



Small Business Legal Services

The Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights (CLC) works to advance economic opportunity in disinvested communities of color.

CLC provides two forms of **free transactional legal services** to **eligible small businesses**:





 **Brief Advice Hotline**
30 minutes or less

 **Direct Representation†**
longer than 30 minutes

† *It often takes at least 4 weeks to find volunteer attorneys for Direct Representation matters.*

Who is eligible?


CLC has limited capacity to provide legal support. We generally only support small businesses that:

-  have a Chicago business address
-  sell a product or service
-  have 5 or fewer employees
-  have annual revenue less than \$500,000 per year
-  are referred by one of CLC's community organization partners
-  have a *transactional* legal need (we cannot help with disputes or litigation)

If your small business meets these criteria, please **apply for legal services online** so CLC can assess your eligibility.

How do I apply for legal services?

If your legal need will take **30 minutes or less**, complete our **brief advice intake**.

 survey.legal/HJRotXq-kav4

If your legal need will take **more than 30 minutes**, complete our **small business assistance application**.

 survey.legal/BHluTYqvgktC

If you're unable to complete our online applications, please email Brady Tilghman (btilghman@clccrul.org) and Angela Dear (adear@clccrul.org).

ABOUT US

Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights has helped to build, strengthen and support nonprofits and small businesses that contribute to economic development and deliver social services in low-income neighborhoods since 1985. Our work is focused in historically disinvested communities of color on Chicago's South and West Sides. Our attorney volunteers and expert legal staff provide small business owners with the knowledge to sustain the quality of their programs, improve outcomes, and spur economic development. Chicago Lawyers' Committee recognizes that structural racism is a major contributor toward economic injustice; we work to eradicate racism and end poverty in our city and coordinate our activities in close working relationship with our community partners.

HOW TO OBTAIN SERVICES

Use our "Small Business Legal Services" brochure (page 1 above) to confirm your eligibility and complete one of our online applications. After reviewing your application and eligibility, one of our legal staff will reply with the most efficient legal resource, which may include written publications covering your legal issue, a brief legal consultation appointment, or, if your legal need would be best served by our network of volunteer attorneys, a request for additional information, including documents needed for the legal work to be performed. Please email Brady Tilghman (btighman@clccrul.org) and Angela Dear (adear@clccrul.org) with any questions.

LEGAL SERVICES AVAILABLE

CONTRACTS

- Reviewing/Negotiating a Vendor Contract
- Advice regarding a Contract that is already in place
- Understanding Options for Fulfilling Contract requirements due to COVID-19
- Drafting a Contract for the Business
- Drafting Liability Waivers
- Drafting a non-disclosure agreement

GENERAL CORPORATE

- Drafting/Review/Amending Operating Agreements
- Adding a new Business Partner/business owner

ENTITY FORMATION

- Forming an Entity to Limit Liability
- Note: business plan required*

EMPLOYMENT

- Hiring the first Employee (legal compliance)
- Classifying Workers Properly (Independent Contractor or Employee)
- Review/Draft Employee Handbook
- Advice on Employment Law Compliance (ACA, ADA, FMLA, Anti-Discrimination laws)
- Exempt or Nonexempt Employee (determining who gets overtime)
- Advice to terminate an Employee (excludes representation for potential litigation)
- Implementing Furloughs or Layoffs due to Financial Difficulties

FINANCIAL DISTRESS/DISSOLUTION/ BANKRUPTCY

- Closing the Business Properly/Dissolution of the Business Entity Advice regarding a Contract that is already in place

FINANCING

- Review/Representation to understand loan documents, close a business loan

INSURANCE*

- Income Disruption and Questions about insurance policy coverage for businesses that have ceased operations (COVID-19 impact only)

**Brief advice only, not comprehensive insurance policy coverage review*

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

- Collaborating with a Nonprofit or partnering with another Business
- Drafting a non-disclosure agreement
- Buying or Selling a Business
- Succession Planning
- Selling the Business to the Employees/Worker-owned collaborative

DATA PRIVACY & IT LICENSES

- Reviewing a technology contract
- Advise on data
- Drafting policies to protect customer data

REAL ESTATE

- Review/Negotiation of Commercial Lease
- Negotiation/Drafting of Rent Abatement Agreement or Payment Plan for Past Due Rent
- Negotiation/Drafting of Lease Termination Agreement
- Questions about Zoning
- Purchase/Sale of Real Estate
- Review/Negotiation of Real Estate Construction Contracts

TAX*

- Questions about income tax, sales tax, or property tax
- Negotiation of payment plans for payroll tax arrears

**Legal questions only, not accounting or audit questions or assistance*

TRADEMARKS, COPYRIGHTS, PATENTS, AND TRADE SECRETS

- Protecting the name and logo of the business
- Protecting work created by the business
- Protecting trade secrets
- Determining ownership of work created by an employee or independent contractor