



WSBA Diversity

Demographic Highlights for WSBA Members of Sexual Orientation Minorities

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 (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 **sexual orientation minorities**, persons with disabilities/impairments, racial minorities, older members (40+), women, primary parents and caregivers to older or disabled adults, and military personnel and veterans.

Quick Facts

For sexual orientation minorities

- 6%** Report being a parent or caregiver
- 8%** Are Women
- 4%** Report being in the military or a veteran
- 7%** Report being 40+
- 8%** Report having a disability impairment

Membership

Members who identify as a sexual orientation minority represent **9%** of Washington State Bar Association

Members who identify as a sexual orientation minority report an average age of 47 years old.

22% of members who identify as a sexual orientation minority practice outside of Washington state.

Practice

Average years licensed for members who identify as a sexual orientation minority is **18** years.

Employment Settings for Members who identify as Sexual Orientation Minorities

(includes active and inactive members)

Group Law Firm	26.1%
Solo Practice	11.6%
Gov-Fed/State/Local/ Tribal	23.2%
Retired	2.9%
Corporate	8.7%
Business-Outside Law	4.3%
Unemployed	4.3%
Public Interest- other nonprofit	8.7%
Education	2.9%
Public Interest-Legal	5.8%
Superior/District courts	1.4%
Mediation	*
Federal Court	*
Appellate court	*
Local/Municipal Court	*

* less than 1%

**The membership study used a broader definition than what is commonly utilized to collect Census data.

Key Findings

- **9%** of WSBA members fall within a protected class because identify as a sexual orientation minority.
- **27%** of active members who identify as sexual orientation minorities are solo practitioners.
- Of the three barriers presented in the study, **barriers to social inclusion** are the most difficult for this group to overcome.

The profession is changing. The business interests of attorneys, employers, and clients call for more diverse legal representation across the state. WSBA is committed to supporting and advancing diversity and inclusion in the profession. In demonstration of its ongoing commitment, WSBA seeks to:

- Ensure a more diverse Continuing Legal Education faculty that better reflects its membership and the clients they serve.
- Educate members statewide to develop cultural competency skills critical to achieving inclusion for this population.