

The Board of Governors took up the draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 budget and proposal to set 2016–17 license fees for initial consideration in July. In its review of the budget and a proposed license fee increase, the Board focused on resources necessary to provide regulatory and other services at reasonable value to our 36,000 members. The table below lists some of the Bar's key programs and services.

DISCIPLINE AND DISCIPLINARY SYSTEMS

In 2013,¹ the Bar processed 8,503 Consumer Affairs inquiries; reviewed 2,228 written grievances; dismissed 1,839 grievances; concluded disciplinary proceedings with 94 actions imposed (32 disbarments, 30 suspensions, 26 reprimands, and 6 admonitions); concluded 10 disability matters with transfers to disability inactive status; and diverted from discipline 30 less serious grievances.

MEMBER SERVICES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CONFIDENTIAL ETHICS LINE

Members may obtain free help from our confidential Ethics Line to analyze ethical issues and make decisions consistent with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

LEGAL LUNCHBOX SERIES

Members may fulfill their MCLE requirements at no cost by attending this monthly, free 1.5-credit webcast CLE held the third Tuesday of each month.

NEW LAWYER EDUCATION

New and young lawyers may attend skill-building seminars at reduced rates.

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Members may obtain phone, online, and in-person consultations and support on technology, marketing, financial management, practice transition, and other areas to help achieve and maintain a successful practice.

CASEMAKER

Members have free access to a powerful legal research tool.

WSBA CONNECTS

Members have 24/7 access to a confidential, statewide wellness benefit that helps address issues related to mental health and addiction concerns, career management, family, caregiving, daily living, health and well-being, and more.

WSBA PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMS

Members may earn CLE credit while giving back to their community through the Call to Duty Program, which helps address the legal needs of veterans and their families; and through the Moderate Means Program, through which lawyers provide legal assistance at a reduced fee to clients whose income is within 200–400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

HARDSHIP OPTION AND PAYMENT PLAN

Available to support members with financial challenges.

PAPERLESS LICENSE RENEWAL

As part of our organization-wide effort to go “paperless,” WSBA is offering members the opportunity to opt out of receiving a paper license renewal packet in the mail and instead renew online.

License Fees

As reported in prior columns, license fees are the Bar's primary source of funding for programs, services, and operations. The 2012 referendum dropped fees from \$450 to \$325 without regard to the actual cost of providing these functions to members. Although license fees historically covered 75 percent of this work, they covered only 64 percent in FY2014. Through increased operational efficiencies, reductions, and prudent use of diminishing reserves, we have been able to hold license fees at this level for three years, through 2015.

In order to continue to support our obligations to the public, to you, and to the profession, the Board has concluded that license fees will need to increase beginning in 2016. The Board reviewed a proposed license fee of \$385 for 2016 and 2017 at its July meeting, which is equivalent to WSBA license fees in 2005-06. The FY2015 budget and proposed license fees for 2016 and 2017 will be presented to the Board for approval on September 18. We will keep you informed of our deliberations. **NWL**



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¹Discipline data is collected on a calendar-year basis.