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**TO FIND LAWYERS ONLINE, LOOK  
TO ABA'S LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE**

CHICAGO, June 14, 2001 – Today the Internet has become such a strong marketing force that virtually anything and anybody can be found in cyberspace – including professionals like doctors and lawyers. In fact, finding lawyers online has become commonplace.

“Because so many ‘for-profit’ dot-coms for legal advice have sprouted up in the past couple of years, this has become a ‘buyer beware’ situation,” cautions John Busch, chair of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Lawyer Referral and Information Service. “The ABA’s Lawyer Referral program, found online at **[www.abanet.org/referral](http://www.abanet.org/referral)**, is a public service provided by state and local bar associations.”

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## LAWYER REFERRAL, Add One

It lists more than 300 Lawyer Referral programs throughout the country. And, unlike any other online lawyer search, the initial half-hour consultation with the lawyer is free or at a nominal cost, typically \$30 or less.

“Most average citizens don’t have lawyers until legal matters arise – and then they don’t know how to find them,” says Busch. “Lawyer Referral helps you pinpoint a lawyer experienced in the area in which you need help. In essence, the Lawyer Referral service does the screening for you.”

The process is simple. Visit the ABA’s Web site at **[www.abanet.org/referral](http://www.abanet.org/referral)**. The site contains a listing of more than 300 Lawyer Referral programs throughout the country. Some states have several programs, serving different counties. For example, California has nearly 70 offices and New York has 26.

The site even has direct links to several bar association Lawyer Referral services, so that requests can be processed online. For other states, consumers need to phone. “But either way, it’s easy, expedient and efficient,” says Busch.

Lawyers who are registered with the Lawyer Referral program are in good standing with their state licensing authority and are considered qualified in their areas of practice. Callers to the referral program will speak with trained staff persons who will determine the nature of the legal questions at hand and will suggest lawyers who can answer them.

The service also can help determine if a lawyer is needed or whether a community or government agency would be more helpful.

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## LAWYER REFERRAL, Add Two

A caller referred to a lawyer by the service is entitled to a half-hour initial consultation at no charge or for a nominal fee, typically \$30 or less, that helps to fund the local Lawyer Referral program.

“In some cases, all you may need is a half-hour consultation to resolve your legal issue,” notes Busch. “Otherwise, after the initial consultation, it’s up to you whether to hire the lawyer.

“Once a lawyer is suggested to you, it’s still important to meet face-to-face to determine your comfort level with him or her, as well as to get an idea of the services that you will receive and the fees you may incur if you pursue further action,” Busch advises.

Today, more than 10 million inquiries are made annually to Lawyer Referral services through phone calls and the Internet. Family law issues rank first in the number of inquiries made to Lawyer Referral programs. But lawyers can assist clients with a number of situations, including legal matters pertaining to:

- Accidents and injuries
- Buying or selling a home or property
- Civil rights violations
- Consumer problems
- Criminal actions
- Contracts
- Credit problems and bankruptcy
- Divorce and other family matters
- Employment problems
- Rental or leasing problems
- Starting a business
- Workers’ compensation
- Social security benefits
- Writing a will

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LAWYER REFERRAL, Add Three

The American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership association in the world. With more than 400,000 members, the ABA provides law school accreditation, continuing legal education, information about the law, programs to assist lawyers and judges in their work, and initiatives to improve the legal system for the public.