

The Columbus Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service has been helping lawyers build their practice for over 50 years.

The Need for Lawyer Referral

The Columbus Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) was created over 50 years ago to help people with legal problems find a knowledgeable attorney with the appropriate level of experience.

Who Calls LRS?

Last year, our LRS operators talked with over 25,000 people and referred over \$2 million in legal business. For most of the callers, this is the first time they have needed a lawyer and do not know where to begin. For over 50 years, the LRS has received calls in every area of the law from adoptions to zoning; from traffic tickets to murder; from slip and falls to wrongful death cases.

How LRS Screens Calls and Refers Clients

The CBA's experienced staff listen to each caller to determine the nature of his or her legal need and then make a referral to two or three attorneys based on the appropriate area of law and geographic location.

Callers who would be more appropriately helped by other organizations such as the Legal Aid Society, the Public Defender's office, a free legal clinic or other governmental agency are given contact information for those services.

The LRS is not a Pro Bono or Reduced Fee Program

LRS is a service designed to help callers find and hire an attorney with the appropriate expertise and level of experience. LRS directs many callers to free legal clinics and other pro bono services; in fact, many LRS panel members also participate in the CBA's Lawyers for Justice Pro Bono program, but LRS is not a pro bono program.

LRS Feedback Reports

Referral reports are e-mailed to participating attorneys on a monthly basis. Attorneys are asked to indicate which callers have become clients and promptly return the form for case tracking purposes. The 15% referral fees on legal fees paid by panel members (25% on fees of \$100,000 or more) are the primary source of operating capital for the LRS and go to help fund advertising the service. Referral fees are paid to the CBA within 30 days of the lawyer earning the fee.

How is LRS Promoted?

LRS has found that television advertising has been one of the best ways to educate the public about our service. The professional ads are targeted to the helping professions—the social workers, the physicians, and counselors who need a neutral, high-quality program to which they can send their patients and clients. LRS receives a high percentage of referrals from social agencies and the courts. LRS also is the friendly voice of the CBA's online listing service www.ColumbusLawyerFinder.com.

Start building your practice today

The Columbus Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service is a good way to build or expand your practice. Panel members' names are given out hundreds of times each year, making LRS a steady source of calls and potential new clients. Many panel members are members of the LRS for most of their careers.

Easy to join!

Registration with the LRS is open to any lawyer with a valid license to practice law in Ohio, who is in the full-time practice of law, and who maintains a minimum of \$100,000 of professional liability insurance. All applications require the disclosure of any client complaints to a disciplinary body or any court imposed sanctions. Applications are reviewed by the CBA Counsel and the Board of Governors. The annual dues are \$300.00 for new lawyers with 3 years or less experience or \$400.00 for lawyers with more than 3 years of experience.

To join, contact Marion Smithberger at marion@cbalaw.org or 614/340.2070.

