

LRIS LAUNCHES BUSINESS LAW CENTER



Emmy Pasternak

In the land of startups, apps, pop-up dinners, and here today—gone tomorrow businesses, The Bar Association of San Francisco’s (BASF) Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS) has been a fixture in the community for the past seventy years.

Small business owners, micro businesses, and those with just a seed of an idea find a welcome resource when contacting LRIS.

For many small business owners the idea of hiring an attorney is daunting. And the owner may think that because he or she is running a small operation there is no need to seek legal counsel. According to LRIS Business Panel member Amy Anderson, “The biggest challenge faced by small business owners is knowing how best to protect their business and personal assets. Small business owners often fall victim to being blindsided by risks they weren’t aware of.”

Thus the Business Law Center (BLC) was born through LRIS partnerships with the San Francisco Office of Small Business, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce,

certified access specialists, and attorneys. BLC provides to small business owners valuable information on what action to take should their business face a lawsuit. At the same time, guidance is given on complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act in a reasonable and monetarily feasible time period.

Small business owners can obtain thirty-minute legal advice and assessment sessions in legal topic areas of need by contacting LRIS. Mediation for business matters is also available through BASF’s Bay Area Mediation Services for those seeking an alternative to litigation.

Through the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, the Golden Gate Business Association, and the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, as well as local district merchant associations and the Golden Gate Restaurant Association, LRIS has presented to hundreds of merchants and entrepreneurs throughout the Bay Area.

Each year LRIS representatives are in the community meeting business owners, including during San Francisco Small Business Week where LRIS attends events and hosts a resource table.

The attorney members of the LRIS Business Panel fill a niche—they are able to make quality legal services available to small business owners in a middle market unsupported by large law firms on the one hand and by pro bono legal aid services on the other.

Through the Business Law Center, the San Francisco–Marin LRIS continues to carry out its mission of adapting to meet the needs of the more than 85,000 small businesses and entrepreneurs who establish themselves in San Francisco and Marin County. Whether a client is a long-time San Francisco business owner seeking brief legal advice or a new business owner who wants to hire an attorney to draw up contracts with vendors, negotiate leases, and make sure to abide by all family medical leave and fair hiring guidelines, LRIS is adept at matching that client with an insured, experienced attorney to meet the client’s short-term and long-term goals.

From the days of handwritten client intakes on carbon copy and membership information kept on index cards to “in the cloud” database and phone technology and a live chat feature on the LRIS website, LRIS is evolving its processes to more efficiently match its experienced attorneys with clients seeking assistance.

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FOR ALL YOUR SMALL BUSINESS LEGAL NEEDS

415.989.1616

Call the San Francisco–Marin
Lawyer Referral & Information Service

Our trained staff will give you the personalized attention you need to find the right attorney, whether you want a trusted lawyer you can rely on for all your business needs or just need help with a specific legal matter.



www.sfbar.org/lris