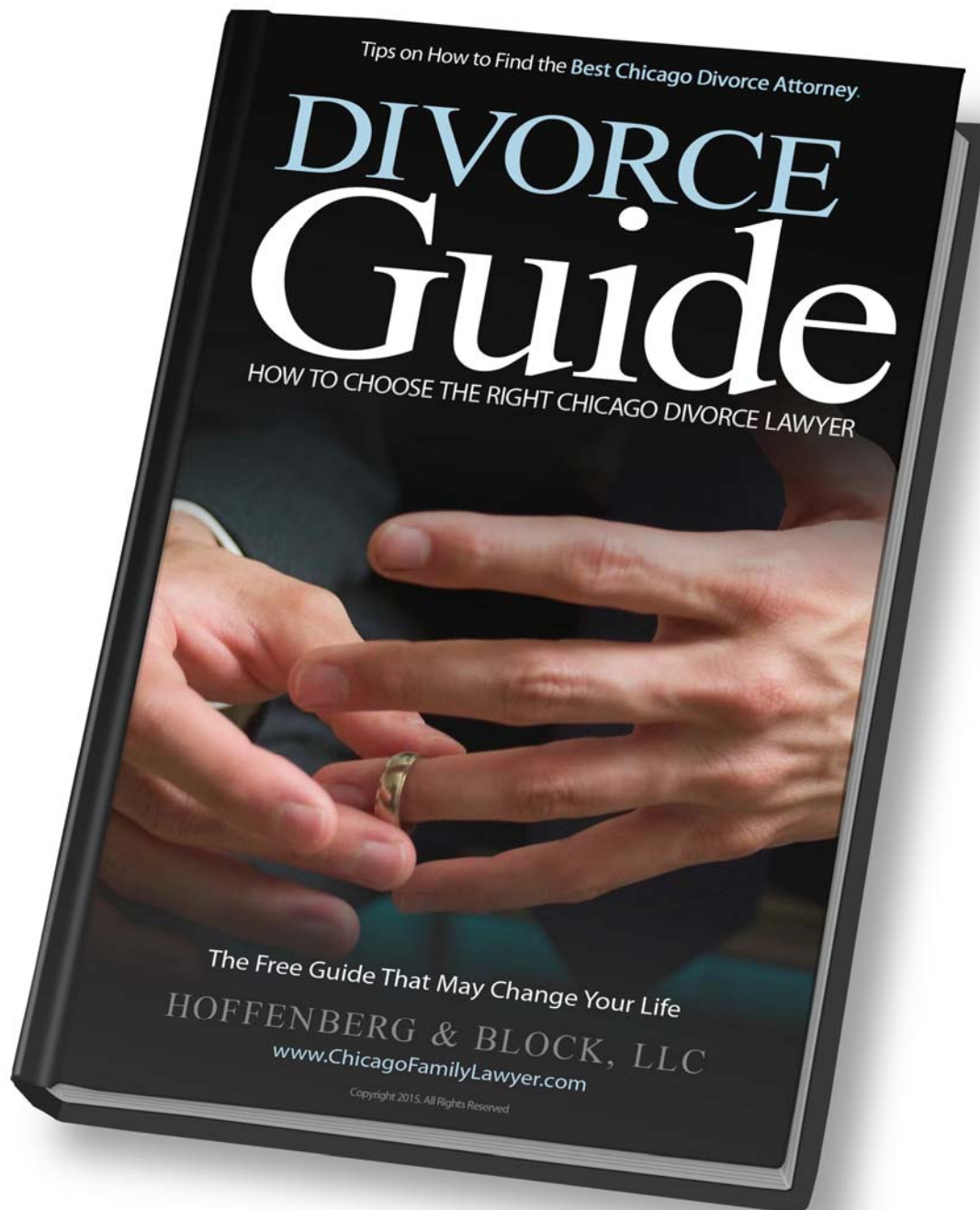




HOFFENBERG & BLOCK, LLC





How to Choose the Right Chicago Divorce Lawyer

Choosing the Right Divorce Lawyer in Chicago

Divorce is a complex process that affects just about every aspect of your life: financial, emotional and physical and preparation is the key as you search for the right divorce lawyer in Chicago to handle your case.

If you want to maximize the probability of a satisfactory resolution to your divorce case, you will need an experienced, dedicated and skilled divorce lawyer on your side. It's not easy, but you need to take the time to find the right divorce attorney for you and your case.

Finding a Good Chicago Divorce Lawyer Takes Research

Before you can choose your lawyer, you really should understand the basic divorce process and then research lawyers in your area. Once you've found several attorneys you like, interview each one and ask what his or her strategy would be for your case. Also be sure to ask how long the case might take, plus other important questions pertaining to your case.

Hiring the Right Chicago Family Law Attorney for your Case

Deciding on a Chicago Family Lawyer is no easy task. There are a number of attorneys in Chicago that are capable of representing you properly, but unfortunately, basic ability may not be enough. You need to do your homework and ask the right questions before you hire anyone. Choosing the right Chicago Family Lawyer is the essential first step of the process.

Preparation is a key component to any successful venture and if you want to maximize the probability of a satisfactory resolution to your family law issue, you will need an experienced and powerful ally on your side.

Take the time to find the best Chicago Family Lawyer for you and your case. While it's absolutely clear that hiring the right attorney can help you avoid many of the pitfalls and hassles of a family law issue, it is even more important for you to realize that hiring the wrong attorney

has the potential to make a bad situation even worse. It may prove to be the difference between achieving a result that you are satisfied with and one that haunts you for years to come. One of the first things you will want to consider when looking for a Family Law Attorney in Chicago is to determine just how much experience the attorney or firm has in the area of Family Law.

Family Law is a multi-faceted area of law that deals with interpersonal relationships, family issues and the law. Family law encompasses such areas as adoption, child custody and visitation, children's rights, child support, spousal support, separation agreements, divorce, property division, cohabitation agreements, marital (pre-nuptial and postnuptial) agreements, marriage and other legal issues pertinent to the family.

Attorneys who exclusively practice divorce and family law have managed more cases and presumably have more knowledge and expertise than lawyers who handle divorce as an "add-on" service to their general law practice. Chicago Family Lawyers also have long-standing relationships in place with judges and other family law attorneys in Cook, Lake, DuPage, Will and McHenry Counties in Illinois, as well as vast experience with the family court process and court personnel.

As part of the selection process, you will want to make sure that you schedule an interview or "Case Evaluation" meeting with your prospective new Family Law Attorney. Do not be intimidated, instead focus on asking questions and deciding if this is a person you trust and have confidence in.

What to ask a Chicago Divorce Attorney before you hire them

Before you hire a family law attorney in Chicago, you need to make sure they are a good fit for you and your case. The following list of questions about the firm, your case and the financial implications of divorce are a good general starting point, but remember to ask all the questions that concern you prior to hiring the firm. The answers you receive are only going to be as good as the questions you ask, so make sure that you get all the information you need before moving forward. Even though the attorney may not be able to completely answer all of your questions, they should be able to provide you enough information to make you feel confident in their abilities and comfortable with their personality.

Questions about the firm

Q. Does your firm exclusively practice Family Law?

There are many attorneys who practice in various areas of law and often time offer family law services as "add-ons" to their general law practice. It's imperative that you hire an attorney who limits their practice exclusively to family law. You want a specialist, an experienced family lawyer with a solid reputation.

Q. How long have you practiced this type of law?

Ideally, you want someone with extensive experience in the area of your case. If you are getting divorced, you definitely want an honest attorney with a good reputation that is results-driven and devotes a majority of their time and effort to divorce.

Q. How many cases of this type have you handled? How many in the last 12 months?

As mentioned above, you want an attorney devoted to family law that specializes in the area of your specific case.

Q. How quickly do you return phone calls?

Your new attorney should be able to return your calls within one business day.

Q. What should I do if I encounter a problem after office hours?

Not all family law issues happen between the hours of 9am and 5pm. Ask if their office has an answering service or what their policy is on after hour communication in the event of an emergency.

Questions to ask about your case

Q. Based on the facts of my case, how long do you think it will take to resolve my case?

Ask what their plan is for resolving your case and what type of strategies they may use.

Q. Who will handle my case?

If it isn't going to be the attorney you are meeting with, ask to speak to the person who would be in charge of your case.

Q. How likely am I to get what I want? Am I being realistic?

You want an honest attorney that will provide you with proper legal guidance and realistically manage your expectations. A lawyer that tells you "what you want to hear" and "promises you the moon" just to secure you as a client, is not the one to choose.

Q. Is this a case you would try to settle?

In many cases, the first and possibly best option may be to settle. Settlement is generally less expensive and potentially less stressful than a long, drawn out, hotly contested case that goes to trial.

Q. Is there a chance of my spouse paying some of my legal fees?

Sometimes, the court may order one spouse to pay the legal fees of the other and this is a fair question to ask.

Questions to ask about costs

Q. What is your fee structure?

Ask for information about in-court and out-of court rates. Ask if a retainer fee (an up-front payment, similar to a down payment) is required and how much. Also determine if a different rate is charged for junior associates or paralegal work and if you will be charged for miscellaneous expenses.

Q. How much do you think a case like mine should cost?

If you are talking to a "Top Chicago Family Law Attorney", one with years of experience in and out of the courtroom, that has been involved in hundreds of cases similar to yours; they should be

able to give you a general range of costs. If the attorney you are speaking to is unable to provide some type of “ballpark” estimate, you should consider a second opinion.

Q. Are there any additional charges I should expect?

Additional charges may include private investigators, forensic accountants, physicians, psychologists and even office expenses such as copies and postage.

Q. What methods of payment do you accept?

Many attorneys accept cash, check and major credit cards as payment for their services.

In addition to contemplating the answers to these questions, you need to take into consideration how the attorney made you feel personally. What was your first impression? Were you comfortable with their personality, did you like the way they responded to your questions or were they defensive and restrained?

Selecting a lawyer is a very personal decision. You may prefer a male attorney; someone you feel is aggressive and intimidating, while others may want a female; someone they feel is more nurturing, friendly and easy to talk to. Only you can decide what you are comfortable with and what will convince you that you are choosing the best Chicago Family Lawyer for your situation.

How to find the best divorce attorney in Chicago to meet your needs.

The attorneys at **Hoffenberg & Block LLC** have been practicing family law for several decades and we receive many referrals from other top Chicago attorneys and business professionals as well as past clients that were satisfied with the work we did for them.

Many of these prospective clients will ask ***“I Need the Best Divorce Lawyer in Chicago, Who Should I Call?”***

Fortunately for us, our firm is recommended quite often. But, honestly, whether or not we are the “Best” is very subjective and really depends on a variety of factors. The Chicago Divorce Lawyer that is best for one client may not be best for you. You should really consider the following when searching for the Best Chicago Divorce Lawyer:

Below are a few things that you should consider when trying to find a top divorce lawyer in Chicago:

Step 1: Identify prospects and create a list

There are several ways to create a list of the top divorce attorneys in the Chicago area.

Yellow Pages – You could open the phone book to ‘Chicago divorce lawyers’ and throw a dart to see which ad it hits – **this would not be considered a good option.**

Personal Referral – If you feel comfortable asking friends to recommend a divorce lawyer that may be an acceptable place to start. Being referred to a divorce lawyer by someone who is a friend of the lawyer is not always the best choice; the referral could be based mainly on personal friendship and less on qualifications, experience and reputation.

Client Referral – If you are referred to a divorce lawyer by one of that firm’s former clients, make sure that you ask the person referring you to describe what their case involved and what the outcome was. If the person providing you the referral had a case that is dissimilar to yours, a referral to that person’s lawyer may not really provide substantial information about that lawyer’s skill and experience at handling your specific case.

Attorney Referral – When searching for the best Divorce Lawyer in Chicago, a great option would be to consult with a local attorney that you trust and is familiar with other lawyers that specialize in the practice of “Family Law” and ask them for a recommendation.

Online Lawyer Directories – If you are not comfortable asking a friend or talking to a former client for a referral, another option is to check one of the major online law firm directories, like SuperLawyers.com. Super Lawyers aggregates peer-ranked lists of attorneys, organized by geography and practice area. Both, **Alan D. Hoffenberg** and **Gloria E. Block** have been awarded the designation of **Super Lawyers in Chicago**.

Step 2: Fine tune your list

The next logical step is to fine tune your list into a “short list” of Chicago divorce lawyers who are actually worth meeting with. You should consider the following:

Only consider experienced family law attorneys that practice in the county where you live. The intricacies of family law can vary from county to county and if your case is in

Cook, Lake, DuPage, Will or McHenry Counties in Illinois, you will want to make sure that the lawyer that you are considering practices there.

Make sure that the divorce attorneys on your list are in good standing with the Illinois Bar Association

Visit the Firm’s website and read the executive biography of each lawyer. A good executive bio will display the education, training, experience and awards of the attorney.

While there is no single label that universally identifies good divorce lawyers, a generally accepted indicator of quality is the Super Lawyer designation which displays peer-ranked lists of attorneys, organized by geography and practice area.

Check the professional credentials, education and accolades of the remaining candidates on your “short list”.

Meet face-to-face

Once you have narrowed the field to a manageable number of candidates, you should start the process of scheduling in-person meetings with each of the divorce lawyers remaining on your list. Be aware of the responsiveness of each firm or attorney to your request for a case evaluation. You need to be sure that the attorney you ultimately retain is able to devote sufficient time to your case and if it takes 3 or 4 business days to get a call back it may be a good indication that they are too busy to give your case the attention it requires and deserves.

When you begin to meet with prospective candidates, ask them about their experience with cases that are similar to yours. For example, if you are expecting an emotionally charged custody battle, ask them to discuss their experience with such cases. Another thing to realize is that the attorney you meet with may not be the one who will actually be assigned to your case. Ask which attorney will be working on your case, and ask to meet them. They will likely be your contact person and it is important that you feel comfortable working with them.

Personality

You should also consider the fact that you need a qualified divorce lawyer, one with years of courtroom and trial experience, fits your personality and is understanding and sympathetic to your specific situation. You will be sharing many intimate details of your life with your divorce lawyer, and he or she will be advising you on important decisions that may impact the rest of your life. If your personalities clash and you are unable to communicate effectively, your case may not go as smoothly as planned.

Conclusion

The process of hiring a divorce lawyer is one that, depending on the complexity of your case, may justify a little extra homework on your part. The final decision may be a subjective one, but if you take the time to create a list of qualified candidates you will have a better chance of finding the Best Divorce Lawyer in Chicago.

About Hoffenberg and Block LLC

Family Law is a complex legal area. Issues often involve intense emotions and have the potential to be life changing for the entire family. If you are involved in a divorce or other family law matter, it is important to have an experienced Chicago family lawyer on your side to advocate for the best possible outcome.

At the Chicago Family Law Firm of **Hoffenberg & Block**, we have been providing comprehensive divorce and family law representation to clients in Cook County, Lake County, Dupage County, Will County, McHenry County and surrounding north eastern Illinois communities for over 45 years.

We are a full-service family law firm, providing personalized, professional service to clients from day one until resolution of their issues. Our practice covers a wide range of family law matters, including divorce and legal separation, child custody and visitation, child relocation, spousal and child support, property division, modification or enforcement of current court orders, prenuptial and postnuptial agreements, and civil unions.

With more than 100 years of combined experience, our team of legal professionals is prepared to advocate for clients in even the most difficult circumstances. We operate according to our firm's philosophy — that if a case is prepared properly, it can be resolved favorably. We also are realistic and understand that sometimes cases cannot be settled. In that event, we are dynamic trial attorneys who will provide aggressive representation in the courtroom.

If you are facing a divorce or fighting for custody of your children, contact our law office immediately. Our main office is conveniently located at 30 N. LaSalle in Chicago, IL, 60602. Call us today at (312) 853-8000 to schedule a no obligation case evaluation with one of our experienced family law attorneys. We can discuss your case with you, help you better understand your options and make this time less difficult for your family.



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