Legal Billing Software: The Complete Buyer's Guide for Law Firms

Finding the best legal billing software seems straightforward enough. You need a platform that can track time, send invoices, handle payments, and generate reports. But after comparing a few options, the features and capabilities can all start to sound the same.

So how do you tell which one will actually work for your firm?

The real test is what happens when you bring your firm's billing rules, trust accounting, client requirements, integrations, and old data into the picture.

That means looking past the sales pitch and asking the questions that matter:

- Can it handle LEDES invoicing when a client requires it?
- Does it keep trust and operating funds separated?
- Does it sync with your accounting data?
- What is the true cost of the platform, beyond the subscription price?
- Can you safely move your existing billing data over without disruption?

This buyer's guide helps you answer those questions before you commit to any option, so your firm can compare billing software based on how it will actually work inside your firm.

Start with the Features Your Firm Can't Compromise On

Non-negotiables are the best place to start your search for legal billing software. Before you compare pricing or extras, take a look at the core capabilities your firm needs to function.

For most law firms, those are the features tied directly to how work gets tracked, billed, paid, and reported. If a platform on your list falls short in one or more areas, you can start narrowing your options.

Compare and Score Your Legal Billing Software Shortlist

Use a simple scoring system while you compare billing platforms:

2 = Must-have and fully supported

1 = Available, but limited or only as an add-on

0 = Not available

Then score each platform on the core features you can't compromise on. For many firms, that list includes the following:

Billing Feature	Requirements	Score
Time tracking	Ability to run multiple timers, use bulk entry tools, and track by matter to keep entries with the right records	___ / 2
Flexible invoicing	Options for hourly, flat fee, contingency, split billing, custom rates, and invoice templates to keep bills consistent	___ / 2
LEDES billing	Ability to create and export the specific formats your clients require with built-in UTBMS task and activity codes	___ / 2
Online payments	Supports secure electronic payment processing, including credit card and ACH (U.S.) or PAD (Canada) options	___ / 2
Trust accounting	Clear separation of trust and operating funds, with proper application to invoices when fees are earned	___ / 2
Mobile and	Options to log time on the go, review billing, and record time tracked while offline	___ / 2

offline access		
Reporting	Visibility into billed, unbilled, collected, overdue, and realization data with built-in reports	___ / 2
Integrations	Reliable connections to any accounting, case management, calendar, and document tools your firm already uses	___ / 2

Check Your Score

- 14–16: Strong fit. The platform covers most of your billing essentials and is worth considering further.
- 9–13: Worth a closer look. Review where the feature gaps are and whether they create more work or cost for your team.
- 0–8: Likely not the right fit for your firm. Too many core billing needs may require separate tools or manual workarounds.

A high score doesn't automatically make a platform the right choice for your firm, but a low score on any true non-negotiable should be a red flag.

Once you've scored each option on your shortlist against these essentials, you have a stronger starting point for a more in-depth comparison.

Which Billing Features Matter for Different Firm Sizes

A solo lawyer uses legal billing tools differently than a firm with five or 20 attorneys. So which features are important to look for with a firm your size?

Firm Size	Top Priorities	Nice-to-Haves	Red Flags to Avoid
Solo	Easy time tracking, simple invoicing, payments, low admin burden	CRM/intake, website creation and management, secure file-sharing, eSignatures	Complicated setup, core features sold as add-ons, features you'll never use

Small (2–10 attorneys)	Shared workflows, rate flexibility, trust handling, reporting, integrations	Client portal, document management, project/task management, eSignatures	Weak security permissions, billing bottlenecks, poor collaboration
Mid-Size (11–50 attorneys)	Role-based access, approval workflows, advanced reporting, LEDES, integrations, scalability	Client portal, advanced project management, workflow automation, document management	Limited reporting, weak controls, manual billing review, poor data visibility

The bigger your firm gets, the more important billing coordination and collaboration becomes. What works for one lawyer can create unnecessary delays once more people are entering time, reviewing bills, managing trust funds, and relying on the same reports.

Use your firm's size as a way to gauge which features are important to prioritize and which are likely to add unnecessary cost or complexity.

Look Past the Per-User Price for the Total Cost of Ownership

The monthly subscription is only one facet of the total legal billing software cost. Once you factor in any payment processing fees, paid add-ons, implementation costs, training time, and the price of any separate tools you still need, the true cost of ownership can be significantly higher.

For example, say a five-attorney law firm with two billing users is comparing billing software that costs $45 per user, per month.

The subscription cost over a three-year period is:

7 users x $45/user/month x 36 months = $11,340

But over that three-year period, the firm may also pay for:

- Payment processing: $7,500
- Paid add-ons: $2,400
- Implementation and data setup: $1,500
- Training time: $2,000

That brings the three-year total cost of ownership, or TCO, to $24,740.

$11,340 subscription cost + $13,400 additional cost = $24,740 3-year TCO

With the extra costs factored in, the price your firm pays could more than double over a three-year period. That's how a platform can look cheaper per seat but end up costing more over time.

When you compare options, calculate the full three-year cost using the same cost categories, but the actual fees, add-ons, setup, and training costs that apply to each system.

This is just an example. Your actual TCO will vary based on your firm size, payment volume, implementation needs, and features included in each software plan.

Make Sure It Connects to Your Tools

Legal billing software has to work closely with other software in your toolkit, from accounting and case management to scheduling and document tools. Before you choose a platform, make sure it can integrate with or replace the software you already rely on.

For each platform you're considering, check:

- Accounting: Does it integrate with QuickBooks, and what data actually syncs?
- Case management: Can matters, clients, time, and billing data move between the two systems without someone re-entering it?
- Calendaring: Can lawyers track time or deadlines from the calendar tools they already use?
- Document storage: Can the billing software connect with your existing document management or cloud storage tools?
- Payments: Is payment processing included in the platform, or can you connect your payment processor while keeping invoices linked to the

right matter and client?
- Trust accounting: Does your trust accounting software integrate with the billing platform, or are trust accounting features included?

You're not just looking at which tools integrate with a specific billing platform, but how those integrations will actually work for your firm.

You can look closer by asking questions like:

- Is the integration one-way (data feeds from one tool into the other) or two-way (data is exchanged between both tools)?
- How often does data sync or update between the tools, and are you in control of when syncing happens?
- What does your team still have to enter, re-enter, or reconcile manually across two or more systems?

The better the integration, the less your team has to re-enter, reconcile, and manually update between systems during billing.

9 Fundamental Time and Billing Features

The capabilities worth insisting on before you shortlist a single platform, with what each one should actually do.

Get the Guide

Get Specific During the Demo

A product demo is more useful when you make the platform work through your firm's real billing scenarios. Don't just watch the standard walkthrough before deciding. Ask the vendor to show you exactly how the system handles situations your firm manages every week.

Here are some questions worth asking during the demo:

- Can you show me how a lawyer starts, pauses, and switches between timers?
- Could you walk through creating and exporting a LEDES invoice?

- How are trust funds applied to an invoice, and what safeguards are there to prevent trust and operating funds from mixing?
- Can you show how an invoice moves from draft to review to final approval?
- What happens when a client uses multiple billing rates or fee arrangements?
- How do online payments get matched back to the right invoice and matter?
- What happens when an invoice becomes overdue? Are reminders automated?
- What billing and collections reports can I see without exporting data?
- Which integrations are two-way, and what would I still need to enter manually?
- What features cost extra beyond the plan you're showing me?
- What does the migration process include, and which data won't transfer over?
- Does my firm have to sign a long-term contract, or is there a month-to-month plan?

This stage of the buying process is your chance to get specific, address any concerns, and run through scenarios your firm expects to encounter.

Take an active role, and you'll walk away knowing how the software could handle your real billing process, not just the vendor's ideal one.

Plan the Move Before You Commit

When a billing platform looks and feels like the right fit, focus on the data migration process. Get clear on what data will transfer, what needs to be cleaned up or exported first, and what your team needs to verify before moving to the new platform.

This migration checklist can make it easier.

- Clients and matters: Confirm names, contact details, matter numbers, billing arrangements, and responsible attorneys transfer correctly.
- Unbilled time and expenses: Make sure Work in Progress (WIP) transfers without losing descriptions, rates, or assigned matters.

- Accounts receivable: Verify open invoices, outstanding balances, credits, and payment history will carry over.
- Trust balances: Confirm client and matter trust balances stay intact during the move and can be reconciled before billing begins.
- Rate tables: Check that attorney, client, matter, and custom billing rates can transfer into the new system.
- Invoice history: Decide how much historical billing data needs to remain accessible once you switch.
- User permissions: Ensure you can recreate (or create) access levels for lawyers, billing staff, and administrators.
- Templates and settings: Verify that invoice formats, LEDES settings, payment options, and other billing preferences can carry over.
- Run a post-migration test: Send a test invoice, compare balances, reconcile trust, and spot-check a handful of matters to ensure your data is accurate after the move.

Done right, the migration process isn't about moving data so much as it is about starting your new system on numbers your firm can trust.

See What a Strong Fit Looks Like

Once you know what your firm needs from billing software, it helps to see how those requirements can come together in one platform.

TimeSolv is one example. Its Legal plan brings together the legal-specific capabilities firms need, including LEDES invoicing, trust accounting, payments, reporting, and more.

Picture the billing process from start to finish to see what makes TimeSolv different:

A lawyer tracks time from a phone, tablet, or desktop. That time flows into the correct matter and invoice automatically. Trust funds can be applied to approved invoices once earned, clients can pay online, and billing data can stay in sync with the firm's accounting system with a two-way QuickBooks integration.

From the moment time is recorded to the final invoice and reconciliation, TimeSolv is built to support the way your firm already bills while removing

steps your team shouldn't have to manage manually.

Choose a Platform That Checks the Boxes

When you know which features, costs, integrations, and migration steps to compare, choosing the right legal billing software gets easier.

Look for the platform that handles your non-negotiables, fits the way your firm works today, and leaves room for the billing process to grow along with your firm.

Then make the final decision with real workflows in mind, not just the feature list.

Bring your questions to a TimeSolv demo today and ask to see how the platform handles the billing scenarios your firm deals with every day.

Ready to explore at your own pace? Start a free trial now to try TimeSolv for 10 days, no credit card required.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the best legal billing software for a small law firm?

The right billing tool is one that fits your billing model, firm size, trust requirements, integration needs, and budget without adding extras you don't need or making essential features paid add-ons.

How much does legal billing software cost?

The total software cost depends on per-user pricing, plus additional related expenses like payment processing fees, implementation and migration costs, training, and any separate tools you'll use to get the functionality you need. Compare the total cost, not just the monthly subscription price, for the best cost estimate.

What features are important in legal billing?

At minimum, law firms need time tracking, invoicing, LEDES support, online payments, trust accounting, mobile access, built-in reporting, and integrations with any tools your firm relies on.

How do I choose the right legal billing tool?

Start with the features you can't compromise on, like time tracking, expense tracking, and invoicing. Then, compare platforms using size-specific criteria, total cost comparison, available integrations, demo performance, and migration requirements.

Can law firm billing platforms integrate with QuickBooks?

Yes, many platforms can integrate with QuickBooks, but the depth of integration matters. Check whether your billing tool offers a one-way or two-way integration, what data syncs, and what your team will still need to enter manually.

Put your shortlist to a real test

Run your own matters, rates, and trust rules through TimeSolv free for 10 days, no credit card required.

Try TimeSolv Free