

Alan Banov and Associates

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Client Information: Your First Meeting with Alan Banov and Associates

Beginning a relationship

The decision to seek legal counsel is a powerful one. To assess your case and ensure that the best possible strategy is engaged, Alan Banov and Associates employs a 5-step process:

- Initial Intake Information: quick review to see if an initial consultation is warranted
- Initial Consultation: "diagnosis" of case with recommendations for strategy
- Fee Agreement: agreeing upon a fee and payment structure
- Designing course of action and strategy
- Pursuing your case formally and/or negotiating for a settlement

Intake Information

The first step in investigating your legal options is a brief initial intake process. This can occur via telephone or [e-mail](#). If you would like to complete the intake form yourself, [click here for a word file](#) (.doc) or [click here for a text file](#) (.txt).

There is no charge for your first call to our office. Generally, our secretary or an associate will interview you for a few minutes to find out the essential details of your employment problem or case. The information is recorded on an intake sheet, which is given to Mr. Banov. Afterwards, as soon as his schedule permits, Mr. Banov will call you and spend another five minutes or so (also free of charge), in trying to determine whether it would be worth it for you to come in for an initial consultation and, if so, whether you want to make an appointment.

The current cost of an initial consultation is \$350/hour (\$360/hour as of Jan. 1, 2014). See The Initial Consultation The next step is an initial consultation, which usually takes one to two hours. During this visit, I will ask you some background questions; I will want to know the "actors" in your case (generally your supervisors and the human resources personnel) and your employment history (perhaps even before you began work for the offending employer). Then you will have an opportunity to tell your whole story, and I will focus on the facts most relevant to your claims.

I will ask detailed questions about your situation to determine whether you have a case, what your claims might be, and how best to proceed on those claims. I will also advise you, candidly, if your case is weak or if it would not be advisable to hire me. At the end of the consultation, you will receive a written summary of my findings and recommendations including:

- Any additional documents or information I might need to form a better determination about your case
- What, if anything, you can do to improve your situation or to give me a better picture of your case
- My views of the strength or weakness of your claims
- The options available to you (e.g., filing an EEOC complaint, suing in court, or trying to negotiate an informal out-of-court settlement)
- How much I think it might cost you to pursue the options available to you

Should you decide, after the first consultation, to hire my firm, we will prepare for you, and you will be asked to sign, a fee agreement, containing payment terms acceptable to both of us (see Financial Information). I will then study your materials in depth and interview your witnesses. Once I am fully familiar with your case, we will develop a strategy that best suits your situation and budget, and is most likely to bring you the best results.

Preparation for your initial consultation

Your documents can make a very large difference in the success of your case and my ability to craft a successful strategy. I will concentrate on them in our initial consultation.

Here are some tips to prepare for the visit, which will allow us to focus immediately on the crux of your case and to use our time to best advantage:

- Collect all papers, records, and documents that are in any way relevant your case, especially documents from the adverse party, whether they seem to help your claims or not. If you keep diaries or journals or mark on calendars, or make other records of events as they occur, they may be important and later might be requested in discovery and/or introduced into evidence.
- Organize your papers in chronological order, without envelopes, and bring them. If you make copies before you arrive, we can review them together.
- It is especially valuable for you to type up, in advance of our first meeting, a chronological narrative of all important events in your case (including for example, important conversations, expressions of discrimination, sexually harassing comments, counseling sessions, a discharge meeting), from the oldest relevant event to the most recent. (Double-spaced 12-point text is greatly appreciated.) When they do this, clients definitely save money, not only in the initial consultation, but later.
- It might be useful to bring in a list of possible witnesses, including their names, addresses, phone numbers, and a summary of what they could say in support of your claims. While I would not call any during the first consultation, the list would give me a good idea of the strength of potential corroborating evidence for your case. Also, if you hire me, I would later use that list.

If you take the time, before our meeting, to do this "homework," you will find that our consultation will go faster, reducing your cost and possibly avoiding a follow-up consultation. Also, if you decide to hire me I will be better prepared to represent you afterwards.

Some Time-Honored Advice

To assist in our consultation (and later), here are some tips:

DO let me know if there are any "flies in the ointment" or "skeletons in the closet" which can be used against you. Then I can consider ways to minimize the adverse effects of that revelation, including preparation of objections before a hearing. If you do tell me secrets, I will keep such matters in confidence until and unless I have your authorization to release them or they are lawfully discoverable by an adverse party.

DO tell me your theories about the employer's motivation for the personnel action it took against you. For example, if you think the employer was motivated to fire you because of discrimination, please say so. It will be my job to figure out if the evidence supports that theory. If so, I will develop your case based on that theory.

DO observe the sanctity of documents, even photocopies, by not writing on them. Your language, clean or otherwise, on those papers may be held against you if they are discoverable by the other side in court proceedings.

DO resist any temptation to withhold, deny, misstate, or omit facts. While it may be difficult to share these things, we can design strategies to best minimize any damage. Again, you are assured of my complete confidentiality.

See "[Working with Alan Banov and Associates](#)" for further insider tips as we pursue your case.