



WSBA Diversity

Demographic Highlights for WSBA Members with Disabilities/Impairments

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 (those who ceased membership in the last five years). Seven diversity groups were identified and data was analyzed on group characteristics and job setting experiences. These groups included **persons with disabilities**, racial minorities, older members (40+), sexual minorities, women, primary parents and caregivers to older or disabled adults, and military personnel and veterans.

Quick Facts

For members with disabilities/ impairments

- 15%** Report being a parent or caregiver
- 12%** Are women
- 11%** Report being in the military or a veteran
- 17%** Report being 40 years or older
- 8%** Report being a sexual minority

Membership

Members with a disability/impairment represent **21%** of the Washington State Bar Association membership**

Members with a disability/impairment report an average age of 53 years.

18% of all WSBA members practice outside of Washington. Of those, **15%** report having a disability/impairment.

Practice

Average years licensed for members with a disability/impairment is **21** years.

Employment Settings for Members with a Disability/Impairment

(includes active and inactive members)

Group Law Firm	27.5%
Solo Practice	24%
Govt., Fed./State/ Local/Tribal	18.1%
Retired	4.4%
Corporate	3.1%
Business, Outside Law	5%
Unemployed	3.1%
Public Interest/Other	
Nonprofit	3.1%
Education	1.9%
Public Interest, Legal	5.6%
Superior/District courts	1.9%
Mediation	*
Federal Court	*
Appellate Court	1.2%
Local/Municipal Court	*

* less than 1%

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

Key Findings

- **21%** of WSBA members fall within a protected class because they have a disability/impairment.
- Members with a disability/impairment experienced **social barriers** at a rate higher than all other diversity groups.
- **47%** of active members who report a disability/impairment are solo practitioners.
- Congressional Districts 3 and 6 have the second highest percentage of members reporting a **disability/impairment**.

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.