

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

WSBA Services & Support for Sections

Through its 29 sections, the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) is fortunate to be able to provide a diverse and active structure for members and others to become involved in professional and educational development. Many sections are practice area focused, such as the Business Law, Criminal Law, and Intellectual Property Sections. Other sections, such as Dispute Resolution and Solo & Small Practice, address aspects of the legal profession that intersect with a variety of practice areas.

SECTION SUPPORT

The primary purpose of each section is to serve the needs and interests of its members and the activities of each section are largely dependent on its current leadership. To ensure the viable and active operation of the sections, WSBA staff provide a broad spectrum of support and services. Current staffing for the sections (Sections Team) includes a full-time Sections Program Specialist, a full-time Sections Program Coordinator, and a part-time Member Services and Engagement (MSE) Program Coordinator who are guided by the MSE Manager and are part of the Advancement Department of the WSBA.

The Sections Team provides strategic guidance, tools, and resources for the day-to-day work and strategic development of each section. Each fall, the Sections Team holds a meeting to welcome section leaders to the new fiscal year and provide an overview of WSBA operations and services, including any updates and policy changes from the prior year. During the spring, the Team holds a second meeting focusing on leadership support and goals fulfillment. The Team also offers a noon discussion series and various drop-in support sessions throughout the year, and works closely with other WSBA staff to comprehensively address section needs.

On an ongoing basis, the Sections Team works with sections to coordinate a variety of service and support needs, including, but not limited to:

- **Web Content.** Each section has its own webpage on the WSBA website. An invaluable tool for communicating with members and the public, a section's webpage contains information about current leadership, bylaws, budget, CLEs, special events, and a variety of other resources. Each section coordinates with Sections Team staff to provide new and updated content. Some sections have elected to independently host "off-site" websites separate from the WSBA website. These off-site websites are not administered or maintained by the WSBA, so the section is responsible for administration and maintenance. All section website content is subject to review and approval by WSBA staff to ensure consistency with relevant WSBA Bylaws and policies.
- **List Serves.** The majority of section members-only list serves are set up on the WSBA's Lyrus program with content managed by the section. These list serves are administered by the Sections Team, and section members are subscribed to the list serve unless they opt out. Some sections have elected to independently host non-Lyrus program list serves. These non-Lyrus program list serves are not administered or maintained by the WSBA so the section is responsible for administration and maintenance. The Sections Team also administers the Section Leaders List Serve, which serves as an important avenue of communication from WSBA to section leaders and is also available for section leaders across sections to communicate with each other.

- **Newsletters.** Numerous sections publish a newsletter, with production coordination and distribution provided by the Sections Team and other WSBA staff. Aspects of support include coordinating with the desktop publishing vendor and distribution of the newsletter via web posting and a broadcast email (e-blast) to section members. Newsletter drafts are reviewed by WSBA staff from the Sections Team, the Office of General Counsel, and the Communications Department.
- **Continuing Legal Education programs.** This overview does not include services and support provided by WSBA CLE staff. For information about WSBA CLE, please visit [this webpage](#).
- **Broadcast E-mails (e-blasts).** This communication tool provides a way to reach section members via WSBA email. A broadcast email is typically used to announce CLEs, special events, and official notices of section business, such as bylaws amendments or elections. Section leadership may request that an e-blast be sent to section members for a specific purpose.
- **Budget and Fiscal Resources.** Each section's chair, chair-elect, and treasurer are emailed a monthly financial report. The Sections Team is responsible for reviewing and coding all non-CLE expenses and ensuring that expenses and revenue are charged to the correct budget account. Each spring, WSBA's Finance and Sections Teams coordinate the process for each section to develop a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Sections receive Sections Team assistance with developing an accurate and meaningful budget based on their proposed plan of work for the coming year.
- **Expense Reports.** The Sections Team processes and routes reimbursement requests (expense reports) from section leaders, as well as disbursement of section awards and donations. The Sections Team ensures that the requests comply with [WSBA fiscal policy](#).
- **Event and Project Planning.** Non-CLE events, such as a law student reception or an executive committee retreat, receive Sections Team support for various details and logistics, including site procurement, contractual agreements, and processing of registrations. All contracts, memorandums of understanding (MOUs), and letters of agreement (LOAs) must be reviewed and signed by the WSBA. Examples of non-event projects include section-funded annual community-based grant programs and summer internship programs for law students.
- **Bylaws.** Each section operates through its own bylaws, which are developed in accordance with the WSBA Bylaws. Any amendments to section bylaws involve technical assistance provided by the WSBA General Counsel and the Sections Team prior to being forwarded to the WSBA Board of Governors for review and approval. Each section's current bylaws are posted on their respective webpage.
- **Annual Section Membership Marketing Campaign.** The section membership year is January 1 through December 31, while the WSBA's fiscal year is October 1 through September 30. Each October or November, all active members of the WSBA receive a section membership join or renewal notice along with the annual licensing fees packet. Individuals may join a section online via [myWSBA.org](#), mailing the [Join-a-Section form](#) to the WSBA office, or by contacting the WSBA Service Center at 1-800-945-9722.
- **Elections.** Sections conduct an election of officers and executive committee members between March and June each year by electronic ballot. Support from the Sections Team and other WSBA staff includes developing the ballot, collecting candidate applications and materials, arranging notice of election, tabulating votes, and providing election results.
- **Survey and Form Design and Distribution.** Sections may choose to poll the membership on various topics such as member benefits, section midyears and conferences, and practice or interest area issues, and collect event

RSVPs. Section leadership may submit drafts to the Sections Team to format and administer in MS Forms. Submissions are subject to WSBA review.

- **Membership Records.** Sections frequently request current membership data, which is maintained and provided by the membership systems division of the WSBA Regulatory Services Department. Please contact your Sections Program Specialist to request this information.
- **Section Master Records.** Section master records are maintained by the Sections Team. In accordance with the WSBA's retention schedule, master files contain archival information, including bylaws, executive committee meeting agendas and minutes, elections data, and executive committee rosters.

WSBA INTERDEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

To ensure the healthy and viable operation of 29 sections, WSBA staff support is provided by almost every WSBA department, including:

- **Finance and Administration.** Annual budgets, monthly financials, processing of section expenses and revenue, and processing of section memberships.
- **Advancement.** Continuing Legal Education (CLE), collaborative opportunities with new member services and programs, mentorship, rural practice, practice management assistance, member wellness, professional responsibility, ethics, Lending Library, legal research tools, practice management discount network, and the insurance marketplace.
- **Communications and Outreach.** E-blasts and other publication opportunities, including *Washington State Bar News* (magazine), *NWSidebar* (blog), *TakeNote* (biweekly all-member email), and social media outlets (e.g., Facebook and LinkedIn), as well as support and guidance from Legislative Affairs. Support is also available for creating individual section social media accounts.
- **Equity and Justice.** Support in applying WSBA's equity and justice efforts and principles, pro bono and public service opportunities in section program and project development and member recruitment.
- **IT.** Technical assistance and support for staff to manage webpages, list serves, and other communications tools.
- **Office of the Executive Director.** Key policy direction and new initiatives provided by the Executive Director and the Board of Governors.
- **Office of General Counsel.** Technical and legal assistance for bylaws, including amendments, newsletter review, review of all contracts, public records, and the provision of legal advice.
- **Regulatory Services.** Coordination of annual section membership dues and maintenance of section membership data, including monthly membership counts and demographic reports.