

A trusted source for finding a lawyer

CHOOSING A LAWYER SHOULD NOT BE A CRAPSHOOT. The stakes are too high. The person you pick can mean the difference in the outcome of a divorce or the survival of a small business. Problem is, selecting a lawyer can feel like a throw of the dice. You want to be confident that the lawyer you hire will handle your matter well, treat you with dignity and bill you fairly. You cannot predict any of that based on an ad in a phonebook.

In truth, you may never achieve certainty in your choice of a lawyer. You can, however, improve your odds and fortify your confidence. The surest route to the right lawyer is through a source you can trust that can vouch for the lawyer's work. Find a source that can reassure you, "That lawyer would be a good choice," and you eliminate the guesswork.

This directory, The New York Area's Best Lawyers®, is just such a source. It is excerpted from the upcoming 2006 edition of "The Best Lawyers in America®", the preeminent referral guide to the legal profession in the United States. Lawyers cannot buy their way into this directory. The lawyers included on these pages get here solely through a vote of their peers. A confidential survey asks thousands of lawyers one question: "If you had a close friend or relative who needed a real estate lawyer (for example), and you could not handle the case yourself, to whom would you refer them?"

The results form a directory that stands as the gold standard of reliability and integrity in lawyer ratings. New York Magazine is proud to team with ALM – a leading media company serving legal, real estate, financial and business professionals – and Best Lawyers to bring you the most reliable and useful guide to the New York area's best lawyers available anywhere.

-- Robert J. Ambrogio, Editor

METHODOLOGY

The New York Area's Best Lawyers® is excerpted from the upcoming 2006 edition of "The Best Lawyers in America®", the preeminent referral guide to the legal profession in the United States. Published since 1983, Best Lawyers lists attorneys in 52 specialties, representing all 50 states, who have been chosen through an exhaustive survey in which thousands of the nation's top lawyers confidentially evaluate their professional peers. The upcoming (12th) edition of Best Lawyers is based on more than 900,000 detailed evaluations of lawyers by other lawyers.

The new edition (to be published in November 2005) will mark the first annual publication of Best Lawyers, which has previously been published biennially. Changes in the legal marketplace, which grows bigger, more complex, and more fluid every year, have made this transition inevitable; while advances in technology, such as online voting, have made it possible.

Nevertheless, the method used to compile the latest edition of Best Lawyers is fundamentally the same as it was when the first edition was compiled more than 20 years ago. Lawyers are chosen for inclusion based solely on a vote of their peers. Listings cannot be bought, and no purchase is required to be included. In this regard, Best Lawyers remains the gold standard of reliability and integrity in lawyer ratings.

The survey for the 2006 edition began with a nomination pool consisting of all lawyers whose names appeared in the previous edition of Best Lawyers, lawyers who were nominated since the previous survey, and new nominees solicited from the 18,500 listed attorneys. Half of the voting pool (lawyers listed in the previous edition) were sent fax or email ballots; the other half were asked to vote by phone. (All of the voters for New York's Best Lawyers List were polled by phone.) Some lawyers were asked to vote only on nominees in their own specialty in their own jurisdiction. Lawyers in closely related specialties were asked to vote across specialties, as were lawyers in smaller jurisdictions. In a few instances, where specialties are national or international in nature, lawyers were asked to vote nationally as well as locally. Voting lawyers were also given an opportunity to offer more detailed comments on nominees.

Voting lawyers were provided this general guideline for determining if a nominee should be listed among "the best": "If you had a close friend or relative who needed a real estate lawyer (for example), and you could not handle the case yourself, to whom would you refer them?" All votes and comments were solicited with a guarantee of confidentiality – a critical factor in the viability and validity of Best Lawyers surveys. To ensure the rigor of the selection process, lawyers were urged to use only their highest standards when voting, and to evaluate each nominee based only on his or her individual merits. The additional comments were used to make more accurate comparisons between voting patterns and weigh votes accordingly. Best Lawyers uses various methodological tools to identify and correct for anomalies in both the nomination and voting process.

Ultimately, of course, a lawyer's inclusion is based on the subjective judgments of his or her fellow attorneys. While it is true that the lists may at times disproportionately reward visibility or popularity, the breadth of the survey, the candor of the respondents, and the sophistication of the polling methodology largely correct for any biases.

For all these reasons, Best Lawyers lists continue to represent the most reliable, accurate and useful guide to the best lawyers in the United States available anywhere.