

Bar associations

New lawyers are encouraged to join a bar association, an association of like-minded attorneys. There are 27 local bars in Colorado that make up the Colorado Bar Association. Bar associations offer attorneys the opportunity to become involved in public service, to improve their communities, to network with other lawyers, and to enhance their careers. Check out the Colorado Bar Association online at cobar.org.

Conclusion

We hope this brochure helps you appreciate what it takes to become a lawyer in Colorado. Though the path to becoming a lawyer may be long, the rewards are many. Becoming a lawyer may help you in achieving your goals of helping others, having a satisfying career and being a leader in your community. For those interested in more information, talk to your school counselor or attorneys you may know. Many books are also available with information that will help you make solid career choices. Good luck!

For more information

Talk to your high school/college career counselor or, contact the following organizations:

University of Colorado Law School (Public)

Wolf Law Building
2450 Kittridge Loop Road
Boulder, CO 80309-0401
303-492-3825

University of Denver (Private)

Sturm College of Law
2255 East Evans Ave.
Denver, CO 80208
303-871-6000

Colorado Supreme Court Board of Law Examiners

1560 Broadway Suite 1820
Denver, CO 80202
303-866-6626

LSAT/Law Services

P.O. Box 2000
Newtown, PA 18940
215-968-1001

For more brochures contact

Colorado Bar Association
1900 Grant St., Suite 900
Denver, CO 80203-4336
303-860-1115

This pamphlet, published as a public service by the Public Legal Education Committee of the Colorado Bar Association, and its purpose is to inform prospective attorneys of the requirements of becoming a lawyer in Colorado. The requirements may have changed since publication of this pamphlet. Therefore, please verify all information provided in this pamphlet is still current.

What Do Lawyers Do?

Lawyers help people solve problems and issues, which may be related to business (negotiating, writing and closing deals), crimes (representing the victim or defending the accused), claims for injuries, property ownership, housing, ending a marriage, adopting a child, complying with laws, environment, insurance, discrimination, employment, health care, pensions, taxes, death, patents, computers and other technology rights, ethics, and more.

In the past, most new lawyers planned on immediately entering a law firm; that is no longer the case. While many new lawyers still do that, others will work for local, state, or federal government. As a new lawyer you may go to work as counsel for a corporation or legal service organization or other non-profit organizations, or you may start your own private practice. Some licensed attorneys never actually practice law. They may enter politics, work in business or government, or teach.

Here's a startling fact: The majority of those who choose to practice law never see the inside of a courtroom. For every would-be Perry Mason, many more attorneys work behind the scenes. As society has become increasingly diverse and specialized, so has the practice of law.

Is Law In Your Future?

Do you like reading and writing or answering math questions? Do you wish you could solve problems easier and faster? Do you ever see people being treated unfairly and want to stand up for them? Do you like to convince other people of your position? Do you like to talk with people and help them with their problems? Would you like to learn how to be more persuasive? Maybe there's a future lawyer inside of you, just waiting to get out!

Requirements for Becoming a Lawyer

High School

You can start planning to become an attorney now. Of course, you must graduate from high school or get your General Equivalency Diploma before you can take the next steps of acquiring a four year college degree, a law school degree and passing the State bar examination. Meanwhile, high school courses you take may help you decide whether you want to become a lawyer and develop skills to succeed as a lawyer.

The essence of being an attorney is communicating by writing and speaking effectively. Have you ever spoken in front of your class? Were you nervous? Lawyers who speak in front of groups, including juries, are often nervous too. But, public speaking gets easier with practice. Speech & debate, mock trial, acting, writing, English, reading comprehension and history can all be important classes. If you like speech, writing and reading — law is for you.

College

College can be exciting, as well as demanding. A liberal arts education that emphasizes and develops reading and writing skills can provide a solid foundation to become a lawyer. Also a specialized education in math, sciences or engineering can provide you the analytical and logic skills to help prepare you for a legal career. Other courses can help you learn specialized areas relating to a future legal practice. For instance, courses in business, finance, real estate or accounting can help those considering commercial law, just as courses in chemistry, geology, natural resources, or environmental sciences can be an asset for later practicing environmental law.

Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)

The LSAT is a standardized, national test that law schools use to screen admissions. The LSAT is given four times a year at locations around the world. Many students take specialized preparation courses to help

them do as well as they can on the LSAT. Most law school candidates take the LSAT in their senior year of college. Study programs for the LSAT and practice tests are available.

Law School

Of course before you apply to law school in Colorado, you must complete a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Getting into law school is becoming more and more difficult. If you want to go to law school in Colorado you have two options: The University of Denver Sturm College of Law (DU) or the University of Colorado, School of Law (CU Boulder).

Some schools, such as DU, offer night classes to allow students to work during the day. Other law schools, such as CU, offer day classes only. Law school usually takes three or four years to complete. After law school you'll be ready for the BIG test.

The Bar Examination

You must graduate from law school before you can take the bar exam, and you must pass it before you apply for a license to practice law in Colorado. The bar exam is given by the Supreme Court Board of Law Examiners. The exam is given twice a year and has two parts; the Multi-State Bar Evaluation (MBE) and an essay and performance exam. In order to help assure that attorneys are familiar with ethical guidelines, applicants are also required to take the Multi-State Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE). You must pass both of these exams to get your license.

Continuing Legal Education (CLE)

Once you become a lawyer your education is never finished! You must continue your education to remain current in your knowledge of the law. In Colorado, each attorney must complete 45 general hours and seven ethics hours of continuing legal education every three years.