

## So, You Want to Be a.... Attorney/Lawyer

### **Introduction**

An attorney (also commonly known as a lawyer) is a professional career that can incorporate criminal justice. Attorneys work in both the public and private sectors to represent clients and help them understand the law, often pursuing a course of action that is helpful to their client's position. Attorneys may give advice, represent clients, prepare legal documents, interview witnesses, conduct depositions and trials, and analyze legal problems. Most attorneys specialize in a particular legal field, such as criminal defense, environment, tax, intellectual property, family, and estate planning. They work in law firms, businesses, and in government agencies.

### **Types of Careers**

Alternate Dispute Resolution	Partner in Law Firm
General Counsel	Solo Practitioner
In-House Counsel	Arbitrator/Mediator
Litigator	Judge
Public Defender	District Attorney/Prosecutor

### **Education/Licensing**

1. Acquire an undergraduate degree (usually want to maintain a 3.0 or greater overall GPA)
2. Take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT)
3. Acquire Juris Doctorate (J.D.) Degree (law degree) (takes approx. 3 years full-time)
4. Take and pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE)
5. Take and pass the Bar Exam for each state you wish you practice within

### **Other Requirements/Information**

Generally, attorneys want to display strong skills in active learning/listening, analytical/critical thinking, negotiation, persuasion, public speaking, time management, and writing. Some attorneys also pursue Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees in addition to their Juris Doctorate. LL.M. degrees help individuals establish a specialization (such as human rights, tax, elder law, international law, or criminal law), can improve opportunities for some jobs, and give individuals opportunities to conduct research and publish while diving deep into topics.

### **For More Information**

American Bar Association: [Resources for Law Students and Law School](#)

North Carolina Bar Association: [North Carolina Bar Association](#)

North Carolina State Bar: [Law Student Division](#)