

# Careers in Law

Middle schools and high schools are the foundation for preparing for your adult life. Instead of, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" you will be asked, "How are you preparing for your future?" Perhaps you have considered a career in law. Here are some commonly asked questions and answers.



## WHAT IS A LAWYER?

A lawyer is both an advisor and an advocate. As an advisor, a lawyer tells clients how local, state and federal laws affect them and prepares legal documents to meet the client's needs. As an advocate, a lawyer represents the legal rights of clients and talks to other people on behalf of his/her clients.

There is much more to being a lawyer than what you see on television or in the movies, where lawyers are always in the courtroom. Most lawyers spend a majority of their time in their offices, meeting with clients, drafting contracts, mediating disputes, researching legal issues, talking (or consulting) with experts, and negotiating settlements.

## ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF LAWYERS?

Careers in law are extremely varied. Some lawyers work in criminal law, which includes defending or prosecuting people accused of committing crimes. Other lawyers work in civil law representing people, businesses, and the government. Civil matters include areas like contract negotiations, real estate transactions, workers' compensation, divorces, wills, and landlord disputes.

Some lawyers choose to use their legal skills and education as corporate lawyers, bankers, legal affairs reporters, sports/entertainment advisors, teachers, politicians, and more.

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A LAWYER?

Anyone can become a lawyer. Lawyers are dedicated to the administration of justice and the public good. They are motivated, pay special attention to detail, and have high ethical standards. A lawyer must have a good vocabulary, sound reasoning skills, the ability to understand complex written material, the ability to write clearly and concisely, a good memory, the ability to communicate orally, and good listening skills. Lawyers who work in the courtroom must be able to think quickly on their feet, speak with ease and authority, and understand courtroom strategy.

## WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION WILL I NEED?

To become a lawyer, you must have a bachelor's degree and a degree from a law school. It usually takes four years to earn a bachelor's degree at a college or university and three years to complete law school. Prior to entering a college or university, you must take a standardized test called the SAT or ACT. Prior to entering law school, you must take a standardized test called the LSAT. After completing law school, graduates must pass an exam administered by the state's highest court called the bar exam. Upon passing the bar exam, a license is issued to be a lawyer in South Carolina.

## DOES THE SOUTH CAROLINA BAR OFFER PROGRAMS THAT ARE LAW RELATED FOR STUDENTS?

The South Carolina Bar Law Related Education Division has several programs offering a chance to test out what it is like to be a lawyer. At both the middle and high school levels, you can compete in Mock Trial. This is a competition based program using fictional cases argued in a courtroom. Middle and high schools also have *We the People* competitions, focusing on constitutional arguments in front of a panel of judges. *iCivics.org* is a free online website, which allows you to take on the role of a lawyer or judge in virtual games. Check out [www.sctbar.org/lre](http://www.sctbar.org/lre) for additional information!

## SOME AREAS OF LAW

- Business Law
- Criminal/Civil Law
- Education Law
- Environmental/Energy Law
- Family Law
- Health/Insurance Law
- Juvenile Justice Law
- Sports/Entertainment Law
- Workers' Compensation Law

## OTHER LAW RELATED CAREERS

(LAW DEGREE NOT REQUIRED)

- Bailiffs
- Court Reporters
- Investigators
- Mediators
- Paralegals
- Police Officers
- Probation Officers
- Social Workers
- Translators

**Laws affect everyone.  
Flip the page  
to learn more!**



**South Carolina Bar**  
Law Related Education Division

**For more information, visit our website at [www.sctbar.org/lre](http://www.sctbar.org/lre)**

# Have questions about the law?

Every day you are protected by thousands of laws. Some laws you may be familiar with and others may surprise you. In some cases, laws may not apply to you now, but will very soon. Don't be caught off guard—understanding the law is a click away. The South Carolina Bar Law Related Education Division offers resources, such as SC.LawForKids.org and Law for Young Adults, to help navigate through the laws affecting YOU!

## Law for Young Adults Topics

- Working and Taxes
- Getting Around (Driving)
- Money Matters
- Hate Crimes
- Smart Shopping
- Moving Out
- Tips for Socializing Online
- Military Service
- Marriage and Partnerships
- Protecting Your Identity
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Warranties
- Jury Duty
- Gang Violence and the Law
- Crimes and Consequences
- Finding Legal Help

## SC.LAWFORKIDS.ORG

Have a legal question? Check out SC.LawForKids.org, which is a website where you can anonymously ask your own legal question and have a SC lawyer answer the question. Lawyers answer questions as they pertain to the laws in South Carolina, but do not give advice. You can also browse through thousands of previously asked and answered questions without ever posting a question of your own. LawForKids.org features quizzes, interactive games, cartoons, comics, law documents, and searchable sections on South Carolina law and how it affects young people. This website also links to other law related education websites and offers homework assistance.



## LAW FOR YOUNG ADULTS

This web resource provides relevant and practical knowledge for young individuals, especially those who are approaching the age of majority, age 18. Turning 18 is a critical point in your life. Each year brings new and exciting opportunities and responsibilities. You will be making important decisions about your life and future. However, these decisions can come with some life-long consequences. Law for Young Adults provides valuable information on the new responsibilities and consequences applying to you. The list to the left includes some of the 33 topics found in this online resource.

Go to [www.scbars.org/LRE/LYA](http://www.scbars.org/LRE/LYA) to learn more.

If you are interested in the law, a legal career may be right for you. Flip the page to learn more!



**South Carolina Bar**  
Law Related Education Division

For more information, visit our website at [www.scbars.org/lre](http://www.scbars.org/lre)