. Many publishers and Internet sites -- Nolo being just one -- publish excellent materials on a wide variety of legal topics from adoption to zoning. Knowing as much as you can will save your lawyer from having to bring you up to speed on the basics.

Don't Pay a Lawyer for Unnecessary Tasks

Ask the lawyer to be your coach. If you have the time and energy to present yourself, make it clear to the lawyer that you're eager to do as much work as possible yourself with the lawyer coaching you from the sidelines. Many lawyers find it gratifying to impart their knowledge and experience to others, but they're used to clients who simply drop their problems on the lawyer's desk to solve. Unless you specifically ask for coaching, you may never tap into your lawyer's willingness to help you in that way.

Use nonlawyer professionals. Nonlawyer professionals can perform some legal tasks as well as, or better than, lawyers at a far lower cost. For example, look to management consultants for strategic business planning; real estate brokers or appraisers for valuation of properties; accountants for preparation of financial proposals; insurance agents for advice on insurance protection; and independent paralegals for routine form preparation for uncontested legal actions, such as divorces, guardianships, and stepparent adoptions.

Each of these concerns is likely to have a legal aspect, and you may eventually want to consult your lawyer, but normally you won't need to until you've exhausted less expensive ways to accomplish the task.

Respect Your Lawyer's Time and Fees

Group together your legal affairs. You'll save money if you consult with your lawyer on several matters at one time. For example, in one conference, a small business owner may be able to review the corporate bylaws and review the landlord's lease proposal, as well as discuss how best to draft a noncompetition agreement for new employees to sign.

Show that you're a good client. The single most important way you can tell your lawyer how much you value your relationship is to pay your bills on time or, if you can't, explain why and ask for a payment plan. And if you own a small business or will otherwise have a continuing need for legal help, be sure to let your lawyer know about your future plans. Also, let your lawyer know when you recommend him or her to your business colleagues.

Getting Help

If you need legal advice, consider taking advantage of your Quest Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Employees and dependent family members are entitled to **one (1) initial thirty-minute** office or telephone consultation per separate legal matter at no cost with a network attorney. After the initial consultation, you will be provided with a preferred **rate reduction of 25%** from the normal hourly rate.

For information on how to access your legal benefits or any other EAP questions, please contact Quest at 1-800-364-6352.