

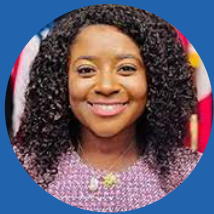
GUIDEBOOK

Recruiting & Retaining Talented Young Lawyers



INTRODUCTION

Attorney retention and recruitment is an issue at the forefront of the minds of those individuals tasked with staffing the many law firms, government agencies, nonprofits and other legal service providers that serve the State of Florida. This guide seeks to provide a resource to anyone tasked with recruiting and retaining young lawyers in the ever-evolving legal field through defining who young lawyers are, and offering tips on how offices can attract, hire and retain talented applicants.



"The investment in young lawyers is invaluable and is the masonry of the future of the legal profession. This investment isn't just in the office, but also occurs in legal organizations, civic engagement, and personally. When you can, extend a hand to include more young lawyers by remembering how you felt right after passing the Bar. Compound that with the common feeling of being the first lawyer in your family or not having the expansive network that comes with experience. We increase professionalism, civility, and the reputation of all lawyers by modeling that to young lawyers. We retain young lawyers by learning what motivates and engages young lawyers. Opportunities for growth, elevation, and engagement will always be key. Your legacy is dependent upon developing your replacement. You shine, when the young lawyers around you shine. Thank you for your commitment to the future of our noble profession."

Iris A. Elijah, President, Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division



"It is exciting to see that so many stakeholders in the legal field have recognized the importance of providing job candidates with well-rounded benefits that span far beyond salary. Law firms, government agencies, nonprofits and other legal service providers can distinguish themselves to prospective hires by showcasing how their office can provide development opportunities and benefits that are unique to them."

*Randall Baskin, Baskin Eisel Rightmyer, Clearwater
& Ciara Willis, Bush Ross, PA, Tampa*

*Co-Chairs, Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division,
Inclusion and Equality Committee*



WHO QUALIFIES AS A YOUNG LAWYER AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HIRE THEM?



All lawyers under age 36 years of age and new attorneys within their first 5 years of practice, regardless of age, qualify as young lawyers. Hiring a young lawyer at the beginning of their legal career can offer benefits to both employers and employees alike. Making the initial investment in a young lawyer can bring new perspectives into a workplace. Whether a young lawyer has followed a more traditional path to practice or is beginning their second career, they are sure to bring their unique knowledge and skillset to the office with them. Additionally, young lawyers are eager to learn and be trained by the seasoned attorneys they work with. Much like any major sports program, most drafted players are not day one starters. Instead, they are developed over time while giving your team depth. From meticulously learning plays, to eagerly becoming physically fit, and understanding changes in league and team rules, new players are willing to vigorously prepare to join the team. When it is time for them to make their start, their ability to succeed depends on the amount of coaching that has been provided. When developed thoughtfully, a young lawyer has the potential to effect a positive return for your office for decades.



HOW CAN OFFICES ATTRACT & HIRE TALENTED APPLICANTS?



One way to put your office in the best hiring position is to build a pipeline for homegrown talent. If you look beyond traditional word of mouth referrals from lawyers within your established network and utilize the vast resources available, you will find an entire pool of qualified applicants. Consider bringing on a law student intern with potential to become an attorney hire upon graduation, or, if your office is located near a law school, reach out to the law school's career development center to create a job posting or participate in a job fair at the school or as part of a local bar organization. If you wish to cast a wider net for applicants, post your job opening on the [Florida Bar's Career Center website](#), but before you hit post, be sure to review the resources on the [Florida Bar's Legal Fuel website](#) for information on how to create job descriptions that are attractive to the potential applicants ([Practical Tips to Virtually Hire and Onboard Successfully](#)). If your office offers flexible work schedules or attractive benefits, such as an established parental leave policy, be sure to highlight that in your job posting! If you would like more information on creating a parental leave policy for your office, the Florida Bar YLD has a guide for that ([A Practical Guide to Parental Leave for Employers](#)). After your job opening has been posted, be mindful of your office's internet presence, as your website and social media will likely be the second thing a potential applicant sees after the initial job posting. Make sure your office's website and social media are up-to-date and contain information that would be attractive to potential hires. In particular, announce

promotions, efforts you have made to encourage work/life balance, training and mentoring programs, along with any other firm news. Consult the [Florida Bar YLD's Social Media Pocket Guide](#) for additional tips on this topic.

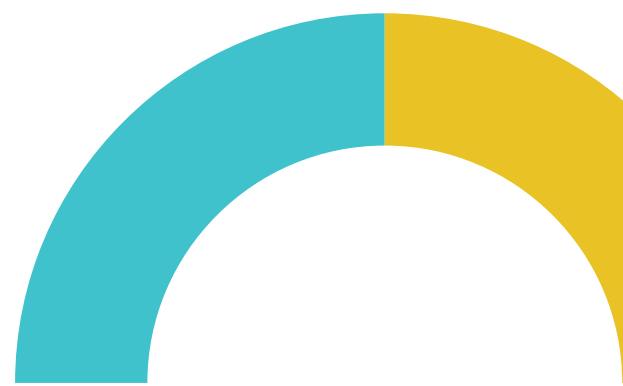
Another way to broaden the pipeline for new talent is to participate in mentoring programs for young lawyers or law students. Many of the mentees that participate in these programs are go-getters and have shown a desire to go above and beyond the minimum requirements to practice law by investing in their careers and proactively seeking mentors. If you are looking for a program, check out your local bar associations and law schools, or participate in The Florida Bar's mentoring program, Counsel to Counsel

> SIGN UP FOR COUNSEL TO COUNSEL



"Counsel to Counsel is designed for newer lawyers to be matched with more experienced lawyers in a mentorship relationship, and to share practical knowledge and encourage professional growth. We hope newer and more experienced lawyers sign up!"

Gary Lesser, Florida Bar President



RETAINING TALENTED YOUNG LAWYERS

Hiring a promising young lawyer is only half the battle. In a challenging job market for employers, it is also important to make efforts to retain the young lawyers that help your office provide the high-quality service that your clients expect. Presently, many private firms are facing a staffing shortage with 1 in 5 lawyers under the age of 40 thinking about leaving the legal profession in the next five years (<https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/legal/long-term-legal-labor-shortage>). Government agencies, such as prosecutors and public defenders, are also facing retention issues. Currently, public defenders are experiencing a 26% turnover rate statewide (<https://www.floridabar.org/the-florida-bar-news/state-attorneys-pds-seek-resources-to-stem-turn-over-staff-shortages>). When a young lawyer evaluates their happiness in any particular position, there is so much more to consider than just salary, as such, it is vital that you also evaluate your office's workplace culture, mentoring initiatives, professional development benefits, and paths for advancement. For more insight into how employers can motivate and retain young lawyers, specifically, those young lawyers falling into millennial demographics, check out the Florida Bar's Legal Fuel podcast on the topic ([How to Motivate and Retain Young Associates in Your Law Firm](#)).



“When looking to bring on a new attorney hire, government positions can appeal to young lawyers by empowering them to take a lead role on complex matters when they are ready, not when a client determines whether they have sufficient experience to fit the role, and by providing training and mentoring opportunities with experienced lawyers who can take the time to do so without worrying about billable hours.”

Annika Ashton, Office of the County Attorney, Fort Lauderdale

If the average person spends approximately one-third of their day at work, a positive workplace culture is key to employee retention. Creating a positive work environment starts with the employer. Though everyone in an office providing legal services is bound to be busy, be sure to make time to check-in on your young lawyer-staff. Consider implementing an open door policy that encourages free flow of ideas and feedback from

seasoned staff to young lawyers. However, if you implement an open door policy, it is important to follow through and ensure you make yourself available, listen attentively, and respond to the young lawyer - saying you have an open door policy and not following through with it will send the message that employees cannot trust the employer's word.

Mentoring initiatives within the office can also positively impact a young lawyer's workplace experience. While law school teaches the law, it does not truly prepare a law student for practice. Taking even a small portion of the day or week to meet with the young lawyers in your office allows employers to directly guide young lawyers through any issues that may have come up during the course of their practice. Mentoring programs can be formal, by pairing young lawyers with mentors in and out of their departments, and can also be informal, through office social events or even encouraging lunches and coffees between senior attorneys and new attorneys.

Encouraging a young lawyer within your office to become involved with a Florida Bar Section or a voluntary bar association can provide great benefit to employer and employee alike. Your local voluntary bar association is ripe with networking opportunities and it is beneficial for a young lawyer to build relationships with judges and other local attorneys outside the courtroom. Additionally, Florida Bar Sections and voluntary bar associations offer a variety of in-person and online Continuing Legal Education (CLE) opportunities. CLEs are available in almost every specialty area and should be viewed as an opportunity for specialized training. Overall, investing in a young lawyer's development and encouraging participation in bar programming can enable them to build expertise and confidence which will in turn benefit your office.

A major source of frustration in jobs, particularly those held by young lawyers, is not understanding the path for advancement. Employers should make sure that the young lawyers they hire clearly understand what is expected of them to advance, including whether those expectations include development of a book of business, meeting certain fee collection goals, firm leadership, community involvement or number of years of practice. Another great way to keep communication channels open regarding advancement is to have a routine check-in, or “stay interview,” with the young lawyer. In a stay interview, you may wish to discuss what the young lawyer is envisioning for their future at the office and what steps they will need to take to achieve that vision (<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/stay-interviews-questions>).

CONCLUSION

Hiring young lawyers is an investment not only in the present-day success of your office but also the future of the legal profession through the transfer of knowledge from seasoned attorneys to those who have recently entered the profession. For more information on the topics discussed in this publication, please consult the resources listed within this guide and also The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division (<https://flayld.org>).

RESOURCES

- > www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/legal/long-term-legal-labor-shortage
- > l.fl.bar.associationcareernetwork.com
- > www.legalfuel.com
- > flayld.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FLAYLD_Social-Media-Pocket-Guide_WEB.pdf
- > fortune.com/2021/11/29/diversity-inclusion-great-resignation-three-ways-to-retain-diverse-talent
- > www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/stay-interviews-questions

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