

Limited scope representation

The lawyer agrees to do some of the legal work and you will perform other tasks, as you and your lawyer decide is appropriate in your case. The fee is based on the amount of work you agree that the lawyer will perform. Common legal work includes: consultation about legal rights, drafting and/or reviewing legal documents, or appearing in court in uncontested matters. The fee may be determined based on the time required or a set fee for the work to be performed.

How can I find a lawyer who offers limited scope representation?

The Missouri Bar has a searchable list of lawyers offering legal services through limited representation in family law matters. Go to www.mobar.org and look for the Lawyer Search Service under the Public Information tab on the homepage.

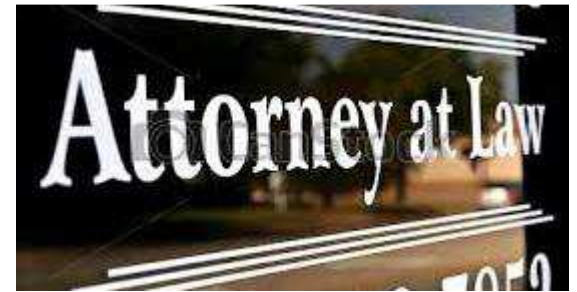
You also may find lawyers who offer limited scope representation in your area by contacting your local Bar Association.

You are always encouraged to have a full and frank discussion with the lawyer about the legal services to be provided, the fees involved and other costs.

The Missouri Bar Client's Resource Guide available at www.mobar.org/publicinformation discusses how to hire a lawyer, setting fees, and lawyers' ethical responsibilities to their clients. The Missouri Bar has a fee dispute resolution program to help people work out disagreements over lawyers' fees.

Limited Scope Representation:

Hiring a Lawyer by the Task



This brochure was developed by the Supreme Court of Missouri's Committee on Access to Family Courts. More information can be found on our website: selfrepresent.mo.gov.

Direct comments to cafc@courts.mo.gov.

As a consumer of legal services, you have decisions to make about legal representation. One method for hiring a lawyer is called "limited scope representation." The lawyer's fee is based on the specific legal services you and the lawyer agree will be provided.

What is different about hiring a lawyer for limited scope representation?

You and the lawyer agree on what the lawyer will do and what you are willing to do to reduce the lawyer's time and fees in providing legal services. The lawyer must explain what steps are needed to handle your legal matter and coordinate what the lawyer will do with what you are responsible to complete. Clients usually feel well informed about what is required to complete their legal matter.

You and the lawyer must agree that limited legal services are reasonable and appropriate in your legal matter. The lawyer then is entitled to rely on your representation of the facts and will not be required independently to investigate or verify the circumstances unless the lawyer knows the representations are false.

You only pay for the time and tasks you agree the lawyer will do. It can be cost effective for specific legal tasks or legal matters that are not complex. You may be required to pay before the lawyer performs the work. Normally this does not involve as large an advance deposit, as the lawyer does not provide full representation.



Is the lawyer's responsibility different when hired for limited scope representation?

The tasks the lawyer performs, however, must meet the same standards of professionalism and care as hiring a lawyer for full representation in a civil legal matter. You must give "informed consent" for limited scope representation. This means that you clearly must understand what the lawyer will and won't do,



How will I know what I need to do?

If you and the lawyer agree upon limited scope representation, you will sign a written engagement agreement that spells out the tasks to be performed by you and by the lawyer. It is recommended that you stay in touch with the lawyer to be sure your tasks are completed as needed. If you have concerns about whether the engagement agreement covers what is needed, talk with your lawyer about changing the scope of representation.



Am I assuming more risk when I agree that I will do some of the work involved?

You must follow up on the tasks you agree to do. You are taking responsibility for performing your tasks accurately and in a timely manner. The risk is yours if you do not complete your tasks as agreed. You accept the risk that other legal issues may arise which are not covered by your engagement agreement with the lawyer.

When does representation end?

When the goal of the representation has been achieved, the lawyer has the right to terminate representation. When a court appearance is involved, the lawyer does not need the permission of a judge to withdraw once the tasks are completed.

The lawyer is not required to expand the scope of representation. You may find this desirable as your case proceeds. If you want additional representation, you and the lawyer will need to renegotiate the scope of legal services to be provided and you will usually be charged for additional services.