

WASHINGTON STATE B A R A S S O C I A T I O N

SECTION ANNUAL REPORT – 2019

Deadline: Friday, December 6, 2019

Email Annual Report to: sections@wsba.org

Name of the Section:	Low Bono Section	
Chair:	Jeff Hamilton	
Section Information: <i>*To be completed by WSBA*</i>	Membership Size: <i>(As of December 15, 2019)</i>	82
	Staff Lead:	Patrick Mead
	BOG Liaison:	Bryn Peterson
	FY19 revenue (\$): <i>As of September 30, 2019</i>	\$2,156.85
	FY19 direct expenses (\$): <i>(As of September 30, 2019; does not include the Per-Member-Charge)</i>	\$290.42
Purpose:	<p>The underlying purpose of “low bono” is to increase the availability of legal representation and legal services to clients of moderate means.</p> <p>Clients of moderate means are individuals who have a need or a want for 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. These individuals comprise the majority of those seeking resolution of, or planning for, legal issues and legal matters.</p> <p>The Low Bono Section is a community of lawyers, other legal professionals, and law students committed to identifying solutions, creating systems, and developing projects to increase the overall availability and affordability of legal representation and legal services.</p>	

2019 Accomplishments and Work in Progress:

1. Supported Seattle University School of Law’s Access to Justice Institute on the CLE: “Launching a Successful Practice.” February 27, 2019 by presenting on the panel “Reality Check: The Biggest Challenges Practitioners Face When Setting Up Their Own Practices.” And by sponsoring and hosting the social event immediately following the CLE.
2. Sponsored Seattle University School of Law Low Bono Incubator Awardees for free membership in the Low Bono Section for one year.
3. Planned and held the second Low Bono Section Leadership Retreat in October 2019. The retreat was focused on strategic planning and was facilitated by executive committee members over one Saturday.
4. Implemented the new voting system as approved by the WSBA By-Laws before the required deadline.
5. Executive Committee Members presented at the Solo and Small Firm Conference on the topic of “Illuminating Low Bono Practice.”
6. Executive Committee Members presented at Seattle University School of Law in collaboration with the Access to Justice Institute on the topic of letters of engagement/retainers.
7. Sent representatives to the Open Section Nights in January 2019.
8. Hosted a Young Lawyers Liaison on our executive committee.
9. Continued improvement of existing member benefits:
 - Online directory of low bono attorneys in WA
 - Low-cost and no-cost mini CLEs
 - Active Listserv
 - Multiple socials
 - Active committees
10. Continued to cultivate relationships with Seattle University School of Law, the University of Washington School of Law, Gonzaga University School of Law, the Moderate Means Program, and the Access to Justice Institute.
11. Submitted a comment on ESHB 1788 regarding the effect of the bill on important WSBA programs such as the Moderate Means Program.
12. Sponsored a proposal by Patrick Palace to amend RCW Title 41 regarding attorneys fees in worker’s compensation cases that would allow low bono assistance in that area of law.

	Quantity	Member Benefit
	\$	Scholarships, donations, grants awarded

<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 		Law school outreach events/benefits hosted
		Legislative bills reviewed/drafted
		Newsletters produced
		Mini-CLEs produced
		Co-sponsored half/day to multi-day CLEs with WSBA
		Receptions/forums hosted
		Awards given
		New Lawyer Outreach events/benefits
		<p>Other (please describe):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered free and low cost mini-CLEs to members through a co-sponsored monthly "Low Bono CLE Connections Series" with the Access to Justice Institute's Low Bono and Solo Initiative, WSBA Moderate Means Program, and WSBA LOMAP. • Sent representatives to Open Sections Night in January • Sponsored social events for members and guests
<p>2020 Goals & Priorities (Top 5)</p>	1	Offer 4 webcast or webinar CLE's; one for each quarter and at least two in partnership with another section
	2	Offer 4 socials with an aim to increase membership
	3	Create a resource portal for our members
	4	Increase section membership by 10%
	5	Create centralized resources for executive committee leadership
<p>Please report how this section is addressing diversity:</p> <p>(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?)</p> <p>The Executive Committee has discussed the importance of diversity and inclusion within the Low Bono Section, but has not adopted an official strategy for incorporating the main tenets of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan into our section's activities. Nonetheless, our Executive Committee has taken several steps to encourage participation by a more diverse group of people. All of the meetings of our Executive Committee have encouraged attendance by providing a telephone call-in number for those who live too distant to attend the meetings in person. We hold our Executive Committee</p>		

meetings at a later hour of the day, typically on the third Tuesday of the month, to encourage more people to participate, including members with small children who may have trouble meeting during workday hours. In FY2018, we began rotating the location of the meetings among three different Seattle locations---Pioneer Square, Fremont/Queen Anne, and Northgate---in order to allow more Section Members to attend in person. All three locations are along multiple bus lines, are handicap accessible buildings, and the latter two locations have free parking. We also began regularly hosting socials after these meetings and invite all Section Members to the meetings and to the post-meeting socials.

We are fortunate to be a section whose organizing principles appeal to a diverse group of attorneys, even without having focused our leadership activities on improving diversity and inclusion. Our mission is promotion of access to justice, which appeals to a diverse population of lawyers. This has resulted in a relatively diverse membership. Notably, the executive committee and Section membership is majority female. Since its inception in 2014, Section membership has historically been more diverse than the WSBA membership when measured purely by conventional demographics. We focus heavily on alternatives to traditional law firm practice and work/life balance, something that appeals specifically to women in the profession.

Our section did not utilize the services of the WSBA Diversity Specialist this year. The WSBA Diversity Specialist should feel free to contact any member of our Executive Committee regarding diversity and inclusion unless and until such time as the Executive Committee designates a point person for such contact.

In the past year, our Executive Committee's primary focus was keeping the members it has (as distinct from merely maintaining our membership numbers by having growth that exceeds attrition). This has meant focusing on providing high quality programs and other valuable benefits for all of our members, as well as promoting opportunities for our members to communicate with each other and build meaningful professional relationships. Our Executive Committee's secondary focus in the last year was encouraging new members to join the section. This has meant actively recruiting new members from among attorneys and other professionals in the community, usually through in-person conversations in a variety of contexts. As a small section, our focus must continue to be growing our numbers and maintaining our existing members. We believe that continuing our efforts to keep our existing members while we continue to grow will result in the Low Bono Section continuing to be one of the most diverse and inclusive sections of the WSBA. Nevertheless, our Executive Committee will include developing a strategy for incorporating the tenets of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan into our section activities during the next fiscal year.

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?)

By its very nature, low bono practice seeks to foster a respectful and civil practice environment. Clients typically have limited resources. Therefore, low bono practitioners must make the most of those resources to obtain the best possible outcome for a client. An effective method to achieve this end is to practice with respect and civility throughout the life of a matter in order to keep the focus of all involved on the legal and client-centered issues at hand.

In addition, low bono practitioners approach matters with their clients from the perspective of what outcomes will be both achievable and satisfactory to the client within the client's means. This approach typically improves the overall experience the client has with the legal system when compared to a more traditional approach of advancing a client's matter to a point where there is no resolution or satisfactory outcome, and then withdrawing when the client can no longer pay.

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 reach out specifically to new and young lawyers, with most of our outreach focusing on new/young lawyers and those transitioning from big firms to solo/small firms. Our bylaws allow us to have three law students hold non-lawyer board positions. A future goal is to reach out to lawyers reaching retirement, especially those seeking to semi-retire, and to lawyers practicing in big firms, which we imagine will lead to creating connections for new and young lawyers to find mentorship and professional opportunities.

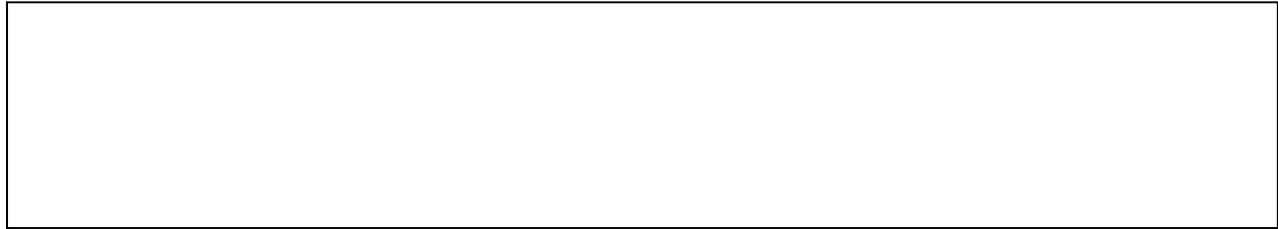
A significant number of our Executive Committee Members are within their first five years of practice. For FY2020, we welcome a Young Lawyers Division liaison to participate in the Section Executive Committee meetings. Further involvement with the Seattle University School of Law Low Bono Incubator Program is planned.

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 are blessed with significant support and involvement in FY2019 from our WSBA Section Liaisons (Julianne Unite and Pat Mead). The same can be said for other WSBA staff that the Section has interacted with. All are approachable, thorough, and helpful with regard to Section business.



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