

Need To Hire A Lawyer, Understand The Fee Options First.

Personally as well as for business dealings one needs a lawyer. And, a lawyer must always be selected with great care. And the first thing to do is agree on fees. There are no recommended fee schedules but if a survey is made in your local area you will realize that there is a flexible fee schedule in place. Fees vary depending on the practice and the intricacies of the case on hand. Law means long hours of research and study as well as a lot of time spent filing papers and appearing in court.

In general there are four ways in which lawyers compute fees:

- **By the hour:** in this arrangement a lawyer will bill by the hour for time spent on your case by himself, his assistance, as well as office staff. The computing will include: drafting of documents, faxes, phone calls, locating and briefing witnesses, time spent at court and meetings, research, leg work, filing fees, deposition costs, expert witness fees, travel expenses, sheriff's fees, bail bondsmen costs, transcript fees and so on.
- **Contingent Fees:** Normally applied in personal injury, social security, and collection cases. Not applicable in criminal or divorce cases. In this the lawyer will get between 25-40% of the recovered or settled amount. In this too the client is billed for "out of pocket" expenses, which includes long-distance calls, filing fees, and depositions.
- **Flat fees:** In this a consolidated amount is decided on between the client and lawyer. The flat fee includes all costs and there are no out of pocket expenses.
- **Percentage fee:** This is applied in the management of estates and buying or selling of homes. The fee for completing all legal functions will be a percentage of the total value of the property or estate to be settled.
- **Monthly retainer:** This applies when a lawyer or his firm contract to carry out all legal work required by a corporation, business, or individual. When the expected billing is continuous and quite substantial such an arrangement is made. In this case, a whole bouquet of legal services are carried out for a fixed monthly payment.

It is important to discuss the cost of legal services in detail during the initial interview itself. Ask for an estimate and prepare a memo of understanding. Decide on:

- Retainer fees.
- Billing cycles and itemization of bill.
- Conditions under which the fees will be revised.

If all matters are clear then there should be no disputes at all over fees. Ask the lawyer to explain the different fee options in detail and recommend which one would be most suitable in your case. Make sure you understand what the cost of legal fees will entail. And agree on a suitable payment schedule preferably as and when a part of the work is completed.

About the Author

Aaron Brooks is a freelance writer for <http://www.1866attorney.com> , the premier website to find Attorney Directory including topics on civil right, litigation, defense, attorney power, legal services, prosecuting all crimes and much more. He also freelances for the premier REVENUE SHARING discussion forum for Legal Advice Site <http://www.1888discuss.com/legal-advice/>