

State Bar Appointments Overview and Tips for Applicants

Benefits of volunteering for a State Bar sub-entity

- Helps improve the legal profession
- Increases diversity within the State Bar volunteer structure
- Increases visibility for your practice/firm/company/office/organization/local bar association
- Creates networking and professional development opportunities

Variety of sections, committees, and commissions

(Appointments handout summarizes all of the committees)

- 10 standing committees
- 16 section executive committees (applicant must be a member of the section to apply)
- 19 special committees
- 2 external organizations

Application timeline

(information also included on front page, right column of Appointments handout)

- **February 1, 2011 – DEADLINE** for applications to Standing, Section Executive and Special Committees as well as ABA House of Delegates and Judicial Council
- **February - April** – Individual sub-entities review appointment applications and make recommendations to Board Volunteer Involvement Committee (VIC)
- **May**– VIC considers appointment recommendations
- **MAY 2 – DEADLINE** for applications to the Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation (a.k.a. JNE Commission)
- **July**– VIC considers remaining recommendations; Board of Governors makes appointments
- **July - August**– Official appointment letters and letters to the applicants not selected are mailed
- **August**– VIC and the Board of Governors consider the appointments to JNE
- **September 15-18, 2011** – 2011 State Bar Annual Meeting, Long Beach; terms for new members and officers for 2011-2012 begin upon close of meeting, September 18, 2011. JNE terms begin February 1, 2012.

Overall practical tips for completing and submitting a “successful” application

- **Read committee descriptions** carefully (expectations, number of meetings, State Bar reimbursement for pre-approved travel, etc) and make sure you can meet the prerequisites and expectations of the committee
- **Follow the instructions on front page of application; note “Committee Preferences”**— you may submit one application and list preferences, but it is better to submit a separate application for each committee, so you can tailor your application for the particular entity; you can apply for up to 3 entities but can only be appointed to one; include personal statement, resume/biography and maximum of 3 letters of recommendation for each committee application. If you are already a member of a State Bar entity when you apply for appointment to another entity, and you are recommended for the new entity, you must decide between the two entities. You cannot serve on more than one entity at any time.
- **Letters of recommendation:** letters are not required but are very helpful and can be persuasive. The letters should address your specific leadership abilities, subject-matter experience, commitment, ability to follow through (generic letters or “form” letters are not as helpful); do not submit more than three letters
- **Be sure to tailor your personal statement** to the charge, objectives and expectations of the committee!! Explain what you can bring to the committee and put your best foot forward. Also attach your resume.
- **Make the application legible and professional looking**
 - Note: the on-line application is in PDF and WORD format. Don’t submit a handwritten application. Use the WORD version to complete your application, print out, copy and submit Access the application on the State Bar home page www.calbar.ca.gov > About Us> Committees and Commissions
- **Respond to “other diversity factors” on Part Two**—this is voluntary information but very useful when committees are reviewing and evaluating applications (see the next section below for the diversity factors included in the State Bar appointments policies)
- **Do NOT submit an application unless you can commit to meeting the expectations**
- **Don’t be discouraged if you are not appointed -- sometimes the “competition” is stiff; reapply!** -- talk to the Chair, vice chair, staff liaison for feedback; if a member of a section, apply for a section standing committees or talk to the staff liaison or chair about other section activities that need volunteers

“Prerequisites” of certain sections, committees, commissions & application review process by committees

- Some sections (different than committees) have a prerequisite of serving on a standing committee before being eligible to serve on the executive (governing) committee
- relevant subject matter, local bar and other volunteer experience are important
- the activities, priorities, membership composition and number of vacancies vary with each sub-entity (see Appointments Booklet for projected vacancies and other information for each entity)
- all committees look at a range of diversity factors in terms of membership of entities and applicant pool. The factors are included in the State Bar Appointments Policies and include:
 - geographical location, length of time in practice, practice setting, size of firm, age, gender, race, ethnicity, and other diversity factors including, but not limited to, religious creed, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or medical condition

Where to go for more information and questions

- State Bar homepage www.calbar.ca.gov ► About Us ► Committees and Commissions
- For general information about the State Bar’s appointments process, contact the Appointments Office at 415-538-2299 or 538-2318.
- For specific questions about a particular State Bar sub-entity, see the appointments handout that lists chair and staff liaison contact information.
- Contact the Council on Access & Fairness, Diversity Coalition Project – Staff: Brandi Holmes at 415-538-2587 or brandi.holmes@calbar.ca.gov