WSBA Section Profiles 2023

Sections are established to provide a forum for those members of the WSBA who wish to pursue shared specialized interests. Section membership is voluntary. The current membership year is Jan. 1, 2023 – Dec. 31, 2023. Dues are the same for both WSBA “active members” and “subscribers.” Individuals who are not members of the WSBA, including inactive members and the general public. New admissions may join one section for free in their first year of admittance to WSBA. Law students may join any section at a discounted rate as “subscriber.” For additional information about the WSBA sections, please visit www.wsba.org.

The Administrative Law Section is designed to serve the interests of public and private sector attorneys who work with state and local regulatory agencies to improve and facilitate the administration of justice. Regulatory law practitioners include assistant attorney generals, city attorneys (on private contract as well as public employees), county prosecutors who work on regulatory matters and private practitioners who either contract to represent government entities or who represent clients subject to government regulation.

The Animal Law Section seeks the participation of WSBA members and other parties interested in increasing connection to relevant animals and the human-animal interface, which includes landlord/tenant, criminal, wills and trusts, personal injury and tort claims, nonprofit corporations, agricultural, local government, and administrative law.

The Antitrust, Consumer Protection, and Unfair Business Practices Section is primarily devoted to keeping its members informed about significant developments in the field of trade regulation law. The Section serves as a forum for members of the Washington State Bar Association to exchange information and ideas and to develop and conduct educational programs regarding public and private aspects of trade regulation law, including antitrust, consumer protection, and unfair business practices.

The Business Law Section is committed to providing services that its members value, operating in a fiscally responsible manner, and in a manner that represents the interests of legal professionals practicing in all areas of business law. The Section promotes the education of members in laws, regulations, and administrative and court decisions and the sound development of relevant laws and regulations, cooperating in that endeavor with the American Bar Association and other Sections, and promoting the objectives of the Washington State Bar Association. Section members engage in a broad spectrum of business activities relating to contract drafting and negotiation, and all aspects of dispute resolution including arbitration, mediation, litigation, and bid protest.

The Corporate Counsel Section provides educational and professional development, career enhancement, and networking opportunities for all members of the Washington State Bar Association who work in in-house legal environments, who aspire to work in-house, or who wish to better understand the issues, challenges, and opportunities faced by in-house legal professionals. Section members include in-house legal counsel, attorneys in private practice who spend a substantial portion of their time working with in-house counsel, and other legal professionals who counsel businesses or nonprofit enterprises.

The Creditor Debtor Rights Section encourages the research, study, and initiation of proposals for changes and reforms. The Section aids and educates members and the public by reviewing pending legislation and development of proposed statutory amendments to improve the administration of justice. Section members represent a diverse array of individuals and businesses who are debtors, debtors-in-possession, secured and unsecured creditors, trustees, asset purchasers, and examiners in all facets of creditor-debtor law.

The Criminal Law Section provides the opportunity and forum for the interchange of ideas in the areas of criminal law and procedure by investigating and initiating common projects and by reviewing of pending legislation and development of proposed statutory amendments to improve the administration of justice. Section members include prosecutors, defense counsel, law professors, and law enforcement professionals. With an emphasis on defending and prosecuting attorney positions, the executive board champions the rights of both the accused and victims in the criminal justice system.

The Dispute Resolution Section promotes the informed use and best practices of dispute resolution processes by providing resources, educating members of the Washington State Bar Association and the public issues relating to the growth and development of dispute resolution services in the State of Washington. All WSBA members and other dispute resolution professionals may become a member of the Section.

The Elder Law Section seeks to improve understanding by members of the Washington State Bar Association of matters related to the representation of elderly citizens, recognizing that these individuals have and may be isolated, ill, or vulnerable to undue influence or exploitation. Issues commonly discussed relate to retirement and estate planning, powers of attorney, guardianship, living wills, and other decision making, private and public long-term care and other healthcare financing, and abuse of vulnerable individuals.

The Environmental and Land Use Law Section helps members keep up with this rapidly developing area of law. The Section represents a diverse membership with individuals who are often on different sides of an issue, but who are all committed to civil and professional cooperation and enhancement of shared communities. Accordingly, the Section endeavors to continually and regularly provide opportunities and forums for the interchange of ideas surrounding environmental and land use law.

The Family Law Section is devoted to improving the profession and practice of family law by benefitting members and other family law professionals, the judiciary, and the general public. The Family Law Section is a statewide organization of family law attorneys that represents the interests of legal professionals practicing family law.

The Health Law Section furthers the knowledge of the members of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) in the areas of law involving both federal and local health care. The Section focuses on the business of health care, state and federal reform, fraud and abuse, antitrust, new modes of health care delivery, insurance issues, and many other concerns. The Section works to contribute to valuable relationships among health law practitioners and opportunities to develop health law practices.

The Indian Law Section provides a forum for practitioners representing clients with diverse interests affected by Indian law to learn more about Indian law. Federal, Tribal and state laws, executive and administrative actions, and court decisions provide a complex and rapidly evolving array of law which affects legal services provided by practitioners to clients.

The Intellectual Property Property Section strives to promote the practice of intellectual property law and focuses on patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, and unfair business practices. The Section represents a diverse array of individuals and businesses who are inventors, patentees, intellectual property owners, technology developers, companies, and trusts, asset purchasers, and examiners in all facets of intellectual property law.

The International Practice Section has a broad focus that includes not only the study of current developments in the field of international law but also immigration law, international environmental law, international trade law, intellectual property, financing, services, trade regulation, exports and imports, transnational contracts, travel, and international dispute resolution. Members represent a wide variety of backgrounds and practices, including full-time and part-time practitioners, government, business, foreign lawyers, academia, internationally-focused law students, and those simply intellectually interested.

The Juvenile Law Section provides an opportunity for legal professionals who work with juveniles and their families in child welfare, juvenile justice to meet together and work collaboratively on issues facing their clients. Areas of legal practice the section addresses include child welfare, juvenile justice, status offenses, immigration, as it relates to children and families, delinquency, and diversity in need of special education, all proceedings, as well as a variety of civil legal needs of youth. The Section welcomes advocates from all interested disciplines and a variety of fields of law, including juvenile justice, child welfare, and those who represent youth in civil legal practice.

The Labor and Employment Law Section of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) forms an integral part of the WSBA, mirroring the growth of the practice area. The Section includes members who practice many different aspects of labor and employment law, including lawyers representing public and private sector employers, unions, management, and individual employees, as well as law professors, arbitrators, and other neutrals.

The Legal Assistance to Military Personnel Section promotes the objectives of the Washington State Bar Association with respect to military affairs. The Section establishes and maintains a liaison between the WSBA, the Armed Forces of the United States, and federal, state, and local government agencies to better serve the legal needs of the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and their dependents.

The Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Law Section improves understanding by members of the Washington State Bar Association of the legal needs of LGBT individuals in the state of Washington. The Section supports the efforts of members to achieve the highest standards of competence, professionalism, and ethics in their practices, and assists LGBT residents of Washington state and others who wish to better understand how their legal needs can be met. The Section promotes the study of LGBT and gender identification law, and reports on laws, decisions, and governmental regulations as they may affect the rights, responsibilities, and needs of LGBT people.

The Liquor, Cannabis, and Psychedelics Law Section provides networking and education opportunities to attorneys who practice in, or are interested in, these areas of law. The Section serves as a repository of information to guide practitioners through these highly regulated areas. WSBA is a community of highly skilled practitioners working together to interpret the rules, regulations, and industry developments in order to further best practice guidelines for developing and established businesses.

The Litigation Section strives to be the voice of civil litigators practicing in Washington state. The section is involved in a wide range of activities that interest those who handle civil litigation in superior or federal courts. Activities include review and formal input concerning legislation and rule-making, annual midyear trial skills seminar, and support for litigation skills training.

The Low Bono Section is a community for legal professionals, law students, and others who are committed to providing, promoting, and improving access to legal services for those who may be unable to afford legal representation or legal services, but who cannot qualify for pro bono legal assistance and who typically cannot afford the cost of traditional law firm representation or legal services.

The Real Property, Probate and Trust Section assists members in achieving the highest standards of competence, professionalism, and ethics in their practices. The Section is composed of legal professionals whose practices span the areas of real property, trusts, and estates. The Section’s governance structure includes two separate councils: the Real Property Section and the Probate and Trust Council.

The Senior Lawyers Section is geared toward lawyers aged 55 and counting or who have been in practice in any jurisdiction for at least a decade and who may join the section. As one of the few Washington State Bar Association sections that does not focus on a particular area of the law, the Section engages in robust discussions about their members’ identity, navigation of career transitions, and keeping up to date on development in the law.

The Solo and Small Practice Section serves as a clearinghouse for qualified law practice management and technology information for solo and small practice attorneys to support them in ethically conducting a profitable and satisfying business. The Section provides information to its members in areas of common interest and provides opportunities for members to become better acquainted with other members.

The Taxation Section furthers the knowledge in areas of the law involving federal, state, and local taxation. The Section forms an available working unit to assist in the activities of the WSBA and further the interests of the WSBA and of the legal profession as a whole, and also provides legal professionals with an interest in tax law an opportunity to meet and discuss mutual areas of concern with established practitioners.

The World Peace Through Law Section focuses on international affairs and issues of war, peace, and law. The Section seeks to promote the rule of law and peaceful resolution of disputes among nations, to foster education on public international law and human rights.

For more information about the 29 sections of the Washington State Bar Association, please visit www.wsba.org. For questions, please contact sections@wsba.org.