

## **WSBA New Lawyer Admittee Process Instructions**

The WSBA administers the admission and licensing 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 Supreme Court of Washington has entered an order admitting you to the practice of law.** After completion of all requirements, it generally takes two to three weeks for the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) to review the records, send a recommendation for admission to the Washington Supreme Court for entry of an order, receive the order back, and issue a Bar card. Complete everything below online.

### **I. Verify and Update Contact Information**

Pursuant to APR 13(b) and (c) and WSBA Bylaws Art. III Sec. C, you must advise the Bar of a current public mailing address, telephone number, email address and your home address. The primary mailing address will be your public address of record. The home address is needed to determine your congressional district and your eligibility to vote 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 address of record.

After you are admitted and receive your WSBA license number, you will be able to login to your profile on [myWSBA.org](http://myWSBA.org). There, you will be able to update your contact information, including the ability to place certain [restrictions on how your contact information is used](#). This is where you would be able to indicate that you do not want your primary email address published on the WSBA online legal directory.

### **II. Resident Agent Certification**

Pursuant to APR 13(f) "Resident Agent", if your address of record 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 the 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 licensed legal professional.

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 in Washington, not a post office box.

### **III. 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 online format. Some county bar associations offer the live seminar preceding a formal swearing in ceremony. See the [formal ceremony table](#) 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.

Be sure to certify on your online user home page that you completed the course.

#### **IV. Trust Account Information**

Pursuant to [ELC 15.5](#), this section must be completed by **ALL Active licensed legal professionals** 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 trust account declaration.

#### **V. Washington Supreme Court APR 26 Insurance Disclosure**

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

#### **VI. Swearing in Selection & Oath of Attorney**

##### **Due to COVID-19:**

The Washington Supreme Court has issued an order temporarily waiving the requirement that the oath be taken in open court and authorizes judges to administer the oath remotely or virtually using face-time technology. If the judge conducting the swearing-in agrees to conduct this type of process, please email the judge a signed copy of the oath form for his/her signature. Once all parties have signed the oath form, the applicant is responsible to **upload** a copy of the completed oath to their user homepage. Please keep a copy for your records.

Note: Please check with your local bar association or court for information on group online swearing-in ceremonies.

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, and the Washington Supreme Court will determine whether to enter an order for out of state swearing in.

##### **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, please contact your [local county bar association](#). 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 Admissions Office 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: For individual ceremonies, 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. Use the online link from your user home page to print a copy of the oath and email it to the judge. When you complete your swearing in, upload the Oath of Attorney form, signed by you and the judge on your user home page. Please retain a copy for your records.

#### **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 a Washington judge to swear you in within Washington. We will forward your request to the Washington Supreme Court, which has the discretion to issue an order conferring jurisdiction on the judge you have chosen. Upon receipt of the order, the WSBA Admissions Office will upload a copy of the order to be used at the swearing in ceremony. Use the online link from your user home page to print a copy of the oath and provide it to the judge. Upload the completed Oath of Attorney, signed by you and the judge, to [on your user home page](#). Retain a copy for your records.

Remember that your being sworn in does not immediately qualify you to practice law in Washington. You must complete all other licensing 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.

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

You will not be able to pay your new admittee license fees until you have completed all other admission and licensing requirements and the WSBA verifies your Oath of Attorney. You will then be able to see the amount due on your online user homepage. You may pay online by credit card or electronic funds transfer, or, you may 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 are admitted at the end of one year, you will need to pay the license fee for the current calendar year and also pay the next calendar year's license fee by the license fee deadline of February 1<sup>st</sup>. The license fee for the first year of admission for general applicants is reduced depending on when you are admitted. Attorney applicants have a reduced license fee if admitted anywhere as a lawyer less than two years ago. You can view the [fee schedule](#) on our website (this does not include the reductions for general applicants admitted during the year in which they passed the exam).

The last opportunity for licensing in the current year is December 19<sup>th</sup>. All materials must be received and the new admittee license fee must be paid by December 19<sup>th</sup> or the first business day before December

19<sup>th</sup>. After December 19<sup>th</sup>, the fee will be calculated 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 fee until December 20<sup>th</sup>. **Note:** This option to defer your licensing fee is not available if it means that you are unable to complete your application before it expires. See Washington Supreme Court APR 5(e) for expiration time periods.

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 active lawyer in Washington is required by order of the Washington Supreme Court to pay an assessment of \$10 to fund the Client Protection Fund (CPF). The CPF was established by 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 obtain a specific licensed legal professional status other than active, you must first be admitted and licensed as active status and then request a status change. Please view the [licensing page](#) on our website for more information.

### **VIII. Washington Law Component (WLC)**

All applicants qualifying for admission as a lawyer under APR 3 must pass the Washington Law Component (WLC). The WLC is comprised of online materials and an online multiple choice test based on areas or subjects of law that are specific to Washington State. The Board of Bar Examiners is responsible for the content of the WLC and shall publish the Washington state specific materials for applicants.

The WLC is self-administered by applicants and is available to applicants after submitting the application. There is no fee to take the WLC. The WLC is an open-book test. Applicants may take the WLC as many times as necessary to achieve the minimum pass score. There is a mandatory waiting period of 24 hours after failing to pass the WLC the first time. Subsequent fails of the WLC require a 72 hour waiting period before retaking the test. The WLC minimum pass score is 80% correct. If an applicant fails the UBE or withdraws from the UBE after taking the WLC, that applicant must retake the WLC after applying for the next UBE administration.

### **IX. Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE)**

All applicants qualifying for admission as a lawyer by UBE or by UBE Score Transfer under APR 3 must file a transcript demonstrating that the applicant received a MPRE score equal to or higher than the score required to pass the MPRE in Washington, and the score was received no earlier than three years prior to and no later than 40 months after the date of the administration of the UBE in which the applicant received the UBE Score.

### **X. Optional Demographics Form**

It is helpful to the WSBA for you to complete the demographics form. Individual gender, race/ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation information is kept strictly confidential, and is used only in the aggregate for demographic analysis. With this information we can better understand the demographics of

Washington licensed legal professionals. Providing confidential demographic information is optional. You can download the form from your user home page, complete it and email it to [statuschanges@wsba.org](mailto:statuschanges@wsba.org).

**Admission by the Court:**

Once the WSBA has verified completion of all items and received payment, we will send a recommendation for admission and licensing to the Washington Supreme Court. The Supreme Court will then issue an order admitting you as a licensed legal professional in the WSBA. **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 and licensed after all information has been received and transmitted to the Court. You will receive an email notification once the court has signed the order.

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

**Certificate:** After admission and licensing, lawyers who qualified for admission under APR 3 may purchase a wall certificate suitable for framing, by writing to the Supreme Court of Washington, Temple of Justice, and 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 want or would like a copy of your application after being admitted as a licensed legal professional, you will need to contact the Washington Supreme Court Clerk's office, because the files are maintained at the Court after admission. The contact information is: Supreme Court of Washington, Temple of Justice, P.O. Box 40929, Olympia, WA 98504-0929, Tel. 360-357-2077, Email [supreme@courts.wa.gov](mailto:supreme@courts.wa.gov).

Congratulations on your achievement, and please contact anyone on the Admissions team if we can help you with the admission process. You can reach us at (206) 727-8209 or [admissions@wsba.org](mailto:admissions@wsba.org).