

WSBA NEW LAWYER ADMITTEE PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS

The WSBA administers the admission, licensing and renewal process for Washington licensed legal professionals on behalf of and under rules adopted by the Washington Supreme Court. Under rule 5(e) of the Washington Supreme Court's Admission and Practice Rules (APR), applicants who took and passed the lawyer bar examination must complete the admissions process within 40 months from the date of the bar exam in which the score was earned. Applicants who apply through Admission by Motion or UBE score transfer must complete the admissions process within one year from the date of filing the application.

You are not licensed or permitted to practice law until all the steps below are complete AND the Washington Supreme Court has entered an order admitting you to the practice of law. After completion of all the steps and WSBA's receipt of the oath of attorney, it generally takes two to three weeks for WSBA to review the records, send a recommendation for admission to the court for entry of an order, receive the order back, and issue a Bar card. Complete everything below online except the oath of attorney, which must be delivered to the WSBA.

I. Verify and Update Contact Information

Pursuant to APR 13 and WSBA Bylaws Art. III Sec. C., you must advise the WSBA of a current mailing address, telephone number, email address, and home address. The mailing address will be your public address of record. The home address must be a physical street address and is used to determine your congressional district for voting in the elections for the WSBA Board of Governors. WSBA will not make your home address public unless it is the same as your public mailing address or the only address on file with the WSBA. You may choose not to have your email address published in the WSBA's online Legal Directory.

II. Resident Agent Certification

Pursuant to APR 13(f), "Resident Agent", if your public mailing address is not in the state of Washington or is not a physical street address, you must file with the Bar the name and physical street address of an agent within this state for purpose of receiving service of process or of any other document required or permitted by statute or court rule to be served or delivered to a resident lawyer.

Your agent for service is not required to be a Washington licensed legal professional; you may designate a friend or family member, or your firm's branch office, as long as the agent is within the state of Washington. You may designate a service organization as your resident agent if you choose to, but neither the Secretary of State nor the WSBA may be designated as an agent for service. Note: You must provide your agent's physical street address, not a post office box.

III. Swearing In Selection & Oath of Attorney

The Oath of Attorney must be taken before an elected or appointed judge, excluding judges pro tempore, sitting in open court, in the State of Washington. You may be able to take the Oath of Attorney out of state if it is impossible or impractical for you to take it in Washington. You must indicate if you will take the Oath of Attorney in state or out of state, and if out of state, you must provide information about why it would be impossible or impractical for you to take it in Washington.

There are two options for taking the Oath of Attorney IN STATE:



1) Formal Arranged Ceremony: If you would like to attend a formal ceremony, or if you seek information regarding a formal ceremony, see the [Swearing In Ceremonies](#) link on our website for contact information for specific counties. If your local county bar association is not listed but you want to participate in a formal ceremony, you may want to consider contacting a neighboring county bar association to see if you can attend their swearing in ceremony. The Oath of Attorney form will be provided for you and must be signed by both you and the judge administering the oath; your signed form will then be sent directly to the WSBA by the organization sponsoring the ceremony. For information regarding details (time, locations, etc.) on formal ceremonies, please contact the specific county that is hosting the event.

2) Independent Ceremony: Individual ceremonies are the responsibility of the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange directly with a judge to administer the oath. The Oath of Attorney must be taken before an elected or appointed judge, sitting in open court, excluding judges pro tempore, in the State of Washington. Contact the clerk of the court for scheduling. Use the online link to print a copy of the oath and take it to the judge. When you complete your swearing in, return the original Oath of Attorney form, signed by you and the judge, to the WSBA.

OUT OF STATE independent ceremony option:

An order from the Washington Supreme Court conferring jurisdiction on an out-of-state judge is required for an out-of-state swearing in ceremony for admission to practice law in Washington. If you choose to do an Out of State ceremony, please provide the required information online and provide any requested information about why it is impossible or impractical for you to take the oath before a judge in Washington. We will forward your request to the Supreme Court, who has the discretion to issue an order conferring jurisdiction on the judge you have chosen. Upon receipt of the order, the WSBA will send you a copy of the order to be used at the swearing in ceremony. Use the online link to print a copy of the oath and take it to the judge. Return the original Oath of Attorney, signed by you and the judge, to the WSBA (keep a copy for your records)

Send the signed original Oath of Attorney form to: WSBA, Attn: Admissions, 1325 4th Ave Ste. 600, Seattle, WA 98101.

Remember that your being sworn in does not immediately qualify you to practice law in Washington. You must complete all other admission requirements, the Washington Supreme Court must order your admission, and you must receive a license number before you are permitted to start practicing law as a lawyer in Washington.

IV. Preadmission Education Program (PREP)

Washington applicants who have passed the lawyer bar exam must complete a *free* four-hour course of approved preadmission education as one of the preadmission requirements. PREP courses are available in a live seminar or online format. Some county bar associations offer the live seminar preceding a formal swearing in ceremony. See the [Swearing In Ceremonies](#) link on our website for contact information for specific counties. If you are unable to attend a live course, WSBA-CLE has the course available in an online format. If you experience technical issues with the online course, please contact the WSBA at 800-945-9722.

Whether you attend a live seminar or take the online course, be sure to certify on your online admission account that you completed the course.

V. Insurance Disclosure

Washington lawyers are not required to have professional liability insurance coverage. However, they are required to report to the Washington State Bar Association, on a yearly basis, whether they have coverage ([APR 26](#)). See Professional Liability Insurance Disclosure [FAQ](#) page for more detailed information.

VI. Trust Account Information

Pursuant to [rule 15.5](#) of the Washington Supreme Court's Rules for Enforcement of Lawyer Conduct (ELC), trust account information must be completed by ALL Active lawyers regardless of whether you have a trust account.

- Mark Yes or No.
- If you answered Yes, fill out the Institution, Branch/City and IOLTA Account number(s).

Visit the [Trust Account Information](#) page for more detailed information about IOLTA accounts and the trust account declaration.

VII. Annual License Fee and Client Protection Fund (CPF) Assessment

You will not be able to pay license fees and assessments until you have completed all other admission requirements and the WSBA receives, and processes, your Oath of Attorney. You will then be able to see the amount due on your online admissions account. You may pay online by credit card or electronic funds transfer (EFT). You may also pay by check by printing the payment form and mailing it with your check to the WSBA.

WSBA license fees are based on a calendar year and must be paid annually. If you pay the license fee and are admitted at the end of one year, you will need to pay the license fee for the next calendar year by the license fee deadline of February 1st. The license fee for the year of admission for general applicants is reduced to either 25% or 50% depending on when you are admitted. Attorney applicants have a reduced license fee if you were admitted elsewhere less than two years ago. You can view the [fee schedule](#) on our website.

The last opportunity for admission in any year is December 19th. All materials and the new admittee license fee must be paid by December 19th or the first business day *before* December 19th. After December 19th, the fee displaying online will be the license fee for the next calendar year. If you want to wait to be admitted until the next calendar year, please wait to pay your new admittee license fee until December 20th. **Note:** This option to defer your license fee and admission to the next calendar year is not available if it means that you are unable to complete your application before it expires. See APR 5(e).

Optional Keller Deduction: Licensed legal professionals may elect to reduce their license fee payment by the pro rata amount used for political activities not related to regulating the practice of law or improving the quality of legal services. The amount to deduct will show up online if you choose this option.

Every Washington lawyer on active status is required by order of the Washington Supreme Court to pay an annual assessment of \$30 to finance the Client Protection Fund (CPF). The CPF was established by court rule (APR 15) as a trust for the purposes of relieving or mitigating a pecuniary loss sustained by any person by reason of the dishonesty of, or failure to account for money or property entrusted to, any licensed legal professional of the WSBA in connection with the licensed legal professional's practice of law.

Note: To request a license status other than active, you must first be admitted to practice law as an active member and then you can request a status change. Please view the [status change page](#) on our website for more information.

VIII. Optional Demographics Form

It is helpful to the WSBA for you to complete the demographics form. With this information we can better understand the demographics of our licensed legal professionals. Providing demographic information is optional. There are two sections: public demographics and confidential demographics.

Public demographics include Office Type and Size, Practice Areas and Languages Other Than English. The public demographics information displays on the online legal directory. It is useful information for people who are searching for a lawyer.

Confidential demographics include individual gender, race/ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation information. This information is kept strictly confidential and is used only in the aggregate for demographic analysis. Aggregate data are available on the [WSBA website](#).

IX. Admission by the Court

After the WSBA Admissions Team has verified completion of all items and received payment and the oath of attorney, we will send a recommendation for admission to the Washington Supreme Court. The Supreme Court will then issue an order admitting you to the practice of law as a lawyer in Washington. **The date the order is signed is the date of your admission to practice law in Washington.** It generally takes about two to three weeks to be admitted. You will receive an email notification when the WSBA receives the Court's order.

Admission is usually posted on the WSBA's online legal directory the first business day after the date of admission. You can expect to receive your WSBA Bar card and the certificate signed by the Washington Supreme Court about one week from the WSBA's receipt of the signed order from the Court.

Certificate: After admission, you may purchase a wall certificate suitable for framing, by writing to the Washington Supreme Court, Temple of Justice, P.O. Box 40929, Olympia, WA 98504-0929. The cost is \$25.00 (check payable to the Washington Supreme Court). Please enclose a copy of your WSBA Bar card with your request.

Copies of Applications for Admission: If you require a copy of your application after being admitted, you will need to contact the Washington Supreme Court clerk's office as the files are maintained with the Court after admission. The contact information is: Washington Supreme Court, Temple of Justice, P.O. Box 40929, Olympia, WA 98504-0929; (360) 357-2077; or supreme@courts.wa.gov.

X. Contact Us

Congratulations on your achievement. Please contact anyone on the WSBA Admissions Team for help with the admission process. You can reach us at WSBA, Attention Admissions, 1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600, Seattle, WA 98101-2539; (206) 727-8209; or admissions@wsba.org.