

# Lawyer

Argue, advise, negotiate and write. Seven years of school and one hard exam stand between you and the license.

## TYPICAL PAY

**\$159,670**

a year, full time

## PAY RANGE

**\$78k to \$352k**

starting to experienced

## TIME TO QUALIFY

**7 to 8 years**

after high school

## DEMAND

**Moderate**

job outlook

## LICENCE NEEDED

**Yes**

regulated job

## WHERE YOU WORK

**Law firms, corporate legal departments, government agenci...**

## How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12  
 There is no pre-law subject requirement. Take English, history and anything that makes you argue and write. Debate helps more than it sounds.
- 2 Bachelor's degree, any subject** 4 years  
 Law schools accept every major. Political science, history, English, economics and engineering all work. Grades matter more than the subject.
- 3 LSAT (Law School Admission Test)** 3 to 6 months of study  
 The admission test accepted by every accredited law school. Most people study for three to six months. Your score and your grade point average are the two numbers admissions runs on.
- 4 Law school** 3 years  
 Three years for the Juris Doctor degree. First year is contracts, torts, property, civil procedure, criminal law and legal writing. Grades in that first year drive which jobs you can get.
- 5 Bar exam and admission** 2 to 3 months of full-time study  
 Two or three days of testing, plus a separate ethics exam and a character and fitness background check. You are admitted by one state's highest court, not by a national body.

## Pros and cons

- + Real influence over what happens to people and companies
- + A license nobody can take away lightly
- + Enormous range: you can practice almost anywhere in almost any field
- Seven years of school and often six figures of debt
- Two thirds of lawyers work more than 40 hours a week
- High rates of stress, burnout and problem drinking in the profession

## Optional boosts

Litigation. Corporate and transactional. Criminal, prosecution or defense. Family, immigration and housing.

### Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Lawyers (23-1011.00)

O\*NET OnLine: Lawyers

National Conference of Bar Examiners: the Uniform Bar Examination

Law School Admission Council

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/lawyer>

## Good to know

### There are about 865,000 lawyers

Roughly 864,800 people work as lawyers in the United States, with about 31,500 openings a year. Growth is average, around 3 to 4 percent, so the field is large and stable rather than expanding.

### Your bar score can travel

Thirty-two states plus the District of Columbia use the same Uniform Bar Examination, and a score earned in one of them can be transferred to another. California, Florida, Texas and New York stayed out, which i...



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