

# WASHINGTON STATE B A R A S S O C I A T I O N

## 2020 SECTION ANNUAL REPORT

**January 1 - December 31, 2020**

*Deadline: Friday, December 4, 2020*

<b>Name of the Section:</b>	<i>Low Bono</i>	
<b>Chair:</b>	<i>Jennifer Ortega</i>	
<b>Section Information:</b>  <i>*To be completed by WSBA Staff*</i>	Membership Size: <i>(As of December 1, 2020)</i>	122
	Staff Lead:	Eleen Trang
	BOG Liaison:	Brett Purtzer
	FY20 revenue (\$): <i>As of September 30, 2020</i>	\$3,337.55
	FY20 direct expenses (\$): <i>(As of September 30, 2020; does not include the Per-Member-Charge)</i>	\$787.08
<b>Purpose:</b> <i>(Usually stated in the Section's Bylaws)</i>	<p>The underlying purpose of “low bono” is to increase the availability of legal representation and legal services to clients of moderate means.</p> <p>Clients of moderate means are individuals who have a need or a want for legal representation or legal services, but who cannot qualify for pro bono legal assistance and who typically cannot afford the cost of traditional law firm representation or legal services. These individuals comprise the majority of those seeking resolution of, or planning for, legal issues and legal matters.</p> <p>The Low Bono Section is a community of lawyers, other legal professionals, and law students committed to identifying solutions, creating systems, and developing projects to increase the overall availability and affordability of legal representation and legal services.</p>	
<b>2020 Accomplishments and Work in Progress:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased membership by double, going from 54 voting members to over 100.</li> </ol>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Presented mini-CLE via Skagit County Bar Association “Low Bono 101: Unbundled Services and Limited Scope Representation”.</li> <li>3. Created an online resource for Executive Committee members to access documents and a shared section calendar.</li> <li>4. Presented mini-CLE in conjunction with the Solo and Small Practice Section “Putting the Gears in Order: Structuring Your Firm to Serve the Moderate Means Client”.</li> <li>5. Hosted multiple virtual Low Bono Online Roundtables, an open forum for discussions on serving low-to-moderate-means clients and low bono practice in general, over several summer months.</li> <li>6. Participated in virtual Open Sections Night at Gonzaga Law School.</li> <li>7. Presented mini-CLE “Guardianship of a Minor: The New Law Replacing Nonparent Custody January 1, 2021.</li> <li>8. Co-hosted panel on Member Recruitment for WSBA’s 2020 Fall Section Leaders Orientation.</li> <li>9. Established and published a quarterly newsletter “Access to Justice Champions”.</li> <li>10. Established an Outreach Committee which actively promotes the section, including on social media.</li> <li>11. Continued to cultivate relationships with Seattle University School of Law, the University of Washington School of Law, Gonzaga University School of Law, the Moderate Means Program, and the Access to Justice Institute.</li> <li>12. Maintained a vibrant low bono section community during COVID-19! Held virtual monthly meetings with social hours afterwards, and presented outgoing ExCom member awards after October new leadership was installed.</li> </ol>
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<p><b>Please quantify your section’s current member benefits:</b></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3000 Scholarships, donations, grants awarded;</li> <li>• 4 mini-CLEs produced</li> </ul>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Member Benefit</b>
		Scholarships, donations, grants awarded (\$ amount)
	<b>1</b>	Law school outreach events/benefits hosted
		Legislative bills reviewed/drafted
	<b>2</b>	Newsletters/publications produced
	<b>3</b>	Mini-CLEs produced
		Co-sponsored half-day, full-day and/or multi-day CLE seminars with WSBA
		Co-sponsored half-day, full-day and/or multi-day CLE seminars with non-WSBA entity

		Receptions/forums hosted or co-hosted
	<b>3</b>	Recognitions/Awards given
		New Lawyer Outreach events/benefits
		Other (please describe):
<b>Looking Ahead: Goals &amp; Priorities for 2021 (Top 5)</b>	<b>1</b>	Continue to increase membership, with a focus on diversity and inclusion.
	<b>2</b>	Present quarterly mini-CLEs and one or more special events centered around low bono practice, and work to increase collaboration with other sections.
	<b>3</b>	Publish a quarterly newsletter with articles written by a wide variety of authors, primarily focused on low bono principles and practices.
	<b>4</b>	Increase law student and young lawyer/LLLT membership and participation.
	<b>5</b>	Increase visibility and awareness of Low Bono Section through outreach efforts.

**Please report how this section is addressing diversity:**

(Are you using any of the tools provided by WSBA and if so, how? Have you sought out training or consultation from the Diversity Specialist? How have you elicited input from a variety of perspectives in your decision-making? What have you done to promote a culture of inclusion within the board or committee? What has your section done to promote equitable conditions for members from historically underrepresented backgrounds to enter, stay, thrive, and eventually lead the profession?)

A number of the Executive Committee members have been trained by WSBA’s Diversity Specialist within the past two years. The Executive Committee has discussed the importance of diversity and inclusion within the Low Bono Section, and in the upcoming fiscal year, the Executive Committee will include diversity on its standing agenda to form a plan around increasing diversity.

Our Executive Committee continues to encourage participation by a diverse group of people. While meetings have also included a telephone call-in number for those who live too distant to attend the meetings in person, all meetings are now held remotely. The meeting link is published with the agenda, and shared on the section’s listserv and our WSBA webpage. It is now vastly easier for anyone interested in attending our meetings to do so, and we have had increased participation by members located outside of Seattle. We hold our Executive Committee meetings at a later hour of the day, typically on the third Tuesday of the month, to encourage more people to participate, including members with small children who may have trouble meeting during workday hours. We continue to host socials after these meetings and invite all Section Members to the meetings and to the post-meeting socials.

We are fortunate to be a section whose organizing principles appeal to a diverse group of legal professionals. Our mission is promotion of access to justice, which appeals to a diverse population. This has resulted in a relatively diverse membership. Notably, the Executive Committee and Section membership is majority female. Since its inception in 2014, Section membership has historically been

more diverse than the WSBA membership when measured purely by conventional demographics. We focus heavily on alternatives to traditional law firm practice and work/life balance, something that historically has appealed to women in the legal profession.

In the past year, our Executive Committee's primary focus was on growing membership, and it has had tremendous success in recruiting LLLTs and attorneys. The Executive Committee focused on providing high quality programs and other valuable benefits for all of our members, as well as promoting opportunities for our members to communicate with each other and build meaningful professional relationships.

**Please report how this section is addressing professionalism:**

(Does the section's work promote respect and civility within the legal community? Does it seek to improve relationships between and among lawyers, judges, staff and clients? Does it raise awareness about the causes and/or consequences of unprofessional behavior?)

By its very nature, low bono practice seeks to foster a respectful and civil practice environment. Clients typically have limited resources. Therefore, low bono practitioners must make the most of those resources to obtain the best possible outcome for a client. An effective method to achieve this end is to practice with respect and civility throughout the life of a matter in order to keep the focus of all involved on the legal and client-centered issues at hand.

In addition, low bono practitioners approach matters with their clients from the perspective of what outcomes will be both achievable and satisfactory to the client within the client's means. This approach typically improves the overall experience the client has with the legal system when compared to a more traditional approach of advancing a client's matter to a point where there is no resolution or satisfactory outcome, and then withdrawing when the client can no longer pay.

The Executive Committee and section members have presented CLEs regarding low bono practice which include information on professionalism when practicing law, and in particular in low bono practice models.

**Please report how this section is integrating new and young lawyers into its work:**

(How have you brought new and young lawyers into your decision making process? Has the section supported new and young lawyers by (for example) helping to find and prepare them for employment, assisting with debt management, building community, and providing leadership opportunities?)

COVID-19 has impacted our ability to reach out to new and young lawyers and LLLTs, as historically the Executive Committee has done so via in-person events. The Executive Committee has created an Outreach committee and is using social media and other means to reach out to new/young lawyers/LLLTs and those transitioning from big firms to solo/small firms. Our bylaws allow us to have three law students hold non-lawyer board positions. As part of our drive to increase membership, the Executive Committee plans to reach out to lawyers reaching retirement, especially those seeking to semi-retire, and to lawyers practicing in big firms, which we imagine will lead to creating connections for new and young lawyers to find mentorship and professional opportunities.

A significant number of our Executive Committee Members are within their first five years of practice. For FY2021, we will seek out a Young Lawyers Division liaison to participate in the Section Executive Committee meetings. Further involvement with the Seattle University School of Law Low Bono Incubator Program and the UW and Gonzaga Law Schools is planned.

**Please describe your Executive Committee's relationship with WSBA staff and the Board of Governors.**

*For example:*

- *Quality of WSBA staff support/services provided to Section Executive Committee*
- *Involvement with Board of Governors, including assigned BOG liaison*
- *Ideas you have on ways WSBA can continue to strengthen/support services to sections.*

We are thankful for the significant support and involvement in FY2020 of our WSBA Section Liaisons (Julianne Unite and Eleen Trang). The same can be said for other WSBA staff with whom the Section has interacted. All are approachable, thorough, and helpful with regard to Section business.

Our BOG liaison in 2020 was able to attend several meetings and provide updates on the BOG and its priorities. We have contacted our new BOG liaison for 2021 and are looking forward to developing a strong relationship with him.

**Note:** Annual Reports will be provided to the WSBA Executive Director and Board of Governors and will be posted on your section's webpage. We encourage you to share the Annual Report with your BOG liaison and section membership.

Reports are scheduled to be included in the January 2021 BOG Meeting Materials.

**Return by December 4, 2020 to [eleent@wsba.org](mailto:eleent@wsba.org)**