



**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: PROVISIONAL LICENSURE PROGRAM FOR
FIRST-TIME TAKERS OF THE FEBRUARY 2025 CALIFORNIA BAR EXAM**

Effective September 1, 2025, first-time takers of the February 2025 California Bar Exam who were unsuccessful on or withdrew from the exam are eligible for the Provisional Licensure Program (PLP) pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 9.49. Please see the Court's June 11, 2025, [news release](#).

These FAQs are a living document. They are subject to revision and will be supplemented and updated as needed. They are not a comprehensive description of all program responsibilities or requirements.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. How do I know if I am eligible for the PLP as a first-time taker of the February 2025 California Bar Exam (CBX)?

Applicants who are eligible for the PLP as first-time takers were notified by the Office of Admissions in June 2025 via email.

You may also verify your eligibility via the status screen in the Applicant Portal. There are multiple PLP programs listed in your applicant portal. Make sure you are checking your eligibility for the PLP for first-time takers of the February bar exam, and not the expansion program also listed on the portal.

2. I'm planning to apply for the PLP once the application opens. What should I do in preparation?

In preparation for the PLP application opening on September 1, 2025, you are encouraged to:

- Submit an Application for Determination of Moral Character as soon as possible in the Applicant Portal if you do not have a valid positive moral character determination or a pending moral character application.
- Sign up for the [MPRE](#) or ensure you have a passing score on file with the State Bar Office of Admissions. Verify your MPRE status via the status screen in the Applicant Portal.
- Secure a California attorney who is willing to be your Supervising Lawyer and meets the requirements of [rule 9.49](#).

By December 31, 2025, you must have a passing MPRE score on file and either a valid

positive moral character determination, or an adverse moral character determination that is pending on administrative review by the Committee of Bar Examiners or on appeal in the State Bar Court. We recommend that you fulfill these requirements as soon as possible.

3. What is the fee to apply for the PLP?

At the joint meeting on August 14, 2025, the Board of Trustees and the Committee of Bar Examiners set the new fees for the PLP. Please find them below.

Applicant Status	Application Fee
Volunteering	\$0
Employed by an IOLTA-funded organization that is paying the application fee	\$600
All other applicants for the PLP	\$1,200

4. How do I know if I will be working for an IOLTA-funded organization?

“IOLTA” stands for Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts. IOLTA is a method of raising money, primarily for providing legal services to those unable to afford them.

The State Bar’s Legal Services Trust Fund Program collects the interest generated by IOLTA accounts and distributes the funds to more than 100 nonprofit legal aid organizations that provide civil legal aid to indigent Californians.

You can look up the [IOLTA-funded organizations](#), and you can learn more about IOLTA accounts on the State Bar’s [website](#).

5. What is meant by effective date of applicant's employment on the [Supervising Lawyer Declaration](#) and PLP application?

This is the date you expect to begin employment as a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer (PLL), if your application is approved. A start date on or prior to the date you submit your PLP application will not be accepted. Please ensure the effective date on the Supervising Lawyer Declaration matches the date provided on your PLP application submitted through your Applicant Portal. Note: You are not authorized to work as a PLL until your PLP application is approved.

6. How long do I have to complete the New Attorney Training Program? Is there a fee for it?

First-time takers of the February 2025 CBX in the PLP must complete the New Attorney Training Program five months from the approval of their PLP application or by May 31, 2026, whichever is sooner.

The New Attorney Training Program costs \$55. After logging into the [LMS portal](#), you will

need to [purchase](#) the New Attorney Training Bundle.

7. What if I do not have a passing MPRE score?

Pursuant to the California Rules of Court, rule 9.49(d)(1)(C), you must complete the legal ethics courses of the New Attorney Training Program within 30 days of the date of approval of your PLP application if you did not have a passing MPRE score on file when you submit your PLP application.

If you take the MPRE in August 2025, you may wish to apply for the PLP once your passing MPRE score has been uploaded to your Applicant Portal. We anticipate that scores from the August 2025 administration of the MPRE will be uploaded by the end of September. Please note that you must have designated California to receive your MPRE score and have your accurate NCBE number and Social Security Number in the Applicant Portal for the State Bar of California to upload your MPRE score.

8. When will the PLP sunset for first-time takers of the February 2025 CBX?

The PLP will sunset for first-time takers of the February 2025 CBX on December 31, 2027.

9. How do I report a concern, challenge, or feedback about my experience in the PLP to the State Bar?

If you are a PLL or a Supervising Lawyer, please send an email to provisionallicensure@calbar.ca.gov to share any concerns, challenges, or feedback about your experience in the PLP. While this is not a formal complaint process, we value your input and feedback.

Staff who review the submissions may:

- Reach out to your supervisor, with your permission, to discuss with them the concerns you are having;
- Connect you with the Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP) to get career counseling;
- Connect you with professional associations or your law school to assist in locating a new Supervising Lawyer;
- Pursuant to [rule 8.4.1](#), if you believe your Supervising Lawyer has engaged in discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, we will direct you to the [complaint](#) process and provide assistance, as needed; or
- Collect data to understand systemic issues, etc.

10. If I participate in the PLP as a first-time taker of the February 2025 CBX, do I have to pass the CBX to be admitted to practice law?

Yes. Applicants who are eligible for the PLP as first-time takers, similar to the PLLs who qualified to participate as 2020 graduates, must pass the bar exam and meet all other requirements for admission to practice law. Participation in the PLP for these cohorts is not a pathway to licensure; however, it does provide valuable real-world experience practicing law under the supervision of an experienced California attorney. In response to a prior survey, the vast majority (89%) of the PLLs agreed or strongly agreed that the program was valuable in preparing them for the practice of law.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

11. What professional services can a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer (PLL) provide?

Under rule 9.49, a PLL is allowed to provide a broad array of legal services for clients, including appearing before a court; drafting legal documents, such as contracts, transactional documents, and pleadings; engaging in negotiations and settlement discussions; and providing other legal advice, provided that the work is performed under the supervision of their Supervising Lawyer. The limits on what a PLL can do, or what needs to be done under direct versus general supervision, are largely left to the Supervising Lawyer to determine based on the readiness of the PLL.

12. What are some of the other requirements imposed by the rules?

A PLL must:

- Expressly refer to themselves orally and in writing as a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer and/or participant in the State Bar’s Provisional Licensure Program and not describe themselves as a fully licensed lawyer or imply in any way orally or in writing that they are a fully licensed lawyer.
- Follow the same professional conduct rules as all fully licensed lawyers.
- Agree to be subject to the disciplinary authority of the Supreme Court of California and the State Bar with respect to the laws and rules governing the conduct of lawyers.
- Attest that they will not practice California law other than under the supervision of an approved Supervising Lawyer during the time they are provisionally licensed.
- Be employed by or volunteering at the firm (as defined in rule 9.49) where the Supervising Lawyer works, which must have an office located in California.
- Immediately report the termination of supervision by their Supervising Lawyer to the State Bar.

SUPERVISION

13. What are the requirements for a Supervising Lawyer?

- To qualify to supervise a PLL, the supervisor must have practiced law for at least four years and have actively practiced law in California or taught law at a California Law School for at least two years immediately preceding the period of supervision.
- Supervising lawyers may also be judges of a court of record in the California judicial branch.
- Registered In-House Counsel and Registered Military Spouse Attorneys and others “specially admitted” are not California licensed attorneys and cannot act as supervisors for a PLL.
- Supervising lawyers must be active licensees in good standing, and must not be ineligible to practice, suspended, under a stayed suspension order, or have resigned or been disbarred in any jurisdiction.
- Supervising lawyers must agree to assume professional responsibility for any work of the PLL and must be prepared to assume personal representation of the PLL’s clients.

14. May a PLL have multiple supervising lawyers to get a broader range of experience? Once I get approved for PLP, how can I add more Supervising Lawyers?

Yes, the rules allow for multiple supervisors. The supervisors may work within the same law firm or at a different law firm if you will be employed or volunteer at more than one organization.

To add a Supervising Lawyer, replace your main PLP employer, or update your employer’s address or contact information, you must submit the PLP Employment Update Notice in the Applicant Portal. There is no fee associated with this change. You must submit a [declaration](#) from each Supervising Lawyer with your PLP Employment Update Notice. You may not work as a PLL at any organization or under a new supervisor until the State Bar has approved your PLP application.

15. Rule 9.49(a)(3)(C) says that by May 31, 2026, I must have a Supervising Lawyer who is committed to supervising me through the end of 2027, or until I pass the bar exam. Does this mean I cannot change my supervisor after May 31, 2026?

No. You must have a Supervising Lawyer who is committed to supervising you by May 31, 2026. However, you are still permitted to change supervisors, if the need arises, and in compliance with rules 9.49(e)(7)-(8), by submitting a PLP Employment Update application in the [Applicant Portal](#) with a [declaration](#) from each new Supervising Lawyer. You may not work at any organization unless you have submitted a declaration from a Supervising Lawyer with that organization, and the State Bar has approved your PLP Employment Update.

16. I understand that I must immediately report the termination of supervision by my Supervising Lawyer to the State Bar. How do I report this?

Once you are no longer supervised by your Supervising Lawyer, you must immediately:

- Log in to the [Applicant Portal](#).
- Click on your most recent PLP case number.
- Report the termination by posting the information, including the date and reason for termination, to your most recent PLP case.
- Alternatively, you can also submit a general request through the Applicant Portal by clicking on the Help Center.

TERMINATION

17. What happens if a Provisionally Licensed Lawyer is found culpable of misconduct?

If the State Bar Court determines that a PLL is culpable of conduct that would result in discipline if they were fully licensed by the State Bar, or if the PLL is sanctioned for misconduct by any court or professional licensing authority, the provisional license terminates, and the matter is referred to moral character.

18. Does provisional licensure automatically terminate upon issuance of an adverse moral character determination?

No. The license is suspended to give the PLL the opportunity to contest the determination. If no request for review or appeal is timely filed, the provisional license is terminated. If a request for review or appeal is timely filed, the provisional license will remain suspended until the final outcome, unless the provisional license is terminated as a result of other factors (such as failing to timely meet other program requirements).

UPDATES

8/25/2025

- Added questions 4 and 9.
- Updated question 8 (renumbered).

8/15/2025

- Added questions 3, 5, and 7.
- Updated questions 1, 2, 4 (renumbered), and 11 (renumbered).

9/12/2025

- Added question 5 and renumbered all subsequent questions.