



## WSBASections

### WSBA SECTION ANNUAL REPORT – FY17

**Deadline: Friday, October 13, 2017**

**Email Annual Report to: [sections@wsba.org](mailto:sections@wsba.org)**

<b>Name of the Section:</b>	<i>Family Law Section</i>	
<b>Chair:</b>	<i>Ruth Edlund. Report respectfully submitted by Rhea J. Rolfe, Chair for FY 2017-18</i>	
<b>Section Information:</b> <i>As of September 30, 2017</i>  <i>*To be completed by WSBA*</i>	Membership Size:	1,311 (as of 9/1/17)
	Staff Lead:	Julianne Unite
	BOG Liaison:	Bill Pickett
	FY17 revenue: \$	\$51,124.59 (as of 8/31/17)
	FY17 direct expenses: \$ <i>(does not include the Per-Member-Charge)</i>	\$21,122.46 (as of 8/31/17)
<b>Executive Committee Information</b>	FY 16-17 Hours Donated	>1,000
<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>The purpose of the Section shall be to seek the participation of 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:</p> <p>a. By providing the opportunity and forum for the interchange of ideas in all areas of law affecting families and juveniles;</p> <p>b. By initiating and implementing common projects, including but not limited to an annual meeting.</p> <p>c. By 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; and</p>	

	<p>d. By undertaking such other service as may be of benefit to the members, the legal profession, and the public.</p>	
<p><b>2016-2017 Accomplishments and Work in Progress:</b></p>	<p>Thank you for giving the Family Law Section (“Section”) the opportunity to report to the Board of Governors (“BOG”) on its work and accomplishments for the past fiscal year. In addition to its usual CLE and listserv activity identified herein, the Section engaged in the following:</p> <p><b>Legislation.</b> The Section reviewed proposed legislation as per prior years (see attached summary of bills) and provided input on proposed legislation as requested, working with the WSBA.</p> <p><b>Section Policies.</b> The section remained actively engaged in the review of sections policies throughout the year. Immediate Past Chair Ruth Edlund was elected by Section Leaders as one of the members to represent Sections regarding such policies.</p> <p><b>Bylaws.</b> After various changes in the WSBA bylaws, FLEC worked tirelessly in revising the Section bylaws, explaining to the members what changes were expected, and revising those bylaws several times to meet the WSBA requirements. Initially the membership adopted bylaws that were rejected by the WSBA, and FLEC revised the bylaws and they were passed by the membership.</p> <p><b>Plain Language Forms.</b> There has been on-going follow-up and feedback by the Section on the Plain Language Forms, which formed the principal theme of the December 2016 annual section CLE.</p> <p><b>Liaisons.</b> Following our practice of many years, the Section’s BOG liaison, and occasionally other members, regularly attended BOG meetings, providing input and feedback as allowed or solicited.</p> <p><b>Workgroups.</b> In response to recent legislation, one of our members is serving on a Domestic Violence workgroup with other members of the community, legislators, bar staff, and judiciary.</p>	
<p><b>Please quantify your section’s current member benefits:</b></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3000 Scholarships, donations, grants</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quantity</b></p>	<p><b>Member Benefit</b></p>
	<p>\$2,000</p>	<p>Scholarships, donations, grants awarded to Scholarships, donations, grants awarded to the Thurston County Volunteer Legal Services, Olympia</p>
		<p>Law school outreach events/benefits hosted</p>
	<p>69+</p>	<p>Legislative bills reviewed/drafted</p>

<i>awarded;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 mini-CLEs produced</li> </ul>	1	Newsletters produced (in draft)
		Mini-CLEs produced
	2	Co-sponsored half/day to multi-day CLEs with WSBA
	1	Receptions/forums hosted
	0	Awards given Due to issues of illness and board turnover, no awards were given this year.
	2	New Lawyer Outreach events/benefits FLEC members participated in Open Sections Nights to provide information about Section benefits
	2	Other (please describe): Two active member-only listservs: one for legal discussions regarding substance and procedure, including some mentoring, and another dealing with practice and office management issues.  The long-term Webmaster for these listservs is resigning, and a new one is being selected.
<b>2017-2018 Goals &amp; Priorities (Top 5)</b>	<b>1</b>	Obtain authorization from WSBA CLE for long-standing Family Law Skills Training Institute, and conduct Skills Training Institute in FY 2018.
	<b>2</b>	Review legislation as requested/referred, and improve the communication between the Section and legislators with the ultimate goal of improving legislation benefitting families.
	<b>3</b>	Maintain strong lines of communication between the Section and BOG, and the WSBA, for the improvement of quality and availability of family law advice and services, as well as for making advance arrangements for the mid-year and other CLEs.
	<b>4</b>	Increase Section outreach to law students/law clerks/Rule 9 interns and broaden the scope of WSBA dialogue re: culture of inclusion.
	<b>5</b>	Improve visibility and availability of quality legal assistance by encouraging members to donate time to legal clinics and provide mentoring, scholarships, and donations for agencies providing these services.
<p><b>Please report how this section is addressing diversity:</b>  (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?)</p>		

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?)

FLEC consistently and actively attempts to recruit members and Board members from geographically and economically diverse areas of the State to ensure that concerns of smaller-populated counties and their clientele are addressed, since frequently they are overshadowed by the concerns of urban areas.

The Section emphasizes access to justice not only for pro ses, but also for disabled and ethnic populations. Unfortunately, due to miscommunication, appropriate accommodations were not made for a long-term Section member at the mid-year, resulting in his being unable to attend. This incident was a loss not only for him, but also for his colleagues, as it is important for the goal of diversity to achieve integration and inclusion. In fact, one of the Midyear speakers addressed the challenges of representing hearing-impaired clients.

As the Bar ages, in general, it will be crucial to provide additional accommodation to people whose sight, hearing, and mobility are diminishing.

The Diversity and Inclusion tools available in the Section Leaders Toolbox are very useful, and document an increase in membership for women and people of color, while showing a slight decrease in members who are disabled. The Section exceeds the WSBA percentage of diversity in all categories.

**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?)

We participate annually in a joint meeting with the Family Law and Juvenile Law Subcommittee of the Superior Court Judges' Association. This meeting provides an opportunity for Family Law and Juvenile Judges and Family Law Practitioners to share ideas and concerns in an informal setting. Discussions span the gamut of professionalism, forms, court appearances, forms, consistency, dealing with pro ses and every manner of issue facing family law professionals. In addition, there is increased understanding between the judiciary and practitioners.

We regularly include ethics issues in our CLE presentations and skills training, to keep up with evolving issues and to share them with the membership and others.

**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?)

We have had a very active liaison to the Young Lawyers as part of the Board. Now that this person has been elected to FLEC, and is the incoming Chair for 2018-19, we will actively seek to recruit another young lawyer to be our liaison. We regularly maintain a presence at Open Section nights, speaking with young lawyers who are still deciding their areas of practice. Some of our members have been Mentors and Moot Court judges for the University of Washington and other law schools, to help encourage young lawyers.

**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.*

We have had a very active and long-term liaison to the Board of Governors, who attended nearly every BOG meeting for many years. She, along with four other FLEC members resigned in protest over, among other things, the WSBA's inclusion of non-lawyers to receive full WSBA membership status without paying similar dues or having similar responsibilities. Other FLEC members have attended and contributed to BOG meetings through the year.

This past year has been challenging due to serious personal, illness, and injury issues among FLEC members. Relationships have also been hampered by turnover among the WSBA staff. Due to lack of communication, we were unable to present our annual Skills Training Institution, which had become a tradition. It is our hope to put it on again this coming fiscal year.

The WSBA staff were very supportive and helpful during the Section's Annual Mid-Year in Walla Walla in June, (particularly Kevin Plachy) in providing support in getting the proposed and revised bylaws distributed to members as the Board continued to edit and review them.

Now that several issues have been settled, and new board members elected, we intend to move forward with the WSBA and BOG in the best interest of the Family Law Section membership, to serve our members and explore and address ways to meet the needs of clients and all people in need of support in the area of Family Law, whether through analyzing legislation, providing seminars, and to improve the quality of family law services available.

We appreciate that the BOG's assigned liaison, Bill Pickett, attended a FLEC meeting, and listened to our concerns. We hope that relationship will continue to strengthen in the coming year.

**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 November 2017 BOG Meeting Materials.

**Return by October 13, 2017 to [sections@wsba.org](mailto:sections@wsba.org)**