

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

SECTION ANNUAL REPORT – 2019

Deadline: Friday, December 6, 2019

Email Annual Report to: sections@wsba.org

Name of the Section:	Family Law	
Chair:	Nancy Koptur	
Section Information: <i>*To be completed by WSBA*</i>	Membership Size: <i>(As of December 15, 2019)</i>	1,060
	Staff Lead:	Eleen Trang
	BOG Liaison:	Brian Tollefson
	FY19 revenue (\$): <i>As of September 30, 2019</i>	\$40,138.33
	FY19 direct expenses (\$): <i>(As of September 30, 2019; does not include the Per-Member-Charge)</i>	\$27,150.48
Purpose:	<p>The purpose of the Family Law Section is to improve the practice of family law in Washington and to involve all interested members of the WSBA in cooperation with state and local bar associations in order to benefit its members, their clients, and the general public by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the opportunity and forum for the interchange of ideas in all areas of law affecting families and juveniles; • Initiating and implementing common projects, including but not limited to an annual meeting; • Reviewing pending legislation, providing input and timely responses to pending and proposed legislation and development of proposed statutory enactments to improve and to facilitate the administration of justice within the Section’s area of interest and expertise; • Hosting CLEs to improve the quality of family law practice; and • Undertaking such other service as may be of benefit to the members, the legal profession, and the public. 	

<p>2019 Accomplishments and Work in Progress:</p>	<p>Legislation: FLEC has been rebuilding our relationship with legislators, which was damaged due to prior WSBA/BOG policies regarding section participation in the legislative process. We are encouraged by our work with Sanjay Walkevar and his staff: we have a renewed emphasis on reviewing pending legislation and providing input to WSBA and stakeholders as appropriate. FLEC members have participated in meetings with legislators and other stakeholders during the interim, discussing proposed legislation for the 2020 session and beyond.</p> <p>Board of Governors: The Family Law Section’s BOG liaison attends most if not all BOG meetings. We are working well with the current Board of Governors and have established open and healthy lines of communication to address questions posed by the Section.</p> <p>Workgroups: As required under RCW 26.19.025, FLEC had a representative on the 2019 Washington State Child Support Schedule Workgroup. Our initial representative was Ann Farnsworth; when she had to resign due to health issues, she was replaced by Christy Carpenter.</p> <p>Midyear CLE: The 2019 Family Law Section Midyear, held in Spokane in June, was a success. We have also seen an increase in Section CLE income with the “new” process for selling videos of individual CLE sessions. With the assistance of WSBA CLE staff, FLEC is once again able to map out several years’ worth of midyear CLE locations instead of being able to plan only one year ahead.</p>																							
<p>Please quantify your section’s current member benefits:</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3000 Scholarships, donations, grants awarded; • 4 mini-CLEs produced 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="531 1087 670 1150">Quantity</th> <th data-bbox="678 1087 1437 1150">Member Benefit</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1150 670 1220">-0-</td> <td data-bbox="678 1150 1437 1220">Scholarships, donations, grants awarded</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1220 670 1289">-0-</td> <td data-bbox="678 1220 1437 1289">Law school outreach events/benefits hosted</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1289 670 1478">Any bills related to family law</td> <td data-bbox="678 1289 1437 1478">Legislative bills reviewed. The Section did not draft any legislative proposals this year, but members of FLEC have participated in discussions with legislators about proposed and current bills.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1478 670 1547">-0-</td> <td data-bbox="678 1478 1437 1547">Newsletters produced</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1547 670 1617">1</td> <td data-bbox="678 1547 1437 1617">Mini-CLEs produced</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1617 670 1686">2</td> <td data-bbox="678 1617 1437 1686">Co-sponsored half/day to multi-day CLEs with WSBA</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1686 670 1755">1</td> <td data-bbox="678 1686 1437 1755">Receptions/forums hosted</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1755 670 1824">4</td> <td data-bbox="678 1755 1437 1824">Awards given</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1824 670 1894">2</td> <td data-bbox="678 1824 1437 1894">New Lawyer Outreach events/benefits held by WSBA</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1894 670 1967">x</td> <td data-bbox="678 1894 1437 1967">Other (please describe): The Family Law Section</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Quantity	Member Benefit	-0-	Scholarships, donations, grants awarded	-0-	Law school outreach events/benefits hosted	Any bills related to family law	Legislative bills reviewed. The Section did not draft any legislative proposals this year, but members of FLEC have participated in discussions with legislators about proposed and current bills.	-0-	Newsletters produced	1	Mini-CLEs produced	2	Co-sponsored half/day to multi-day CLEs with WSBA	1	Receptions/forums hosted	4	Awards given	2	New Lawyer Outreach events/benefits held by WSBA	x	Other (please describe): The Family Law Section	
Quantity	Member Benefit																							
-0-	Scholarships, donations, grants awarded																							
-0-	Law school outreach events/benefits hosted																							
Any bills related to family law	Legislative bills reviewed. The Section did not draft any legislative proposals this year, but members of FLEC have participated in discussions with legislators about proposed and current bills.																							
-0-	Newsletters produced																							
1	Mini-CLEs produced																							
2	Co-sponsored half/day to multi-day CLEs with WSBA																							
1	Receptions/forums hosted																							
4	Awards given																							
2	New Lawyer Outreach events/benefits held by WSBA																							
x	Other (please describe): The Family Law Section																							

		<p>maintains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A listserv for Section members to discuss legal issues and procedures; • A listserv for Section members to discuss law practice issues (software, billing, hiring)
<p>2020 Goals & Priorities (Top 5)</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Continue providing quality CLEs. Each year the Family Law Section puts on three Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In April, we have our 2-day Skills Training Seminar for new lawyers or lawyers new to family law. This training, including members of the local bench, consists of a day of “classroom training” on Friday and a day with role-playing, usually motion arguments (in front of actual judges and commissioners) on Saturday. In 2019, Skills Training was in Kennewick/Richland. We hosted a Friday evening reception for those who attended the training. • Each June, we have our Family Law Midyear, which begins mid-day on Friday and lasts til Sunday afternoon. The 2019 Midyear was in Spokane. In 2020, it will be in Vancouver; we are considering Wenatchee for 2021. • Each December, we host a single-day Fall CLE. This year’s seminar is on December 6th, with in-person and online participation available. The topic is <i>The Intersection of Family Law and Criminal Law</i>.
	<p>2</p>	<p>Review, comment on and testify about family-law-related legislation. The Family Law Executive Committee (FLEC) works with the Board of Governors and WSBA to provide feedback to improve proposed and current legislation. This year, we were invited to, and attended and participated in, several legislator-held meetings during the 2019 interim to discuss improvements to the Uniform Guardianship Act (2SSB 5604, Chapter 437, Laws of 2019) as well as the proposed Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act.</p>
	<p>3</p>	<p>Emphasis on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. In recruiting applications for FLEC membership, we have emphasized the need for diversity on the Executive Committee. In addition, we are working to ensure that our future CLEs appropriately reflect and accommodate our diverse membership.</p>

	4	Continue to strengthen our relationship with the WSBA Board of Governors (BOG). Over the past several years, FLEC has worked on improving our relationship with the BOG and we hope to continue fostering our connection.
	5	Emphasize Public Service. We recognize there is a gap for low-income families needing family law assistance. There are volunteer legal clinics throughout the state that provide services to those underserved communities. Those clinics’ survival is rooted in the active participation of local lawyers, which we seek to encourage. We have been partnering with local volunteer legal services providers in our Skills Training, which helps build state-wide relationships.

Please report how this section is addressing diversity:

(Are you using any of the tools provided by WSBA and if so, how? Have you sought out training or consultation from the Diversity Specialist? How have you elicited input from a variety of perspectives in your decision-making? What have you done to promote a culture of inclusion within the board or committee? What has your section done to promote equitable conditions for members from historically underrepresented backgrounds to enter, stay, thrive, and eventually lead the profession?)

As Chair, I have asked FLEC members to review the WSBA tools regarding diversity in preparation for the January 2020 meeting.

We are hoping to invite the WSBA Diversity Specialist to attend a FLEC meeting, or at least to consult with that person regarding diversity training for FLEC members.

In addition, we are working to ensure that our future CLEs appropriately reflect and accommodate our diverse membership.

We also are planning to include a session on diversity in a future Family Law Midyear, either 2020 or 2021. This way we can reach out not only to FLEC, but to our membership, and openly promote equitable conditions for bar members from historically underrepresented backgrounds to enter, stay, thrive, and eventually lead the profession – including joining the Family Law Section.

In recruiting applications for FLEC membership, we have emphasized the need for diversity. Our 2019 email soliciting volunteers stated:

All sorts of people become family lawyers, so when we talk about diversity, we mean every kind of diversity. FLEC members have a wide range of opinions and arguments, but that’s not enough. If you haven’t felt that there is a “me equivalent” on the Family Law Executive Committee, maybe that’s a sign that we need you on FLEC! We are not going to ask questions (or make judgments) about your sexual orientation, race, national origin, religion, political affiliation, disabilities, or your membership in other traditionally unrepresented and underrepresented communities. We ask you to take a moment or two and think about what you can bring to the table beyond your keen legal mind.

Finally, we really want to expand geographic diversity. The Executive Committee tends to be dominated by members who live or practice either along the I-5 corridor or in Spokane County. Other counties are often unrepresented and/or underrepresented. We are looking for you if you are in Snohomish, Asotin, Garfield, Columbia, Benton-Franklin, Adams, Lincoln, Grant, Douglas, Okanogan, Pacific, Wahkiakum, Stevens, and Pend Oreille Counties, just to name a few!

Please report how this section is addressing professionalism:

(Does the section’s work promote respect and civility within the legal community? Does it seek to improve relationships between and among lawyers, judges, staff and clients? Does it raise awareness about the causes and/or consequences of unprofessional behavior?)

Each November, FLEC attends a joint meeting with the Family and Juvenile Law Subcommittee of the Superior Court Judges’ Association. This meeting provides an opportunity for Family and Juvenile Court judicial officers and family law practitioners to share ideas and concerns in an

informal setting. Discussions span the gamut of professionalism, forms, court appearances, consistency, dealing with pro se litigants, and all sorts of issues facing family law professionals. We believe that this leads to increased understanding and respect between the judiciary and practitioners.

We regularly include professionalism and ethics issues in our CLE presentations and especially in the Skills Training, to keep our membership current on evolving issues.

Please report how this section is integrating new and young lawyers into its work:

(How have you brought new and young lawyers into your decision making process? Has the section supported new and young lawyers by (for example) helping to find and prepare them for employment, assisting with debt management, building community, and providing leadership opportunities?)

- FLEC recruits members of diverse background, including age or length of time in the profession. We encourage lawyers of all ages to participate in section leadership.
- As discussed above, the Section maintains two listservs, which provides a safe forum for practitioners to seek advice or information from other lawyers – this has been a wonderful way of building community. Our general listserv is for Section members to discuss legal issues and procedures; our second listserv is for Section members to discuss issues involved in the business side of a law practice.
- The section provides an annual Skills Training aimed at new lawyers, or lawyers new to family law.
- FLEC is happy to have a Young Lawyer Liaison every year. We believe it is important to have a wide range of viewpoints, including the view from new, midrange and “seasoned” practitioners.

Please describe your Executive Committee’s relationship with WSBA staff and the Board of Governors.

For example:

- *Quality of WSBA staff support/services provided to Section Executive Committee*
- *Involvement with Board of Governors, including assigned BOG liaison*
- *Ideas you have on ways WSBA can continue to strengthen/support services to sections.*

Pretty much since the inception of the Family Law Section, FLEC has maintained a regular presence at the Board of Governors meetings. Our current Liaison – Nancy Hawkins – has continued a strong Family Law Section presence at the meetings.

We are pleased with the improvements we have seen in our relationship with the BOG; we are definitely moving in a positive direction.

FLEC works extremely well with WSBA staff. They are extremely helpful in identifying CLE locations, obtaining BEOs, and handling administrative issues we otherwise would struggle with. They are friendly and timely in responding to any questions we may come up with (and we do ask a lot of questions).

Note: Annual Reports will be provided to the WSBA Executive Director, Board of Governors and posted on your section’s webpage. We encourage you to share the Annual Report with your BOG liaison and section membership.

Reports are scheduled to be included in the January 2020 BOG Meeting Materials.

Return by December 6, 2019 to sections@wsba.org