



WSBA Diversity

Demographic Highlights for WSBA Members Who Are Age 40+

In 2012, the Washington State Bar Association conducted a statewide demographic survey of its membership. The goals of this effort were to understand the composition of those in the profession and examine career transitions. At the time of the study, WSBA membership totaled more than 35,000 attorneys. Data was collected and analyzed from active, inactive and former members (who ceased membership in the last five years). Seven diversity groups were identified and data analyzed on group characteristics and job setting experiences. These groups included older members (**Members 40+**), people of color, sexual minorities, women, primary parents and caregivers to older or disabled adults, persons with disabilities, and military personnel and veterans.

Quick Facts

Of members 40+

- 38%** Report being a parent or caregiver
- 17%** Report having a disability or impairment
- 16%** Report being in the military or a veteran
- 9%** Report being a racial minority
- 7%** Report being a sexual minority

Membership

Members 40+ represent **79%** of the Washington State Bar Association

Members in the 51-60 years age group represent the largest single cohort at **30%**

Members 61 and over represent **21%** of the membership

Practice

Average years licensed for Members 40+ is **24.3** years

90% of Solo Practitioners are 40+

Employment Settings for those 40+

(includes active and inactive members)

Group Law Firm	25.1%
Solo Practice	24.9%
Govt., Fed./State/ Local/Tribal	15.0%
Retired	8.6%
Corporate	6.7%
Business, Outside Law	5.7%
Unemployed	3.9%
Public Interest/Other	
Nonprofit	3.2%
Education	2.8%
Public Interest, Legal	1.7%
Superior/District courts	1.1%
Mediation	*
Federal Court	*
Appellate Court	*
Local/Municipal Court	*

* less than 1%

Key Findings

- **79%** of WSBA members fall within a **protected class** because they are age 40 and over.
- **47%** of these members will be eligible for **retirement** over the next 15 years.
- Transfer of this group's **collective experience** and knowledge is critical.
- Members 40 and over have an average of **24.3 years of licensure** representing almost a quarter-century's worth of legal expertise per attorney.

Recognizing this knowledge base and its potential loss has important implications for the Washington legal community. The proven ability of members 40 and over is a source of wealth and insight. As the profession continues to change, it is imperative that members in this cohort seek opportunities to mentor new and young attorneys. The WSBA provides:

- Case-based mentoring through WSBA Moderate Means Program.
- Mentoring by connecting attorneys with WSBA Sections.
- Mentoring through the WSBA Lawyers Assistance Program's job seekers group.