THE LEGAL NURSE COLLECTIVE GUIDE TO GETTING STARTED AS A LEGAL NURSE CONSULTANT

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU DIVE INTO LEGAL NURSE CONSULTING

Written by:

ERIN ELLSWORTH, BSN, RN, LNC



"Nursing is an amazing profession! There is a vast variety of career paths making bedside nursing not the only choice."

Erin Ellsworth



INTRODUCTION

Welcome! Hi My name is Erin. I have been a Registered Nurse for over 22 years (17 at the bedside), Legal Nurse Consultant for nine years, and LNC mentor for 2.5 years. My main nursing background is Pediatrics, PICU, NICU, Pedi IR, Pediatric floor, Pedi Vascular Access, Pediatric Cardiac and GI, and Pedi Preop/PACU. I loved the variety of bedside nursing like no other. I travelled for more than 8 years at very well renowned Children's Hospitals across the country, which ended in 2014. In 2016, I decided I needed to plan for the future of motherhood with the possibly of leaving the hospital. I was so used to having multiple nursing jobs at one time. I wasn't sure if I could only do one job. First, I worked as a subcontractor LNC for 2 years while also working at the hospital until my second child was born. I took a short break from Legal Nursing contracts and started applying for law firm jobs in 2019. I didn't get the jobs I applied for but I did get overflow work from the law firms I applied. In 2020, I was furloughed from both of my PRN nursing jobs at the same time. I decided to turn it up a notch and dig back into contracts for Legal Nursing. I never returned to bedside and have never looked back. I have not regretted the time spent at home working, no matter how hard it can be as a Mama of two young children. The time spent skipping a commute and not racing against a time clock is everything. Legal Nurse Consulting has changed my life in so many ways and it can for you!

XOXO, Erin

MY LNC STORY

I created this guide because the question I get asked daily is ***"How do I get started as a Legal Nurse Consultant?"*** When I was first researching and looking at the LNC career in 2015. I didn't understand what exactly I needed to do in order to get started. There was a front runner in programs and they were sending me advertising left and right. Finally, I went to an in-person, free information session and called to speak to someone for more information on this particular program. I talked it over with my husband. It took a little convincing, and he finally agreed for me to book the conference. He took off of work and drove to me Las Vegas for a week long course, all while I was 22 weeks pregnant in 2016. I loved every minute of learning and networking. I came home from that conference excited about new beginnings. Then I sat down and all I could think was where do I begin? I waited about 6 weeks to see if I passed my exam. Once I learned I passed, I thought again where do I begin? I took a week long $10,000 course, and I still didn't know where to begin. I began to do my own research. I found a listserve and I began applying for subcontract work. I quickly found a job working with a business which was Nurse and PA owned. They gave direction; however, nothing was very clear. I literally learned by trial and error, teaching myself many new things that I am now going to share with you!

The main thing I learned..... I never needed that 10K course in the first place. This one fact is exactly why I want to give ***YOU*** the information on "where do I start." I want to help others find a clear path to success by eliminating all the confusion. Now let's get you all the details on where to start!

" I was completely fulfilled with bedside nursing until I became a Mama."

ERIN ELLSWORTH



Let’s start with a few FAQ’s

What is a Legal Nurse Consultant?

Registered Nurses with at least two years of clinical experience can get started to use their healthcare knowledge to consult on legal medical cases. I never recommend a clinical nurse leave their job before 5 years experience. Legal Nurse Consultants also known as a LNC can work with Attorneys, Insurance Companies, Medical Facilities, and other LNC’s. Legal cases may include medical malpractice, personal injury, mass tort (product liability), criminal, or workman’s comp. LNC's provide a wealth of knowledge to help guide legal professionals representing health care workers, medical facilities, patients, insurance companies, and families of deceased patients. Legal Nurse Consultants are needed for their expertise in clinical practice, standards of care, critical thinking, and nursing knowledge.

LNCs work ‘behind the scenes.” They create chronologies and summaries by extracting medical information from complex medical records that help attorneys understand the events surrounding a medical concern. Often conduct medical research to support the cases

There are also Legal Nurse Expert Witnesses who also assist attorneys by testifying in court and giving their expert opinions on the subject matter. These expert witnesses need to continue to work bedside.

What are the education requirements ?

Your bedside experience and an active and unrestricted Registered Nurse license are the only requirements. You will need training to tie legal knowledge such as terminology, processes, and documentation into medical aspects.

A certificate or certification is not required. There is only one accredited certification. However, you need evidence of 2,000 hours of legal nurse consulting experience within the past five years. before you can sit for the exam.

How to get started with support

There is not just one way to get started as a Legal Nurse Consultant. Every nurse comes into this space with a different budget, timeline, and learning style.

I offer:

One-to-One Mentorship (Most Comprehensive Option)

If you want the fastest path with personalized guidance, my 1:1 mentorship is the best place to start. This mentorship is designed for nurses who want step-by-step direction with 1:1 support from start to finish, so they can confidently build their Legal Nurse Consulting business. This option removes the guesswork and gives you a clear roadmap with direct support along the way.

Inside mentorship you receive:

• 13 Education Self Paced Modules
•Personalized calls tailored to your background and goals
• Guidance on your CV, fee schedule, and sample case
• Help with report writing and case review
• Support building your LinkedIn and marketing presence
• Access to the Legal Nurse Collective community, live Q&A calls, guest speakers, and mock case reviews

While courses can be helpful for learning the basics, many nurses find they still need guidance when it comes to things like writing reports, setting up their business, or marketing themselves to attorneys. That is where additional mentorship or calls can help fill in the gaps. Feedback and getting your questions answered and sample reports reviewed by a mentor is everything when navigating this career.

Why Make the Transition to Legal Nursing ?

Transitioning from Bedside Nursing to Legal Nurse Consulting can provide opportunities for career advancement, flexible work arrangements including more family time, utilization of your nursing expertise, expanding your skill set in a legal setting, diverse career opportunities, and making a difference in the real impacts for a legal case. The transition can provide an income increase as well.

How will I use my current nursing skills as a Legal Nurse Consultant?

You will use your critical thinking skills to analyze medical records for extracting crucial and pertinent information for medical records review. Complex medical data will need to be organized and summarized. Case analysis will also include recognizing potential discrepancies and red flags with the standards of care. Clear and concise communication will be needed to offer your guidance effectively when conveying complex medical information.

What basic equipment/supplies will I need for Legal Nursing?

- A working computer
- Multiple monitors (not required but comes in handy)
- WIFI
- Microsoft Office (Word and Excel primarily)
- Adobe

Where do I find LNC Jobs?

Legal Nurse Consultant jobs can be found on:

- LinkedIn
- Indeed
- Zip recruiter

LinkedIn groups helpful to join:

- Law Jobs
- Legal Nurse Consultant
- Nursing beyond the bedside
- Juris Educational Resources for Legal Nurse Consulting
- Legal Nurse Consultant and Attorney Network

You can work from anywhere and on any active nursing license. You are not confined to your state as you can work across state lines. Set up your LinkedIn 'open for work' and choose notify you of job listings for Legal Nursing. However, your LinkedIn profile needs to be updated and optimized for Legal Nurse Consulting. This is an entire module in the mentorship education.

I also share a few more places to find jobs via the mentorship.

How quickly can I find a job?

You can't leave bedside nursing tomorrow and go to straight to an LNC job and expect a check right away. Law firms typically require two years experience as an LNC for eligibility, but it is not always the case. A Legal Nursing business will also take time to achieve a status to replace your full time income. This is not a move fast career. It takes time, patience, and building. I always suggest staying at your current job while building your experience and/or business. I never suggest anyone leave the clinical job before 5 years experience as your nursing experience is your secret weapon to gaining attorney clients. I subcontracted for 2 years before I felt ready to apply for law firms. I attended several interviews before I found the right fit. All firms are different in their qualifications. Attorneys are like Surgeons as they all have different requirements. You can do this with all the right tools.

LNC Business Information

Do I need an LLC (Limited Liability Company)?

Yes and no - if you will. I recommend if you plan to build a business then yes, you need it. There are several advantages of having a LLC. I would definitely research to see if right for you in the state where you live. If you plan to work in a law firm, you will not need it. Keep in mind, law firm jobs typically want you to have experience, so you may need to start under your LLC, even if you subcontract.

Do I need a business bank account or PO Box?

Yes, for business banking (after you form a LLC). No, to PO Box. All records are now digitally sent to you. Occasionally, there are documents to be mailed but no need for the expense.

Do I need a LinkedIn Profile?

Yes, for professionalism. Even if you are not using the profile for marketing, you should have the profile for a landing place to network, communicate, and optimized
with your services and experience.

Do I need a Website?

No, it is not a necessity. I recommend this be on the back burner and not the first thing created for your business, as it doesn't typically bring in clients.

Do I have to testify?

No not as a behind the scenes LNC. If you choose to do Legal Nurse Expert Witness, then yes you will have to testify. You can choose to do one or the other or both!

Things to Consider before making the leap to LNC

Transitioning from a bedside nursing role to becoming a legal nurse consultant (LNC) involves several important steps.
Here are some things to consider to see if this is the right path for you:

1. **Research and Self-Assessment:** Understanding of the role and its requirements. Assess your own skills, strengths, and areas of expertise to determine if this career path aligns with your professional goals.
2. **Do you have the required equipment?** Computer and software?Are you comfortable with Microsoft office and other software?
3. **Can you follow directions?** Attorneys and other LNCs do not want to correct mistakes over and over.
4. **Networking and Building Relationships:** Are you open to building relationships and expanding your network can open doors to potential job opportunities and mentorship? These jobs don't fall out of the sky. It's a long game.
5. **Gain Practical Experience:** Seek opportunities to gain practical experience in the legal field. This can involve shadowing or working alongside experienced LNCs, volunteering at legal aid organizations, or taking on freelance projects. Practical experience will enhance your understanding of legal processes and strengthen your skills as an LNC.
6. **Develop Strong Analytical and Communication Skills:** Can you analyze complex medical records, research, and communicate your findings effectively? How is your written and verbal communication abilities?
7. **Research Abilities:** Do you know where to go to find information on current protocols and best practices?
8. **Create a Professional Portfolio:** Compile a portfolio showcasing your nursing experience, specialized training, certifications, and any relevant legal case work you have been involved in. A well-curated portfolio will help demonstrate your expertise to potential employers or clients. This is a forefront of my 1:1 mentorship.
9. **Time Management:** Can you balance multiple cases and deadlines? Do you have effective time management strategies? Know how to prioritize tasks, create a schedule, and set realistic expectations for yourself and your clients. Utilize technology and tools such as project management software or calendar apps to stay organized and ensure timely completion of assignments.
10. **Handle Stressful Situations:** Legal cases can be emotionally challenging and s high-pressure environment. Are you able to handle feedback? Especially when the attorney client is critical of your work?
11. **Market Yourself:** Are you shy? You will need to develop a strong online presence through professional websites or social media platforms. Be able to highlight your unique skills, experiences, and accomplishments. Attend legal conferences, join professional associations, and consider speaking engagements to establish yourself as an expert in the field.

How to get started

Checklist

- [ ] Review “Things to Consider”
- [ ] Decide on Mentorship vs Certificate Class
- [ ] Finish training to learn about LNC
- [ ] Convert Resume to Curriculum Vitae (CV) for LNC
- [ ] Create Fee Schedule
- [ ] Completed Sample Case
- [ ] Obtain LLC
- [ ] Join LinkedIn and create LNC profile
- [ ] Join networking groups
- [ ] Network with other LNCs
- [ ] Obtain First Case

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