
Clio Setup Best Practices

Clio is a very powerful system, but it needs careful configuration. Your Clio “on-boarding” call with your specialist will teach you how to update, but they might not tell you what to expect, how to decide, or best practices. This guide tries to help with that process.

Here are the critical areas you need to make decisions about

- How your practice is defined
- How users are defined and grouped
- Where documents will live and be integrated
- Whether you will use Clio invoices
- Whether you will use credit card payments through Clio
- Integration with third parties, including Quickbooks
- How you will use time tracking and activity descriptions
- How you integrate firm calendars and contacts
- Setting up data escrow.

Firm / Practice configuration

- Practice areas
 - Every matter needs a practice area.
Tip: don't over do this ... too many practice areas will make things confusing.
 - Delete the ones provided by Clio you do not need **right away** so they don't get used.
- Matter Numbering
 - Document folders in Clio are based on the matter. Documents are stored "inside" the matter records. As you can see, there are a lot of different numbering approaches.
 - When it is integrated into DropBox (for example), the system creates folder based on the matter number. If you change it (and you can, easily), it will change the folder structure. So, beware.

What will be your Practice areas?

How will you number matters?

- Custom Fields
 - Use your intake form to define what fields you use, add those that are not in Clio already.
 - This is also used in Lexicata to define the fields there ... Clio and Lexicata will share the custom fields
 - DO NOT set up people with custom fields - use a new contact and make them a relationship with a matter. For example, add a contact and then describe them by the relationship, e.g., "Expert Witness", or "Agent under Medical POA"

What custom fields do you need?
(Attach intake forms for each practice area)

Add firm information

Settings/Account and payment info

This information will show on your invoices and in Clio Connect, so the more complete your information, the more professional (and better) you'll look to your clients

Set up bank accounts

Menu bar/Accounts/Bank accounts

You'll need to set up two bank accounts in Clio. They are an operating bank account and an IOLTA/trust bank account.

Account Name (for example):

- Law Firm Operating Account or
- Law Firm Trust Account

Opening balance:

- For the operating account opening balance, enter your YTD fee and expense income collected.
- For the trust account opening balance, enter zero balance. Once you've brought over clients and matters into Clio, you can add the individual amounts you are holding in trust to the appropriate client and matter.
- Select Operating account as the default.

Tip

Your Clio operating bank account is a snapshot of your law firm's income and your trust account is the total of your client trust funds. The balance in your Clio operating bank account should match your accounting system's YTD income accounts, which represent fees and client paid expenses. At the end of each fiscal year, you can reset your Clio operating bank balance so that it's always a reflection of your YTD income accounts. Your Clio trust account balance should match your actual trust account bank register at all times.

Add Users

Settings/Manage Users

This is where you add users and define their level of access to your system.

Create users

- Settings / manage users
 - Add users - you need email, group, and permissions to begin. This will send an email to the person, and they will create their own record.
 - Add picture, set address
 - Set billing rate in the user record
 - Add the appropriate group
 - Set Job title - you can manage that in the user record, or globally in the "settings / groups, permissions, and job titles" section. We suggest "Attorneys" "Associates", "Paralegals" and "Staff"
 - Set permissions (sometimes called "roles") - you can manage user permissions here, or go to "settings / groups, permissions, and job titles" to manage permissions by group or person.

Groups

- Users can be grouped. This is useful when you have different practice areas, or different types of employees who should not typically see all the different choices.

For example, the estate practice has a time entry for "Create Estate Plan", but the financial practice should not see that activity option.

- Create groups in either the user record when you create a user or in the "groups, permissions, and job titles" section.
- We suggest "Attorneys" and "Staff" to begin the setup. You can easily change that later, for example to add "Estate Planning" and "Financial" and "VA"

What groups will you set up? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Permission levels:

- Administrator (you can have multiple administrators)
- Accounts (can view bank account information)
- Reports (can print reports)
- Billing (can see and create invoices)

Type:

- Attorney
- Non-attorney

Firm groups:

- In its simplest application, you can group users by practice areas

The first person to sign up for the account gains several definitions by default. The “Signing person” is the owner, a lawyer subscriber type, and an administrator, and can control the firm calendar. Only administrators can add, edit, or disable users.

Setting up users also determines your monthly Clio fees. When you add users for the first time, they’ll receive an email confirmation to set up their individual account with User ID (email address) and password. If you negotiated an account with a fixed number of users, your costs will not change when you add or change users.

After new users accept your invitation, as administrator, you can then set billing rates and set their ability to view other users’ billing rates. Which leads to the next section...

Billing Rates and templates

Clio has four levels of billing rates that follow a priority. Get to know them and take some time to understand how they work. Activity rates are nice if you want to do task-based rates for emails, phone calls, or research.

Billing rate hierarchy

- Billing rates have four levels. Keep them in mind as your progress though setup.
 - User - set up with user
 - Activity - set in "Activity Descriptions"
 - Client - set when creating a new contact
 - Matter - set when creating a matter
- Each level overrides all above. For example, if you have a user with a \$300/hr rate, working on a matter capped at \$200 by prior agreement with the client, the billing will be priced at \$200/hr.

Billing/invoicing

- Whether you bill hourly, flat rate, or on a contingency fee basis, Clio can be set up to accommodate that style. Below is a summary of the fee types available in Clio, along with information on further resources available.
- Hourly - Hourly billing is the most common billing structure. You can log your time in Clio, and calculations are performed for you based on the rate you set for that activity on how much you are charging for the time spent. You will need the activity descriptions set up to use hourly.
- Flat Rate - With this fee structure you are charging one rate for all of the work performed on the matter. I find this a little confusing because the flat rate takes away some of the billing options. So, instead, I define Activities that include the flat fee, and use hourly tracking. This also allows me to know how I spend my time.
- Contingency Fee - In Clio, you can specify a contingency fee percentage on a Matter and the award or settlement amount won at the completion of the case. You are then able to generate a bill to provide to your client and you can receive payment from the award in trust. You set this up in Matter billing

Invoice templates

- Settings/Billing/Bill themes
 - Start with the default, edit later
- Creating invoices
 - Will you use Clio to invoice, or will you stay with Quickbooks.

Additional details

Document Templates

- I use about a half-dozen templates. For example, matter folder labels. If you create a template, you can generate them very easily.
- Here is the link for Clio support: <https://support.clio.com/hc/en-us/articles/203359300-Document-Automation-Creating-a-Template>
- Using Lexicata and Infusionsoft we might not need as many of these as I have been using, but I still find it useful. Think about what documents you use repetitively

Document integration

- Decide on DropBox, Drive, or Clio Connect

Calendaring

- You need to select a common firm calendar to sync. I use one calendar from Google and have other calendars synched there, then have the one global calendar synched to Clio.
- Use the same calendar in Infusionsoft too.