



Board of Governors January Meeting Recap

Jan. 16, 2026

A summary, prepared by the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors (Board), of its meeting held Jan. 16, 2026, at the WSBA Conference Center in Seattle. The agenda, materials, and video recording from this Board meeting are [posted online](#). The next regular meeting is March 6-7, 2026, in the Olympia area. The Board is the WSBA's governing body charged with determining general policies of the WSBA and approving its annual budget. To subscribe to the Board meeting notification list, email barleaders@wsba.org.

TOP TAKEAWAYS

Focus on Access to Justice. The [Access to Justice \(ATJ\) Board](#) gathered with the Board of Governors to build relationships, learn, and—most importantly—brainstorm and focus on strategies to close the justice gap in Washington. The justice gap refers to the disparity between the need for legal assistance and the availability or accessibility of that assistance, particularly for low-income and marginalized communities. The ATJ Board leaders talked about their efforts to authentically engage and include people with unmet legal needs across the state, which has led to dedicated leadership seats for community members with these types of lived experiences. Following that conversation, the Board of Governors co-created, with the Access to Justice Board, a Justice Gap Scoping Work Group to conduct a comprehensive analysis of ongoing and proposed solutions to close the justice gap; to identify associated stakeholders; and, as its final product, to provide a prioritized list of solutions for the WSBA and ATJ Board to pursue. ([See page 507.](#))

We Need YOUR Input about the Professional Oath. The [WSBA Oath Review and Drafting Task Force](#) has a survey open to collect data that will be the foundation for its decisions about if and how to move forward in redrafting Washington's professional legal oaths; please take the survey that corresponds to your license type: [Oath of Attorney](#), [Oath of Limited License Legal Technician](#), or [Oath for Limited Practice Officers](#).

Help Us Honor Legal Luminaries. The annual [APEX \(Acknowledging Professional Excellence\) Awards](#) nominations are open through Feb. 27. Nominate a legal luminary so we can celebrate their excellence and impact statewide!

Section Viability Review Process. The WSBA bylaws trigger a [viability review of any section when it drops below 75 members for two consecutive years](#). Currently, the [LAMP](#) and [Liquor, Cannabis, and Psychedelics Law](#) sections are below that threshold. Because Board members have never conducted a sections viability review before, they approved a collaborative process that considers factors such as section leadership input, overall activity and functionality, and fiscal

viability. While the review process is triggered purely by membership numbers, the review process will be a holistic evaluation designed to determine if the Sections are able to offer value to their members, Board members said. The review of the LAMP and Liquor, Cannabis, and Psychedelics Sections should be completed by this July. ([See page 518.](#))

The Board also:

- Maintained the LLLT and LPO license fees for 2027 (no change from 2026). The Court will now review the recommendation for reasonableness. The Board expressed interest in developing a philosophy for reviewing LPO and LLLT license fees in the future. (See page 526.)
- Approved an updated Board Conflict of Interest Policy and related WSBA Bylaw amendment. The Court will review the bylaw recommendation for implementation. (See [page 548](#) and [page 594.](#))
- Reviewed a second read of a proposed bylaw amendment related to the personal political activities of Board members. The Board returned the proposal to the Governance Committee for consideration of the additional comments received. (See [page 548](#) and [page 594.](#))
- Approved a proposal to provide payments to volunteers of the Limited Practice Board when engaged in exam writing and grading (to align with the practice of providing payments to members of the Board of Bar Examiners when grading the attorney bar exam), pending suggested corresponding amendments to APR 12(b)(3) to allow for such payments. (See [page 522.](#))
- Approved revisions to Appendix B of the WSBA Indigent Defense Standards proposed by the Council on Public Defense. Appendix B lists Washington crimes and their corollary case types for purposes of public defense qualifications and case weighting. The revisions were anticipated when the Standards were originally drafted, based on legislative changes to criminal statutes and receipt of new data on the actual time spent on specific case types. The revisions better reflect the actual practice habits of Washington public defenders and respond to formatting requests from local public defenders and administrators. (See [page 593.](#))

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