

MANIFEST DREAMS CONSULTING & COACHING

FREE DOWNLOAD · LEGAL PREPARATION

Questions to Ask Your Attorney

35 Essential Questions for Your First Legal Consultation — Organized
by Case Type

Manifest Dreams Consulting & Coaching
manifestdreamsconsulting.com

Questions to Ask Your Attorney

Your first meeting with an attorney is valuable — and limited. These questions help you make the most of it. You won't get through all 35 in one meeting. Prioritize the ones most relevant to your situation, write down the answers, and don't leave without understanding your next steps.

Important distinction: Legal information is general knowledge about the law (what this guide provides). Legal advice is guidance specific to your situation from a licensed attorney. Only an attorney who knows your full case can give you legal advice.

Questions for ANY Attorney (Ask These First)

1. Have you handled cases like mine before? How many?
2. What is your fee structure — hourly, flat fee, or contingency?
3. What is your retainer, and what does it cover?
4. How will you communicate with me — phone, email, text? How quickly do you typically respond?
5. Who else in your office will work on my case, and what are their roles?
6. Based on what I've told you, what are the strengths and weaknesses of my case?
7. What is the best realistic outcome? The worst?
8. What are the most important things I should do — and not do — right now?

NOTES:

Criminal Defense Questions

1. What exactly am I charged with, and what does the prosecution have to prove?

2. What are the possible sentences if I'm convicted?
3. Is there a plea offer on the table? What are the pros and cons of accepting it?
4. What is your strategy for defending me?
5. Is there any evidence that could be suppressed or challenged?
6. What is the timeline for my case — how long until trial?
7. Will I need to testify? What are the risks if I do?
8. What happens to my record if I'm convicted? If I take a plea?

NOTES:

Family Law / Custody Questions

1. What factors will the judge consider in deciding custody?
2. How does domestic violence affect custody decisions in this state?
3. What is a realistic custody arrangement given my situation?
4. How is child support calculated, and what can I expect to pay or receive?
5. How long will the divorce / custody process take?
6. What can I do now to strengthen my position?
7. What should I avoid doing that could hurt my case?

NOTES:

Protective Order Questions

1. How quickly can I get a temporary protection order?
2. What do I need to show to get a full protection order?
3. What does the order cover — can it include my children, my home, my workplace?

4. What should I do if the order is violated?
5. How long does the order last, and can it be renewed?
6. What happens if the other person contests the order at the hearing?

NOTES:

Civil / General Questions

1. How strong is my case on a scale of 1–10, and why?
2. What evidence do I need that I don't currently have?
3. Is settlement a realistic option? What would a fair settlement look like?
4. What is the discovery process, and how long will it take?
5. What are the costs and risks of going to trial versus settling?
6. Is there anything else about my situation that I should know?

NOTES:

Questions to Ask Yourself After the Meeting

- Did the attorney listen to me and take my concerns seriously?

- Did they explain things in a way I could understand?

- Do I feel confident in their knowledge of my type of case?

- Were they clear about fees and what I can expect to pay?

- Do I feel comfortable being honest with this person?

- Did they give me a clear sense of next steps?

- Would I feel comfortable calling them with questions?

MY OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THIS ATTORNEY:

MY NEXT STEPS AFTER THIS MEETING:

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS I STILL HAVE:

A Note on Free and Low-Cost Legal Help

If you cannot afford an attorney, you are not without options in Washington State:

CLEAR Hotline — Northwest Justice Project

Free civil legal advice by phone for low-income Washington residents.

 1-888-201-1014 | Mon–Fri 9:15am–12:15pm

Washington LawHelp

Free legal information and self-help guides for Washington residents.

 washingtonlawhelp.org

Washington Courts Self-Help Center

Court forms and filing instructions for people representing themselves.

 courts.wa.gov/selfhelp

A Note from Us

Walking into an attorney's office prepared is one of the most empowering things you can do. You deserve to understand what's happening in your own case. If you need help getting ready for that conversation, that's what I'm here for.

These resources were created for people who were overwhelmed, confused, and alone in systems that weren't built to help them. You deserve better than that.

 Contact: manifestdreamsconsulting.com |  Book a free consult: calendly.com