

WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT ADMISSION AND
PRACTICE RULES (APR) 8(f) HOUSE COUNSEL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ADMISSIONS DEPARTMENT
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1. Should I seek to be admitted by motion or should I apply for a limited license as House Counsel?

If you are employed as House Counsel in Washington State, you can choose between applying for the limited House Counsel license or for full admission and licensing by way of admission by motion. The WSBA encourages lawyers who are licensed in another U.S. state or territory and have active legal experience for three of the past five years, to apply for [admission by motion](#). Lawyers who are admitted by motion are members of the WSBA and are fully licensed to practice law and appear in Washington State Courts. Lawyers licensed under [Washington Supreme Court Admission and Practice Rule \(APR\) 8\(f\)](#) as House Counsel are strictly limited to providing advice to their employer-client and cannot appear in court, but they still must abide by the same MCLE requirements and pay the same license fees as active status lawyers. Additionally, if a lawyer licensed as House Counsel under [Washington Supreme Court \(APR\) 8\(f\)](#) later applies for full admission by motion, they will have to pay all of the same application fees again.

2. What's the difference between the application for admission by motion and the licensing for House Counsel?

The Admission by Motion application is online. The application for limited licensing as House Counsel is paper and must be mailed or hand-delivered. A lawyer with an application for Admission by Motion is able to check the status of their application online. That option is not available for the House Counsel application. All applicants for Admission by Motion must take the Washington Law Component (WLC), a 60-question online test that can be taken at any time after submitting an application. House counsel applicants do not have to take this test, but they do have access to the materials if they want to review them.

3. Can I provide pro bono services if I am licensed as House Counsel?

Yes, but only through a [Qualified Legal Services Provider](#). Review [Washington Supreme Court \(APR\) 8\(f\)\(8\)](#) for restrictions and guidelines regarding your scope of practice when providing pro bono services.

4. What are the application fees?

The application fee is \$620 which must be paid at the time the application is filed. After review of your application by the WSBA office, the NCBE will contact you and provide you with NCBE payment and authorization and release forms that will need to be executed by you.

5. Is there a specific deadline to submit my House Counsel application?

No, you can apply anytime for a House Counsel license.

6. Is there a separate fee for the background investigation?

Yes. After review by the WSBA office, NCBE will contact you and provide NCBE payment form and Authorization and Release forms that will need to be executed by you.

7. I have not received confirmation that my application and fees were received by NCBE. What is the procedure and timeline for obtaining my House Counsel license?

The NCBE investigation typically takes three to four months for U.S lawyers and up to nine months for foreign lawyer applicants. After review of your application by the WSBA office, the NCBE will contact you and provide you with NCBE payment and authorization and release forms that will need to be executed by you.



8. Do I need to submit a certificate of good standing?

We require good standing certificates from all jurisdictions where you are admitted or have ever been admitted. They must be dated no more than six months prior to the date the application is submitted.

9. I obtained a House Counsel license because I did not possess the requisite years of experience required for admission by motion. I now possess the active legal experience and would like to apply for Admission by Motion. Is there a different process for transitioning from the House Counsel limited license to full admission?

Yes, you will have to submit a new application and application fee through the online admission system, and apply for admission by motion. The only difference will likely be that your NCBE report will be a supplemental report at a lower cost than the full fee for a new report.

10. What is the procedure to report a change in my employment?

Your license will be automatically terminated when employment by the employer furnishing the affidavit required by Washington Supreme Court (APR) 8 is terminated. You should promptly report to the WSBA a change in employment. You can notify the Admissions department at admissions@wsba.org.

11. Can I use my House Counsel experience to satisfy the three year active legal experience requirements for admission by motion?

Yes, you can use your practice as House Counsel to satisfy the three year active legal experience requirement.

12. Can I withdraw my application and receive a refund?

For all applicants there is a \$300 non-refundable administrative processing fee. You must ask to withdraw an application less than 12 months after filing the application. Any investigation costs are nonrefundable. No refunds will be issued for withdrawals requested more than 12 months from the date the application was submitted.

13. What type of judge can swear me in?

The judge must be elected or appointed; sitting in open court; and, in Washington. Pro tempore judges, retired judges and administrative law judges are NOT qualified to administer the Oath of Attorney. If you do not know a judge, contact your local County Superior Court Clerk's Office to schedule an Oath of Attorney with a judge.

14. Can I fax or email the Admissions Department my completed oath?

No, we must receive the original Oath signed by you and the judge.

15. When will I receive my limited license card?

Once we receive the original oath along with the license fee, we send a Recommendation to the Washington Supreme Court. It generally takes two to three weeks for the Washington Supreme Court to review the application and issue an admission order. The WSBA will assign you a license number and mail your bar card and the order from the Court.

