



## Washington State Bar Association

*Working Together to Champion Justice*

### Overview:

The Washington State Bar Association is part of the judicial branch, exercising a governmental function authorized by the Washington State Supreme Court to license the state's 33,500 lawyers. The WSBA both regulates lawyers under the authority of the Court and serves its members as a professional association — all without public funding. As a regulatory agency, it administers the bar admission process, including the bar exam; provides record-keeping and licensing functions; and administers the lawyer-discipline system. As a professional association, the WSBA provides continuing legal education for attorneys, in addition to numerous other educational and member-service activities.

The governance of the WSBA is vested in its Board of Governors. There are three governors from the seventh congressional district; one from each of the other eight districts; and three at-large members, one of whom represents the Young Lawyers Division. The Board meets regularly (approximately every six weeks) at various locations around the state, and its meetings are open to the public. Much of the work of the Bar is carried out through its many committees, 27 sections, and a Young Lawyers Division. The WSBA's budgeted expenses for fiscal year 2009-10 are approximately \$21.8 million.

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**Mission Statement:** The Washington State Bar Association's mission is to serve the public and the members of the Bar, ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.

**Membership:** Approximately 33,500 lawyers (27,900 active members). All lawyers licensed to practice in the state are required to be members of the WSBA. Of its active members, approximately 37 percent are women and 10 percent are persons of color.

**WSBA Staff:** Approximately 143 full-time staff members

**Other Facts:**

- Many active members provide free civil legal services to low-income people in Washington through the state's 23 volunteer attorney legal services programs.
- Approximately 1,000 new lawyers are admitted each year.
- There are more than 60 county, specialty, and minority bar associations throughout the state, serving the needs of lawyers and the public.
- To promote public confidence and protection of the public, the WSBA administers the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection. This program compensates clients who are victims of attorney misappropriation. Each active lawyer contributes \$30 a year as part of his or her annual licensing.