



Laffey, Bucci & Kent

How Case Cost Financing
Supported a Law Firm's
Pursuit of a \$52 Million
Settlement for a Client



Overview

Since partnering with Esquire Bank, personal injury law firm Laffey, Bucci & Kent has increased case fees by 365% in just three years and significantly increased operations (staff, resources, office space), contributing to growth. Most notably, the law firm utilized case cost financing to invest in resources to help pursue and win a \$52 million civil sexual abuse case settlement.

A familiar challenge

Laffey, Bucci & Kent LLP (www.laffeybuccikent.com) is a personal injury law firm, specializing in crime victim injury cases, workplace accidents, construction accidents, auto injuries and more. Headquartered in Philadelphia, the law firm also has offices in New York and New Jersey.

Like many contingency fee law firms, Laffey, Bucci & Kent had grown to a point where the burden of paying for case costs using law firm revenue was not aligned with the firm's ethos for attaining the best possible result for its clients and the firm's aspirations for growth. In 2017, Laffey, Bucci & Kent sought to represent and advocate on behalf of 29 victims who suffered sexual and physical abuse at a boarding school in West Virginia. This high-profile case would require considerable resources – both in terms of the firm's litigation staff, as well as the level of investment needed for expert testimony and investigation to properly represent the harm done to the former students. Regardless of the financial reserves it could draw upon, the law firm needed a strategic, third-party partner to help finance case disbursements and help the firm achieve its goals. At first, they turned to a traditional bank.

“When we formed a relationship with traditional banks, it was clear that they didn’t understand our business model. They didn’t understand important things, like the timing of a case. We represent injured folks from beginning to end and that may take years.” – Jeffrey Laffey, Managing Partner

As Laffey, Bucci & Kent discovered, traditional banks lacked an in-depth understanding of the litigation industry which led to a narrow view of what a law firm is truly worth. The true value of a contingency fee law firm is often tied to the future value of its case inventory. This disconnect frustrated Laffey, Bucci & Kent and negatively impacted its ability to grow and participate in cases meaningful to the law firm.

A challenge many contingency fee law firms face is the balance between acquiring new cases, outlaying case costs on those cases, and concurrently servicing existing cases with the right levels of case expenditures needed to fight for justice. For Laffey, Bucci & Kent, the firm's primary objective was to seek the best possible outcome for its clients without any financial limitations for access to expert testimony.

“In my experience, taking shortcuts sacrifices the value of a client’s case, because you have too much of your money out in the street and you need to get a result to get it back. It’s vital to have adequate resources to take on the cases that we handle.” – Jeffrey Laffey, Managing Partner

Laffey, Bucci & Kent believed it was important to give victims of abuse a feeling of safety and reassurance that the law firm would seek justice and hold those in power accountable. Therefore, the law firm searched for a better solution – one that would allow it the financial freedom to invest in cases that needed support.

A unique solution

In Esquire Bank, Laffey, Bucci & Kent found a strategic partner that provided flexible financing solutions which enabled the law firm to better attain justice for each and every client and fuel the law firm's growth through the pandemic and beyond.

When Laffey, Bucci & Kent allied with Esquire Bank in 2017, the law firm accessed a case cost line of credit which provided the flexibility and financing that aligned with the firm's aspirations for growth.

"It all starts with Esquire's understanding of how our inventory is an asset. It is a tremendous help to deal with an institution that obviously gets the business model and fully supports you in your efforts to get the best results for your clients."

— Jeffrey Laffey, Managing Partner

Laffey, Bucci & Kent met with the Esquire Bank team and discussed the firm's desire to pursue the case against a boarding school in West Virginia which was already garnering headlines. Esquire Bank's executives and underwriters worked with the law firm to assess the potential value of the firm's case inventory, including the anticipated settlement value for the high-profile sexual abuse case. In addition, Esquire Bank provided financing for the law firm to achieve its goals and ultimately win a record settlement.

With Esquire Bank's support, Laffey, Bucci & Kent found the financial freedom to invest heavily into the case. As a result, the law firm was able to secure the 29 victims related to the West Virginia school a record \$52 million settlement and issue a report that led to the arrest of the alleged perpetrators of the abuse. Laffey, Bucci & Kent continues to represent additional victims from the school and, to date, has recovered an additional \$15 million.

Additionally, the law firm continued to work on other cases concurrently, making investments to sustain its ongoing growth. Most notably, the law firm invested in growth during the pandemic, using the capital freed up from the utilization of its case cost financing to fund marketing initiatives.

"We had an interesting chapter during the pandemic because we grew exponentially. Although the courtroom doors may have closed, the wheels kept turning in all other aspects of litigation. We looked and assessed our inventory, and we knew what was ahead of us. We had the freedom provided to us by Esquire and the backing to grow in a time where most others chose not to. As a result, we are now equipped to handle the challenges."

— Jeffrey Laffey, Managing Partner

A winning result

Leveraging Esquire Bank's case disbursement financing, Laffey, Bucci & Kent freed up the necessary capital to better serve victims of criminal abuse, as well as those involved in personal injury and medical malpractice cases. The increased investment in case resources led to successful outcomes, most notably a \$52 million civil settlement for the sexual abuse case involving a boarding school in West Virginia. Since partnering with Esquire Bank, Laffey, Bucci & Kent has achieved a revenue increase of 365% over 3 years and is poised for further growth.

"I am extremely proud of the accomplishments that the firm has been able to achieve over the last several years. We've had the ability to do it the right way, and that ability came in large part because of Esquire Bank."

– Jeffrey Laffey, Managing Partner

Laffey, Bucci & Kent was able to grow exponentially through the pandemic, as well as significantly increase the size of its operations (staffing, resources, office space), contributing to its growth. As the effects of the pandemic recede, the law firm is well positioned to take advantage of the changing trends in the legal landscape.

"The support that we receive from Esquire Bank is phenomenal. They have lawyers who understand our line of work and understand that we need the resources to 'dot every i', 'cross every t' and turn over every rock so that our clients get the best representation possible. From top to bottom, we've received nothing but professional and courteous service."

– Jeffrey Laffey, Managing Partner



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