

# Limited Scope Representation

LEGAL HOTLINE FOR TEXANS  
815 Brazos, Suite 1100  
Austin, Texas 78701  
(800) 622-2520  
(512) 477-3950



A way for people with limited money to afford an attorney

## Information Not Legal Advice

This pamphlet is for information only and is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney.

## Introduction

Attorneys are expensive, and the cost of legal services has risen over the past few years. And, legal problems do not disappear simply because a person cannot afford to hire an attorney. There may be a possible solution to this dilemma.

## Limited Scope Representation

### What is limited scope representation?

Limited scope representation is a way for a person to be able to afford legal help by limited the amount of work an attorney does for them. This is also known as "unbundled services." In a limited scope arrangement, the attorney and client agree that the attorney will only do a certain list of things for the client. The remainder of the tasks and responsibilities in a case are the sole responsibility of the client

**Example: Lisa needs a divorce, but she cannot afford to hire an attorney to handle her whole case. She found an attorney who would draft her petition for divorce and her divorce decree for a small fee. But she must file the documents with the court and go to the final hearing by herself.**

It is important to talk about all parts of the case with an attorney before agreeing to the terms of a limited scope representation. Your agreement should be in writing and clearly state the duties that you and the attorney have agreed that each of you will perform. Also, make sure that the attorney's fee is stated in the written agreement and that both the attorney and the client sign the agreement.

**Example: Dan is handling his own divorce, but he and his wife have not been able to agree about which person will take some of their property. They are going to engage in mediation. Dan found an attorney to help him prepare for the mediation, but he will go to the mediation by himself.**

**Example: Lupe is applying for a loan, but she does not understand all of the legal terms in the loan documents. She found an attorney who would help her understand the loan documents for an affordable fee.**

## Things to consider

Limited scope representation is a relatively new concept, so you may find attorneys that do not provide this kind of service. Do not be afraid to ask an attorney about limited scope representation. Do not be afraid to ask an attorney for a reduced fee or for a payment plan.

Also, you should know that not all cases are right for limited scope representations. There are some legal matters which are better served if the attorney represents the client through the entire process. You should talk with an attorney to see if unbundled services are right for your legal situation.

In addition, should you find that a case has become more complex than expected you may be able to reach an agreement with the attorney to switch from limited scope representation to the more traditional form of legal representation.

## For more information...

Texas Law Help has useful information on many areas of the law. Go to [www.texaslawhelp.org](http://www.texaslawhelp.org).

**Legal Hotline for Texans:** (800) 622-2520 Talk to an attorney. Advice is free for Texans 60 and over or for anyone eligible for Medicare