

Legal services for the trademark registration process

Do I need to hire an attorney?

It depends on where you're domiciled.

- Yes, if you are a foreign-domiciled trademark applicant, registrant, or party to Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) proceedings. You must be represented at the USPTO by an attorney who is licensed to practice law in the United States.
- No, if you are a trademark applicant, registrant, or party domiciled in the United States or its territories. Nevertheless, we strongly encourage you to hire a U.S. licensed attorney who specializes in trademark law to guide you through the registration process.

Learn more about how your domicile affects hiring an attorney at www.uspto.gov/trademarks/basics/why-hire-private-trademark-attorney.

What's the benefit of hiring an attorney?

Attorneys can provide crucial legal advice.

Filing a trademark application at the USPTO starts a legal proceeding that has strict deadlines and may be complex. Among many benefits, a specialized trademark attorney can:

- Help you determine if your trademark can be legally protected.
- Conduct a trademark clearance search for you.
- Represent you throughout the potentially confusing application process.
- Help you enforce and maintain your trademark rights.

Although attorneys typically charge for their services, hiring one before you file could help you avoid costly legal problems with your mark. You can hire someone at any time during the application process.

Remember, the USPTO trademark examining attorney assigned to your application cannot give you any legal advice. However, the examining attorney can answer general questions about the examination process.

See the reverse side for information about free and reduced-price legal services.



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How do I find an attorney?

Search for an experienced one.

To find an attorney who can represent you before the USPTO in trademark matters, consult U.S. telephone listings or the internet, or contact the attorney referral service of a U.S. state or local bar association. The American Bar Association (ABA) provides a consumer's guide to legal help through its www.findlegalhelp.org webpage.

Make sure that the attorney you hire has experience prosecuting trademark applications at the USPTO and handling proceedings before the TTAB. The USPTO cannot help you select an attorney or recommend one.

Are there less expensive options?

Try the free law school clinic program.

The Law School Clinic Certification Program allows law students enrolled in a clinic program to practice intellectual property law before the USPTO under the strict guidance of a law school faculty clinic supervisor.

You can contact the schools participating in the law school clinic program to inquire about becoming a client. Each school has its own criteria for accepting clients and providing patent or trademark legal services. The USPTO does not endorse any one law school clinic participating in the program.

Learn more at www.uspto.gov/LawSchoolClinic.

Are there any other free or reduced-fee legal services?

Yes. Look for pro bono programs.

Some attorneys and bar associations offer free or greatly reduced-price services to financially under-resourced individuals and small businesses.

Several programs include:

- The ABA pro bono resource directory at [www.americanbar.org/groups/intellectual_p_roperty_law/resources/probonostates](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/intellectual_property_law/resources/probonostates).
- The International Trademark Association (INTA) pro bono clearinghouse program at www.inta.org/resources/pro-bono-clearinghouse.

The USPTO does not endorse any particular pro bono programs and refers to these resources for informational purposes only.