



Support
Help
Contact Us
Avvo Rating
Avvo Legal Marketplace
Community Guidelines
Contributor Level Points
State Coverage
For Law Firms
Avvo Myths
Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
API Terms of Use

What is the Avvo Rating?

The Avvo Rating is our effort to evaluate a lawyer's background, based on the information we know about the lawyer. The rating is calculated using a mathematical model that considers the information shown in a lawyer's profile, including a lawyer's years in practice, disciplinary history, professional achievements and industry recognition - all factors that, in our opinion, are relevant to assessing a lawyer's qualifications.

We periodically collect background data from multiple sources, including state bar associations, court records, lawyer websites, and information that lawyers choose to provide to Avvo. Please keep in mind that we are not able to collect every piece of information about every lawyer's background. Information that we do not have could very well change the lawyer's Avvo Rating. So whether you see the numerical or the basic Avvo Rating, you should do further research regarding the lawyer to collect all relevant information regarding the lawyer's background.

Here's why the Avvo Rating can help you find the right lawyer:

- ✔ **It's unbiased.** Because ratings are calculated using a mathematical model, all lawyers are rated by the same standards.
- ✔ **There's no favoritism.** Here at Avvo, all lawyers are treated equally. They can't pay to change their ratings, and we don't play favorites to lawyers we know.
- ✔ **It's developed by legal experts for non-experts.** The model used to calculate the Avvo Rating was developed with input from hundreds of attorneys, thousands of consumers, and legal experts.
- ✔ **It's easy to understand.** With simple ratings from 1 to 10 or "Attention" and "No Concern," we hope to make clearer the murky process of understanding lawyers' backgrounds.

But keep in mind that the Avvo Rating is not intended to be the only thing you use in choosing a lawyer. It is only one tool and it is our effort to provide a snapshot evaluation of the lawyer's background, so that you can more effectively compare the available background information of different lawyers. Also keep in mind that the Avvo Rating is based only on the information we have collected about a lawyer, and our opinion is based on that information. That is one reason we also provide a forum for both clients and other lawyers to offer their own opinions about a lawyer. Although those opinions may not be perfect either, they at least give you different sources to get started.

And of course, Avvo's mathematical model has not met the lawyer in person. Because of this, our system can't measure subjective factors like personality and communication style. Also, because we don't believe there is yet an accurate way to score it, the Avvo Rating does not take into account a lawyer's performance on particular cases or matters.

In short, we are not saying that the Avvo Rating, or the information within a lawyer's profile, is all you need to know to choose the right lawyer. It is not. It is only one of several tools you should use to choose the right lawyer for you.

Frequently asked questions about the Avvo Rating

How does Avvo calculate the Avvo Rating?

We calculate the Avvo Rating based on background data we've collected on each lawyer. That data may come from various sources, including public records (such as the state bar associations, regulatory agencies, and court records), published sources on the Internet (including lawyers' websites), and information that lawyers choose to supply to Avvo. This information is then considered and weighted by our mathematical model to arrive at a numerical rating from 1 – 10 (or, in some cases where we have limited information, a rating of "Attention" or "No Concern"). The Avvo Rating takes into account factors that we believe are relevant to an assessment of a lawyer's qualifications, including the attorney's experience, professional achievements, and disciplinary sanctions.

What information does the Avvo Rating consider?

You can see the information the Avvo Rating considers: It is displayed in a lawyer's profile. However, we are not able to collect every piece of information about every lawyer's background. If there is information about a lawyer's background that we do not have, then that information could very well change the lawyer's Avvo Rating.

To calculate the Avvo Rating, we assign different weights to the information in a lawyer's profile. These weights reflect our opinion as to the significance of the different information in a lawyer's profile. We believe that some things are more important than others when considering a lawyer's qualifications, and our rating system reflects those judgments. The weightings are informed by our extensive research and legal expertise, but they are ultimately opinions. For instance, we believe the fact that a lawyer has been disciplined by a state bar association for a

violation of the rules of ethics is significant regardless of the reason for the sanction or its severity, and the Avvo Rating reflects this.

Do you publish the details of how the Avvo Rating is calculated?

The Avvo Rating is based on all of the background information in a lawyer's profile. However, we do not disclose how we weigh this information, primarily because we don't want anyone gaming the Avvo Rating system. Much as Google doesn't share its search engine secrets, we don't share the inner-workings of the Avvo Rating so that we can maintain the integrity of the Avvo Rating.



Explore Avvo

Ask a Lawyer
Find a Lawyer
Free Legal Advice
Review a Lawyer

For Lawyers

Marketing Solutions
Claim Your Profile
For Law Firms
Avvo Ignite
Lawyernomics Blog

Company Info

About Us
Support
Press Room
Partner With Us
Jobs
Avvo Blog
NakedLaw Blog

©2013 Avvo, Inc. All Rights Reserved

[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Community Guidelines](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#)

Keep in mind that these ratings speak to a lawyer's background. They do not evaluate a lawyer's actual knowledge of the law, past performance in individual matters, personality or communication skills. These are items that the Avvo Rating cannot evaluate.

Why do some lawyers not have a numerical Avvo Rating?

For some lawyers, the only information we have been able to collect is the publicly available information from state bar associations or other organizations that license lawyers. In some such cases, we will display an Avvo Rating for the lawyer of either "Attention" or "No Concern." We display the "Attention" rating if there is information in the licensing records that, in our opinion, you should pay attention to, such as a disciplinary action against a lawyer without offsetting positive information. Otherwise, we display the "No Concern" rating. In each instance, you should do further research regarding the lawyer to collect all relevant information regarding the lawyer's background.

Why do some lawyers not have an Avvo Rating at all?

There are some instances where rating an attorney would not be useful, such as if the lawyer is deceased.

Should I rely only on the Avvo Rating in choosing a lawyer?

No. While the Avvo Rating is informed by our research and legal expertise, it is only one of several tools you can use to help choose the right lawyer for your case. You should look at the other information on Avvo about the lawyer, including areas of practice, fees and payment, and locations. Plus, Avvo offers client ratings, so you can get (or give) the scoop about what it was really like to work with a particular lawyer. Also keep in mind that the Avvo Rating is based only on information we have been able to obtain about the lawyer, not personal experience; so it can't measure subjective factors like personality and communication style. Nor can the Avvo Rating directly evaluate a lawyer's actual skills, such as knowledge of the law, judgment, or advocacy ability. We think the information that we do evaluate provides an indication of a lawyer's qualifications in the same way a résumé does, but there's no substitute for meeting and talking with an attorney in person.

Why is the profile information important in choosing the right attorney?

Much of the information in a profile is information you might also find on an attorney's website or résumé. Attorneys frequently highlight this kind of information about themselves because it is important, in that it helps consumers understand their background and qualifications. We add to this information from the public records (including disciplinary sanctions), client ratings, and peer endorsements - all factors that we believe are relevant to determining a lawyer's qualifications.

Do lawyers need to pay or sign-up to be included in the Avvo Rating?

Absolutely not. Avvo publishes a lawyer profile for every licensed attorney we can locate, and calculates an Avvo Rating for every lawyer who appears to be working with clients. The lawyer profile is free to attorneys, and the Avvo Rating is unbiased and cannot be influenced by advertising or any other form of payment.

Do peer endorsements and client ratings affect a lawyer's Avvo Rating?

Peer endorsements do affect the Avvo Rating but client ratings do not. This is because peer endorsements—one lawyer endorsing another—are a form of industry recognition, one of the factors the Avvo Rating considers. Client ratings provide a very important but different kind of perspective, which we concluded did not belong in the Avvo Rating. However, in our research, consumers told us that client ratings are very important to them. So we include them in a lawyer's profile but we do not include them in the Avvo Rating.

I'm a lawyer and want to change my Avvo Rating. How can I make this happen?

If you have an Avvo Rating of "No Concern" or "Attention", you can receive a numerical Avvo Rating by claiming your profile. Please note that when you claim your Avvo Profile, we will automatically calculate the numerical rating and it will appear on your profile page and in search

results. A profile may not be unclaimed once it is claimed.

If you already have a numerical Avvo Rating, the rating cannot be changed upon request. This is because the Avvo Rating is based on a mathematical model that is applied in the same way to all attorneys. However, your score may change if you update your Avvo profile with current information about yourself, including your work experience, practice areas, and professional achievements. The more we know about you, the better we can determine your score.

Typically, the more relevant, positive information we have about your background, the higher your Avvo Rating will be. But be sure that the information you add to your profile is accurate, as your Avvo Rating can be negatively impacted if you post inaccurate information to your profile. If you believe a public record contains inaccurate information about you that's affecting your Avvo Rating, you can contact the appropriate organization and ask to have the record changed. The next time we collect information from that state, your Avvo profile will be updated to the extent the information has been changed.

In addition, it is the responsibility of lawyers to ensure that any information or advertisements they place on the Avvo website, and any communication they may have with prospective clients through Avvo, comply with the rules of professional conduct regulating the form, manner or content of communications with clients, advertising, or other matters.

Can lawyers lie on their Avvo profiles to boost their Avvo Rating?

Attorneys can lose their licenses for falsifying data, and we don't believe they will take that risk on their Avvo profile pages. That said, we rely on our community of users to ensure data on Avvo is as accurate as possible. If you see information on an attorney profile that you know to be incorrect, please let us know and we will investigate. If we determine that an attorney has intentionally posted false profile data, this will impact their level of professional conduct and therefore negatively impact their Avvo Rating.

Can a lawyer's Avvo Rating change over time?

Yes, it can in the following cases. First, as we collect more information about a lawyer, the Avvo Rating gets recalculated and the score may adjust accordingly. Second, to the extent that we collect or receive information that our system cannot immediately identify, we mark this information as "unknown" and update the score once we have reviewed it. Third, some information is given less weight as time passes. For example, the weighting the mathematical model gives to certain disciplinary actions and industry recognition items decreases as time elapses, reflecting our opinion that, in these categories, the most recent information matters the most. Finally, we may periodically adjust the mathematical model used to calculate the Avvo Rating, which could result in a change to a lawyer's Avvo Rating.