



## PETITION FOR NEW WSBA SECTION

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**Proposed Name of New Section:** Low Bono

**Area of Practice:** Any area so long as it involves providing reduced fee services

**Bar Number:** 18632

### 1 – Statement of Purpose and Need

**Brief description of why the section is needed and its goals; include benefit of section to targeted population in the legal community**

In the past several years, there has been an increased awareness that in Washington State people with moderate means have a problem accessing justice. (Moderate means is defined as people who have a household income between 200-400% of the federal poverty level.) At the same time, reduced funding has created a shortage of jobs for attorneys, especially in the nonprofit sector. This means that, at the same time there are record numbers of young attorneys who are un- or underemployed, moderate means litigants are unrepresented in matters affecting their basic needs and rights: family law, housing, consumer law, criminal law, estate planning and immigration, among others.

The Bar and the state's law schools have recognized the access to justice challenges and begun to address them with the Moderate Means Program and other programs. Seattle University's Access to Justice Institute is planning a "low bono incubator" program as one way to address the issues. The program, recently approved by the faculty, matches new lawyers with clients who need low fee services. Both of these programs are valuable partners and supporters of the Low Bono Lawyers Section. However, there is not currently an organized group open to all low bono professionals in Washington State.

The target population of the Low Bono Section is attorneys dedicated to providing low bono legal services to clients of moderate means, and experienced lawyers who are interested in mentoring. This section is especially targeting those new/younger lawyers. The idea is that with adequate support, resources and mentorship, these lawyers will have the willingness and ability to provide low bono services as part of their practice, or as solo practitioners and/or small law firms that are dedicated to providing low bono legal services. Low bono work is another way for lawyers to contribute to our community and gain a sense of satisfaction.

The primary aim of the Section is to make justice accessible and affordable to people of moderate means. To meet this goal, the Section has identified five major areas of focus:

1. Developing and providing resources for member attorneys;
2. Providing a forum and opportunity for education, training, and the exchange of ideas, documents, practice

- tips, and other resources;
3. Developing “best practices” and “alternative practices” for providing competent, current, efficient, and economical legal services;
  4. Promoting provision of low bono legal services by all lawyers by educating the Bar on its effectiveness as a business model, its impacts on social justice, and its potential for enhancing professional satisfaction; and
  5. Facilitating formal and informal mentoring relationships among members.

The Section will also welcome law students and non-attorneys as non-voting members of the Section. Connections with other professionals will be useful in assisting clients in finding global resolutions to the legal problems they face. Law students with an interest in low bono practice are especially welcome. There will be three non-voting law student liaison seats on the Executive Committee, one for a representative from each Washington law school, as well as one non-lawyer professional.

## 2 – Section Bylaws

### Define scope of jurisdiction; vetted by a minimum of three proposed members of the section

(From the proposed bylaws)

The purpose of this Section shall be to benefit the members of the Washington State Bar Association and the general public by:

- 2.1 Developing and providing resources for attorneys, regardless of field or area of practice, who are dedicated and committed to providing “low bono legal services,” defined as legal and law-related services provided with the intent to increase accessibility of legal services for people of moderate financial means.
- 2.2 Providing a forum and opportunity for education, training, and sharing of forms, practice tips, client counseling techniques, alternative forms of conflict resolution, and other resources to and among members of the Section.
- 2.3 Developing “best practices” and “alternative practices” for providing competent, current, efficient and economical professional services while being mindful of the clients’ moderate means.
- 2.4 Promoting the provision of low bono legal services as an effective business model for attorneys and other professionals, particularly in solo and small firm environments.
- 2.5 Promoting the provision of low bono legal services as an effective way to increase access to justice in Washington state.
- 2.6 Promoting a mentorship program for members of the section.
- 2.7 Undertaking with flexibility such other service not inconsistent with the bylaws of this Section, the bylaws of the Washington State Bar Association and the State Bar Act as may be of benefit to the members of this Section, the legal profession, and the public.

## 3 – Section Committees

### Names, purpose and scope of responsibility

**Executive Committee**, to run the section

**Operations Committee**, subcommittee of the Executive Committee, composed of the officers, to manage the daily business needs.

**Education Committee**, to manage CLE and educational opportunities for the section.

**Media Committee**, to manage the section web site, email listserve, and internet presence.

**Communications Committee**, to manage any newsletter and communications to the section.

**Members Committee**, to recruit, support and manage membership.

**Mentorship Committee**, to recruit, support and manage mentors.

**Access to Justice Committee**, to promote the increased access to justice of the public through low bono efforts

and to act as liaison with other Access to Justice organizations.

**Best and Alternative Practices Committee**, to facilitate discussion and information about how to effectively and ethically provide low bono services.

**Legislative Committee**, to address the legislative and court-rule needs for low bono practitioners.

## 4 – Section Budget Narrative

The budget narrative is to be completed in addition to the budget Excel sheet (an example is attached; please complete the attached blank excel form); vetted by a minimum of three proposed members of the section.

### Washington State Bar Association Narrative to Budget Request SECTION: Low Bono

<b>Per Member charge</b>	<b>\$17.75</b>
(Budget category)	(Requested budget)

The WSBA charges a fee for their help in managing the section, such as collecting dues, providing meeting space, CLE assistance, etc. The charge is \$17.75 per person, and we assume we will have 100 members in the first year.

<b>Web site expenses</b>	<b>\$500</b>
(Budget category)	(Requested budget)

We will offer an “off-site” web site in addition to web page information on the WSBA site. Our web site will offer member profile pages to facilitate members finding each other for referrals and for the public to find low bono practitioners. The site will also offer a calendar of low bono events, a forum (discussion) page, a blog, section documents, forms, and other information.

<b>Executive Committee expenses</b>	<b>\$725</b>
(Budget category)	(Requested budget)

This is for reimbursement of executive committee travel expenses.

