

The Fair Defense Campaign

**You Have the Right to a Lawyer In Your Criminal Case ...
But You Gotta Know How to Get One**

How to Ask for a Court-Appointed Lawyer

- 1. Ask for a lawyer EARLY in the process.**
The court system is complex and having a lawyer by your side is important. Even if you just feel like you need someone to help explain what's going on, ask for a defense lawyer early.
- 2. Ask to complete an official attorney request form.**
This could be called several things, such as "Application for Appointment" or "Appointment Request Form." Ask a court clerk for whatever official form the court uses to take requests.
- 3. Ask to complete a financial questionnaire.**
Most counties will require you to submit a form that provides financial information showing that you can't afford to hire a lawyer. Ask for this at the same time you ask for the attorney application form.
- 4. Have your supporting information ready.**
If possible, bring pay stubs, bank statements, and copies of your monthly bills to court when you ask for a lawyer. These documents help prove to the judge that you can't afford to hire a lawyer.
- 5. Be persistent.**
Sometimes judges will put off your request, usually by telling you to try to hire a lawyer. If this happens, do not give up. Do not skip court because you cannot afford to hire a lawyer like the judge told you to. Keep asking for a lawyer and filling out the attorney application form every time you go to court.

For help asking for a lawyer or if you have been denied a court-appointed lawyer:

Call 1-866-207-6532

or visit www.fairdefense.org

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