

# Washington State Bar Association Section Policies

This is a statement of general rules and policies for the operation of WSBA Sections. Sections are a part of the WSBA and, as such, are subject to the supervision of the Board of Governors. All funds collected on behalf of a section are subject to the budget as approved by the Board of Governors. Questions about responsibility and authority should be referred to the Sections Liaison, the Director of Finance and Administration, or the Executive Director of the WSBA.

- I. **Sections.** Sections are organized to provide members of the Bar, who have specialized interests, with a structured forum in which to pursue such specialized interests within the framework of and consistently with the interests and obligations of the Washington State Bar Association.
  - A. **General Responsibility.** A Section shall operate in areas of specialized interest to its members where continuity is necessary or desirable.
  - B. **Specific Responsibilities.** Sections in areas of substantive law shall:
    1. Cooperate in the continuing legal education of the members of the Association.
    2. Cooperate in the development of the legislative program of the Association.
    3. Systematically inform the Section members of the activities of the Section.
    4. Strive to obtain the involvement of the Section members in the activity of the Section.
- II. **Organization and Meetings.**
  - A. Each Section shall have bylaws which must be approved by the Board of Governors. **Changes to Section bylaws must likewise be approved by the Board of Governors.** Such bylaws and bylaw revisions, once approved by the Section, should be submitted to the Board of Governors, in care of the Executive Director, for approval.
  - B. The organization and meeting procedures of a Section or the Executive Committee or officers shall be in accordance with its bylaws as approved by the Board of Governors and in accordance with Board of Governors' policy and accounting limitations.

**III. Minutes, Reports, Special Requests.**

- A. Minutes. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the Executive Board of a Section and a copy of the minutes of each such meeting shall be promptly delivered to the Executive Director, the Sections Liaison, and to each member of the Executive Board.
- B. Annual Reports. Each Section shall, not less than thirty days before the annual meeting of the Association, file with the Executive Director a concise report summarizing the activities of the current year and anticipated activities of the ensuing year.
- C. Requests for Action of the Board of Governors. Whenever a Section requests action by the Board of Governors, the requested action shall be reflected in the minutes of the Section or its executive committee and shall be set forth in a letter accompanying the minutes and directed to the Board of Governors in care of the Executive Director. If there are dissenting votes on the requested action, the votes for and against shall be set forth in the minutes and those in the minority shall be afforded the opportunity to set forth, as an attachment to the minutes, their reasons for dissent.
- D. Requests or Reports Regarding Legislation. Whenever a Section reports on, or requests action, with respect to legislation, it shall, in addition to the requirements of C above, promptly furnish a copy of its minutes to the Legislative Committee and the Legislative Representative of the WSBA, together with draft copies in bill form of the requested legislation. Reports and requests with respect to legislation shall be submitted on or before such date as may be set by the Legislative Committee.

**IV. Public Positions and Legislative Activity. No Section, nor any member of a Section in his or her capacity as a member of the Section, shall express a position to the public or engage in legislative activity without authorization by the Board of Governors as detailed by the Board of Governors' policy on Legislative and Court Rule Comment.**

**V. Receipts and Disbursements. Revenues from and expenditures for Sections shall be under the general supervision of the Board of Governors' Budget and Audit Committee acting through the Executive Director in accordance with the Bar's rules of accountability and responsibility.**

- A. Budget Requests. On or before the deadline set by the Budget and Audit Committee of the Board of Governors, each Section shall submit to the Budget and Audit Committee its requested budget for the fiscal year commencing October 1. Such request shall be submitted in such form and with such detail as the Board of Governors shall prescribe. Supplemental budget requests shall be made and approval thereof obtained before incurring any expense not included in, or in excess of, the approved annual budget.

- B. Ownership. As noted above, all funds, including Section dues, collected by the WSBA on behalf of a Section are subject to the control of the Board of Governors and its Budget and Audit Committee. Each Section shall pay annually (beginning in fiscal year 1994) to the WSBA an amount designated by the Board of Governors to reimburse the WSBA for its direct and indirect administrative expenses incurred in administering the various Sections. The Sections carry forward the net result of their financial operating budgets from one fiscal year to the next (beginning with fiscal year 1994.)
- C. Personal Liability. Note that:  
Article VI (F) 3 of the WSBA Bylaws states: "The financial obligation of the Bar to any division, committee or section shall be limited to the amount budgeted for it and shall cease upon payment of that amount unless the Board of Governors authorizes otherwise."  
Article VI (F) 4 of the WSBA Bylaws states: "Any liability incurred by any division, committee or section, or by members thereof, in excess of the funds budgeted, shall be the personal liability of the person or persons responsible for incurring or authorizing the same."  
Article VI (F) 5 of the WSBA Bylaws states: "Any liability incurred by any division, committee or section, or by members thereof, not in accordance with the policies of the Board of Governors or in conflict with any part of these Bylaws, shall be the personal liability of the person or persons responsible for incurring or authorizing the same."
- D. Reimbursements. Requests for reimbursements of expenses are subject to the reimbursement policies set by the Board of Governors and **must** be submitted within **60 days** of the date the expense is incurred (within **30 days** at the fiscal year end, September 30). Requests submitted after these deadlines may be refused. WSBA policy prohibits the use of WSBA license fee revenue to purchase alcoholic beverages. Section dues are not bound by this policy.

VI. Cooperation with Other Sections and Committees.

- A. General. Cooperation with, and respect for, other Sections and committees is expected. Should conflicts appear in areas of responsibility or in purposes or goals, such conflicts should be promptly called to the attention of the Board of Governors through their assigned Section liaison.
- B. Legislative Committee. Full cooperation should be extended by all Sections to the Legislative Committee which is charged by the Board of Governors with overall responsibility for legislative programs and activities.

C. Continuing Legal Education. Continuing legal education programs by Sections of the Washington State Bar Association can be channeled through the CLE Committee and CLE Board to avoid duplication of effort, scheduling conflicts, and unreasonable fees or budgeting. The CLE Committee and CLE Board will report to the Board of Governors, whose approval is a prerequisite to Section-sponsored programs. Written materials to be used in Section-sponsored CLE programs will be reviewed by the WSBA CLE Director. All Section CLE programs must be open to all members of the WSBA and not be limited to members of the Section.

VII. Assistance by Staff. The staff of the Association headed by the Executive Director is prepared to furnish you with assistance specifically including the following:

- A. Providing general information in amplification of policy.
- B. Providing financial statements, paying appropriate reimbursements and Section expenses, and collecting Section dues.
- C. Assisting in obtaining resource materials.
- D. Clarifying and coordinating activities of other Sections and committees.
- E. Providing a Sections Liaison to support Sections. His/her duties include providing support for various Section activities and organizational needs, coordinating and distributing Section newsletters, assisting in disseminating minutes and notices of meetings, coordinating meeting arrangements, and providing other assistance as requested by a Section.
- F. Providing a Sections CLE Coordinator. His/her duties include providing "a la carte" services and coordination for Section events that are not co-sponsored by the WSBA CLE Department, but include a CLE offering. Among other offerings, CLE "a la carte" services include producing event announcements, registration, site logistics and arranging MCLE credits.

Meeting arrangements must be coordinated through the Sections Liaison or Sections CLE Coordinator if CLE-affiliated because all contracts with hotels, motels, restaurants, etc., must be signed by either the Director of Finance and Administration or the Executive Director. These individuals are the only people with the authority to bind the WSBA to meeting contracts.

## Preparation of Section Budgets

Section budgets are approved yearly by the Board of Governors' Budget and Audit Committee of the Washington State Bar Association as part of the WSBA's annual budget. The fiscal year for the WSBA and Sections is October 1 through September 30. If all goes according to plan, you can expect the budget schedule to follow this timeframe: The Director of Finance and Administration will request each Section to submit a budget for the upcoming fiscal year; this budget is generally due in May. The Budget and Audit committee reviews all section budgets in June and the Board of Governors approves the entire WSBA budget, including Sections, at its July/August meeting.

Section expenditures during the year should be consistent with the approved budget and the attached WSBA Section Reimbursement Policy. If a Section wishes to spend funds otherwise, Section leadership should prepare a written request outlining the purpose and amount of the proposed expenditure and submit it to the Director of Finance and Administration who will place it on the agenda for the next Budget and Audit Committee meeting.

The Sections Liaison will send monthly financial statements to each Section chair and treasurer within 30 days of the close of each month. Financial statements will detail actual year-to-date income and expenses and budgeted amounts. When the budget amount is reached, no further expenses for the Section will be paid unless arrangements have been made as noted above. Section chairs and treasurers should review their Section's monthly financial statements and contact the Sections Liaison if they have any questions about the amount of an income or expense item, the category in which it is recorded, or any other concerns.