How to Become a Legal Researcher

A Quick Definition

A legal researcher is one basically responsible for researching cases (and anything that can help to win a case) in advance so that the litigation attorney is prepared for the courtroom. They typically provide research that ties in with evidences presented, case law, and even the litigation process. The process of legal research is varied depending on which country or whichever state in the United States you live in, but the basics are all the same. In general, legal research involves certain tasks such as general information on legal topics that touch on primary authority and specific local jurisdictions and supporting information that'll be helpful to a case. In a nutshell, legal researchers are writers employed by lawyers to provide them with necessary information.

Some Basic Qualifications

To become a legal researcher, you basically need to have a college degree. Although some firms or employers don’t really need you to have a law degree, this is basically recommended if you want to excel in this field. It all varies from employer to employer. You also need to be a good enough writer if you want to succeed. This also means that you have to know how to accumulate information that is beneficial to your boss. So keep in mind, you’re in for long hours of reading various topics that are somewhat related to specific cases. Having a good knowledge of the law, then, is a good advantage; so take some classes that touch on that. If you’ve missed out on that, you can still find good websites that offer an online degree. Just make sure that they touch on legal research.

Research Skills

Learn to research well. This doesn’t just mean that you have to have a basic skill set that allows you to write about what you’ve read. Rather, it’s all about using any and all methods available. Don’t be lazy with the task given to you and just write it off. Instead, delve deeper if you feel that there’s more underneath the topic. Make sure that you’ve looked at every facet of the subject and that you’ve understood it before you proceed to other relevant things. Scan and study databases if you have to.

Practice

Practice, practice, and then practice more. That’s the key to becoming a good legal researcher. Even if you’ve already taken courses in college, you need to apply everything that you’ve learned in real time. The more you work at researching various topics, the more you’ll find out that you’re getting better and faster at it. Get an online freelance job as a researcher if you have to, so you can hone your skills.

Job Market

Decide where you’d like to go to work by checking out the market so you can cross out which ones aren’t suited to your taste. There are basically three kinds of job opportunities that you can choose from: Government Agencies, Large Law Firms, and Private Attorneys. Law enforcement bureaus such as the FBI and CIA are examples of government agencies that hire a lot of legal researchers. Law Firms and Private Attorneys are pretty much self explanatory. It’s all up to you which kind you’d like to work in, but it’s a good idea if you start out with Private Attorneys first so you can accumulate enough experience. You can then
move up to Large Law Firms, because they tend to have higher pay. Working with Government Agencies tends to have better benefits, however.

Whether you consider being a part-time freelance legal researcher or a full-time one, you have to know how to be focused and organized if you want a successful career in this area. Tediously long hours and precise data and information accumulation is what you'll face in this kind of job. If you find that you're up to it, then you can assure yourself that you'll probably be a good legal researcher.