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Once you have an idea for an invention, you want to protect your intellectual property so no one else can take credit for what is rightfully yours. To do so, you will need to file an application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Before you fill out an application for a patent, you should first make sure your idea meets the requirements for a patent and do a complete patent search online before you proceed. Once you have determined that your idea has commercial potential and meets the requirements for a patent, itâ€™s time to begin the application process.

There are a number of sections that must be completed in full on a patent application: the specification, the claims, the abstract, and the drawings. Your specification is a narrative describing your invention and distinguishing it from any similar inventions currently on the market. Here is where you will introduce the title of your invention, its background, a summary of what your invention will do, and a detailed description of the actual structure of the invention itself.

The claims portion of your application will offer detailed description of everything your invention will cover. Your patent rights are ultimately determined based on your claims, making this the most important piece of your application.

Your application must also include drawings to provide a visual of how your invention will work as specified in your claims. In order to get an idea of what the USPTO requires and what they are looking for in terms of your drawings, it is wise to do your research and review other patents of related inventions in your field.

Once you have completed your application, you can file it with the USPTO electronically or by mail. Upon receipt of your application a patent examiner will inspect it to make sure your invention meets patent requirements and that your application follows the strict formatting and language required by the USPTO. From receipt of your application to an agreement over which parts of your invention a patent will covered can take anywhere from one to three years, with many new inventors facing rejection on their first patent attempt due to inexperience with the process.

Because the patent process can be rigorous, and because a large number of inventors face rejection on their first application attempt, it is advisable to seek the assistance of a licensed Patent Practitioner when filling out your patent application. Patent Practitioners process patent applications on a daily basis, and they are well seasoned in how to fill out the applications to get approval the first time around, helping new inventors see their dreams become a reality.

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