

Real Estate Lawyer

Property is contracts, title and land law. You are the person who makes sure the deal actually holds.

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, title companies, developers, banks, city legal depa...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Any strong academic load. Grades matter because your college grade point average follows you into law school admissions.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
 Any major at all. Economics, business, history and English are common. What matters is the grade point average and the LSAT (Law School Admission Test).
- 3 Law school** 3 years
 Three years for a JD (Juris Doctor) degree. The first year is the same everywhere. After that you choose property, contracts, land use and real estate transactions courses.
- 4 Pass the bar exam** Months of study
 Two or three days of testing in the state where you want to practice, plus a separate ethics exam and a character and fitness investigation.
- 5 Learn the actual job** 1 to 3 years
 Closings, title searches and lease drafting are learned at a firm or a title company, not in a classroom.

Pros and cons

- + Transactional work, so far fewer late nights and emergencies than litigation
- + Deals end, which means a clear sense of finishing something
- + Local expertise makes you hard to replace
- Seven years and often six figures of debt before you start
- Starting salaries split sharply, and most graduates are not on the high side
- Volume pressure on residential files, where the fee is fixed and the problems are not

Optional boosts

Commercial leasing. Land use and zoning. Construction law. Affordable housing and tax credit work.

Good to know

Property law is the oldest thing you will study

First-year property courses still use ideas and vocabulary carried over from medieval England, because American land law descends from it directly. Terms like fee simple and easement have been in use for ce...

The bar exam is being rewritten

The National Conference of Bar Examiners is phasing in a new bar exam between July 2026 and July 2028. The first states to use it include Connecticut, Idaho, Maryland, Missouri, Oregon and Washingt...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Lawyers (23-1011.00)
 National Conference of Bar Examiners
 Law School Admission Council
 State Bar of California: admissions

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/real-estate-lawyer>



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