

What does a civil litigator do?

Litigation is the process of preparing a case for trial, and if a settlement cannot be reached, presenting the case at trial and handling appeals. Litigators develop the best legal theories in support of their client's case, gather the relevant documents and facts through discovery requests and depositions, and research and draft pretrial motions. If the case is not settled or dismissed, it proceeds to trial. At trial, litigators select the jury, make opening and closing statements, introduce exhibits, examine and cross-examine witnesses, and make and/or renew objections to preserve the record for appeal.

Any area of the law can be the subject of litigation. Some litigators are generalists whose practice includes a wide range of matters. Most specialize in one or more areas of the law. Commercial litigation generally involves one or more business entity and a financial dispute. Some commercial litigators have a sub-specialty in a particular area of the law such as antitrust, securities, or intellectual property. Commercial litigators often represent both plaintiffs and defendants. With many other civil litigation practices, especially personal injury, medical malpractice, product liability/toxic tort, and employment discrimination, litigators usually represent plaintiffs or defendants, not both.

Where can I practice civil litigation?

Most civil litigators work for law firms. There are also opportunities for students interested in civil litigation at nonprofits that provide direct legal services, the Department of Justice and other federal agencies with litigating authority, the JAG Corps, the Maryland Attorney General's Office, and in the law departments of corporations, insurance companies, financial institutions and other business entities.

How can I get a job as a civil litigator?

Take civil procedure, evidence, federal jurisdiction and trial advocacy classes, as well as classes related to areas of litigation that interest you. For a career in commercial litigation, courses in

business law and securities can be helpful. Gain practical experience by participating in the Civil Advocacy Clinic or the Appellate Practice Clinic. Develop your writing and advocacy skills by participating in Moot Court and the Trial Advocacy Competition. Gain as much legal writing experience that you can through internships, a law journal, or writing competitions. A judicial internship during school and/or a post-graduate judicial clerkship is an invaluable experience for students interested in a career as a civil litigator. Seek a law clerk, internship or summer associate position with a law firm or government agency where you can gain litigation experience.

Where can I learn more?

ABA , Section of Litigation - <http://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation.html>

The Bar Association of Baltimore City - <http://www.baltimorebar.org/>

DRI Today - <http://dritoday.org/today.aspx>

Martindale - <http://www.martindale.com/>

Maryland Association for Justice - <http://www.marylandassociationforjustice.com/>

Maryland Attorney General's Office - <http://www.oag.state.md.us/>

Maryland Defense Counsel - <http://www.mddefensecounsel.org/history.html>

Maryland State Bar Association, Litigation Section -

http://www.msba.org/sec_comm/sections/litigation/

National Legal Aid & Defender Association - http://www.nlada.org/About/About_Home

PSLawNet - <http://pslawnet.org/>

Super Lawyers, Maryland - <http://www.superlawyers.com/maryland/browse>

The Government Honors and Internship Handbook -

<http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm> (Contact the LCDO for the password.)

U.S. Department of Justice - <http://www.justice.gov/>

Wall Street Journal Law Blog - <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/>

Who teaches civil litigation at UB?

Many professors at UB teach courses that are related to civil litigation. Information regarding a concentration in Litigation and Advocacy is available on the law school's website. The faculty advisors for this concentration are professors Jose Anderson and Stephen Shapiro. Professors Michele Gilman and Daniel Hatcher supervise the Civil Advocacy Clinic. Over twenty professors and adjunct professors serve as faculty advisors to moot court teams, see the Moot Court Program page on the law school's website.