

WHAT IS LIMITED SCOPE REPRESENTATION?

Limited scope representation (sometimes called “unbundling”) is a way that an attorney can help you by handling part of your legal matter while you represent yourself on the rest of your case. For example, in family law case with issues involving divorce, custody, and child support, you may choose one of the following options:

1. Hire an attorney to assist you with the child support matter only and you can handle the remaining issues yourself;
2. Hire an attorney to handle each legal service separately; or
3. Consult with the attorney at certain points in your case where legal expertise is needed, while you handle everything in the case yourself.

With limited scope assistance, you may be able to handle some of the case yourself but need legal assistance with certain matters or tasks where the attorney can help you. Deciding what portions of the case you will handle and what portion(s) of the case the attorney will handle will be determined through a discussion between you and the attorney. If you do this, you may return to the same attorney to assist you with some of or all of the remaining legal services, as needed. You may also hire a different attorney. If you hire a different attorney, you may be paying a new attorney to get up to speed on your case.

Some areas of the law are *extremely technical and difficult*, and it is rare for non-attorneys to effectively handle the case without an attorney. Among these are pension rights, stock options, and business interests. You will almost certainly need the assistance of an attorney if your case involves any of these issues.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS YOUR CASE THOROUGHLY WITH YOUR ATTORNEY

It is important to discuss **all aspects** of your case thoroughly (even those which **you** think are simple) with your attorney before deciding which parts you want to handle yourself and with which parts the attorney will handle. It is equally essential to realize that there may be important issues presented by your case of which you are not even aware. There could be at serious legal risk regarding an issue that you do not realize exists. This is why it is critical to talk with the attorney about all aspects of your case.

Never make assumptions about the law which applies to your case. **The law shows you’ve seen on TV are rarely accurate**, and just because you’ve “seen it on TV,” doesn’t mean it is correct, or even “legal.” It is best to speak with an attorney or legal service provider/program about your options before making decisions about your case.

Sometimes new issues will pop up after your case is started. If they do, it is important to advise your attorney and discuss the new issues, so that your attorney may advise you on the potential legal consequences. Remember that your attorney can only advise you on matters you tell him/her about, so it is essential that you provide complete information about your case. That means good communication and a clear understanding of the facts is essential.