



STATE BAR OF TEXAS STRATEGIC PLAN FY2010 & FY2011

INTRODUCTION

Overview

State Bar Act, Section 81.0215 requires the State Bar to develop a comprehensive, long-range strategic plan. In each even-numbered year, the Bar must draft a plan covering a five-year period beginning with the next odd-numbered year. As further required by the Act, the State Bar will adopt performance measures based on the purposes and goals expressed in this strategic plan, and will implement procedures by which the performance outcomes can be measured and reported.

Purpose

The State Bar is committed to keeping this Strategic Plan at the forefront of all decisions and activities of the Board of Directors and of the Bar as a whole. As an evolving and dynamic set of goals and direction, the Strategic Plan will be reviewed by the Board regularly to ensure its relevancy and timeliness. Changes will be made as evolving circumstances dictate. At a minimum, this Plan will be reviewed and revised every other year as required by the State Bar Act.

All decisions and activities of the Board and the staff of the State Bar must comport with the specific goals of this Strategic Plan. The annual budget of the State Bar will be developed and adopted only after careful consideration of the Plan's directives to ensure Bar-wide compliance with and furtherance of the State Bar's goals and objectives.

Implementation

The State Bar will utilize all of its resources to implement the following goals. An operational plan and performance measures based upon these goals will be developed and reported. In developing the implementation plan, the State Bar will work through:

- the members of its governing body, including its officers and directors;
- the Texas Young Lawyers Association, including its officers and directors;
- its extensive network of volunteers, including its 44 sections, 3 divisions and 37 volunteer committees;
- programs, activities and initiatives implemented and executed by its staff and volunteers;
- its relationships and working partnerships with related entities, including local, minority and specialty bar associations;
- polls and surveys of its members and the public to determine what services are needed and desired, and how best to deliver them;
- presentations, speeches and public forums;
- continuing legal education seminars;
- other conferences, including its annual meeting;
- press releases and articles disseminated to and through news media;
- emails, listservs and facsimiles to its members;
- websites, including its own (www.texasbar.com, www.texasbarcle.com, www.tyla.org), and the websites of related entities such as the Texas Access to Justice Commission (www.texasatj.org), the Texas Access to Justice Foundation (www.teajf.org), Law Focused Education, Inc. (www.texaslre.org) and the Texas Center for Legal Ethics and Professionalism (www.txethics.org).

Compliance with the State Bar Act

The State Bar of Texas is governed by the State Bar Act (Texas Government Code, Chapter 81). Contained within that statute are the purposes of the State Bar and a number of specific requirements with which the State Bar must comply. The State Bar considers these requirements of the utmost importance in its operation and has implemented policies and procedures to ensure compliance. Because these requirements and the conforming operations of the State Bar are established and on-going, they are not expressly specified in the following strategic goals.

STATE BAR MISSION

The mission of the State Bar of Texas is to support the administration of the legal system, assure all citizens equal access to justice, foster high standards of ethical conduct for lawyers, enable its members to better serve their clients and the public, educate the public about the rule of law and promote diversity in the administration of justice and the practice of law.

STATE BAR STRATEGIC GOALS

SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

Statement Of Purpose

The State Bar of Texas serves the public by: 1) educating the public on the American and Texas system of justice and the role of judges and lawyers in the system; 2) helping lawyers provide the highest quality legal and community service; and 3) working for equitable access and participation in all aspects of the justice system by diverse groups within our society.

Goals

A. Through education, the dissemination of information and outreach, increase the public's knowledge and understanding of:

- the rule of law;
- the judicial system;
- selection and compensation of members of the judiciary;
- lawyers' professional ethics;
- lawyers' standards of practice;
- attorney discipline procedures;
- availability of the client security fund; and
- fee dispute resolution.

B Promote the development of and participation in programs at all levels of education that encourage a more diverse population to select law as a profession.

C. Assist in efforts to better focus and increase resources by systematically identifying, prioritizing and timely addressing community needs for service, as well as developing appropriate services and programs to address the needs of under-served populations and low-income Texans.

D. Provide and expand opportunities for lawyers and judges to be involved in community service and education.

E. Enhance the public's and media's awareness of pro bono and volunteer work provided by lawyers, and lawyers' contributions both to the legal community and the public at large.

F. Identify those areas of law and of the legal system that impact large segments of the general population and provide the public with useful information and education concerning those areas.

G. Continue to identify and use new methods and media by which pro bono services training can be made accessible to more Texas lawyers.

SERVICE TO MEMBERS

Statement Of Purpose

The State Bar of Texas seeks to provide all of its members superior services (including continuing legal education, online resources, publications, networking and leadership opportunities, and member benefits) to assist them in offering ethical, high quality legal services and in building and maintaining efficient, effective and productive law practices.

Goals

A. Study the future of the legal profession in Texas and implement appropriate services to help Texas lawyers adapt to and succeed in the ever-changing environment in which they practice law.

B. Facilitate increased utilization of State Bar services and participation opportunities by those Texas lawyers whose access to these services has historically been restricted and whose participation in State Bar activities has historically been low.

C. Continue to monitor the quality of current membership benefits as well as utilization of those benefits by Texas attorneys, and continue to examine the need for changes to the package of membership benefits offered by the State Bar.

D. Work to increase diversity among the membership of the State Bar, including its Sections, Committees, Divisions and other entities.

E. Continue to monitor the evolving continuing legal education needs of Texas lawyers and develop educational programs and resources to address those needs.

F. Continue to explore new and innovative methods and media by which to deliver continuing legal education to all State Bar members.

G. Increase services to and collaboration with State Bar sections, local bar associations, minority bar associations and specialty bar associations in Texas in an effort to improve and enhance the provision of services to all Texas lawyers.

H. Increase services to and collaboration with Texas law schools in an effort to improve and enhance State Bar outreach to all their students.

I. Inform Texas lawyers about the State Bar's activities and initiatives to improve the public's perception of and confidence in the Texas justice system, lawyers and judiciary.

PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC

Statement of Purpose

The State Bar works to protect the public through its powers to regulate the conduct of lawyers and by promoting ethics and professionalism.

Goals

- A. Review and, if necessary, improve voluntary mediation and dispute resolution procedures to attempt to resolve allegations of attorney misconduct that are classified as inquiries or are classified as complaints that are subsequently dismissed.
- B. Educate the public and Texas lawyers about the State Bar grievance system and the Client Security Fund and explore ways to increase available funds for disbursement.
- C. Review and, if necessary, improve the State Bar's model fee dispute resolution procedure used by local bar committees and associations or other organizations as a model for a fee dispute resolution program.
- D. Increase Texas lawyers' knowledge of and compliance with professional ethical standards and disciplinary rules for Texas attorneys through education and the dissemination of information.
- E. Review and recommend such improvements as may be necessary to ensure a fair and effective disciplinary system, including a diversionary program for impaired attorneys.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Statement of Purpose

The State Bar of Texas works to ensure access to justice for all.

Goals

- A. Increase coordination with key partners, including the Texas Access to Justice Commission, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation and legal services providers, to improve and enhance access to justice in Texas.
- B. Explore and implement new methods to increase the awareness and understanding among Texas lawyers and the public about access to justice issues.
- C. Identify and pursue additional methods to increase sustainable long-term financial support from public and private sources to be utilized for access to justice goals.

- D. Expand recognition for pro bono work and improve the number and quality of lawyer training opportunities to better enable them to provide pro bono services.
- E. Identify and pursue methods to help increase opportunities for government and transactional lawyers to participate in pro bono activities.
- F. Improve measurement and publication of lawyer volunteer efforts in serving the poor.
- G. Explore new and innovative methods to increase the availability of pro bono legal services to low income Texans in the more remote areas of the state.
- H. Identify and pursue methods to assist Texas law schools in the creation and expansion of clinics and other efforts to increase legal services to the poor.
- I. Identify and pursue methods to assist State Bar sections, local bar associations and specialty bar associations in the creation and expansion of pro bono programs and in encouraging their members to provide pro bono services.
- J. Work in collaboration with key partners to increase the availability and utilization of effective high quality pro se information, education and support materials.
- K. Identify and pursue appropriate incentives to attorneys to provide pro bono or reduced fee legal services.

SOUND ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES

Statement of Purpose

The activities and services of the State Bar shall be administered at a high level of efficiency and professionalism, in conformance with best practices observed by Texas state agencies and by bar associations of similar size and scope.

Goals

- A. Assess and enhance the training of new Board members and State Bar staff.
- B. Explore the establishment of a program whereby each first-year director is assigned a second- or third-year director as a Board mentor.
- C. Review, and if advisable, develop a plan and system for deciding if and when to reapportion State Bar districts to better reflect and represent the geographical distribution of State Bar members.
- D. Review and enhance the receipt of and response to issues and complaints regarding State Bar customer services, including better tracking, analysis and reporting.

E. Identify and pursue appropriate technological solutions and protections to improve the State Bar's ability to perform its functions.

F. In conjunction with the implementation of the State Bar's five-year Real Estate Strategic Plan, provide for continued maintenance of the Texas Law Center and the on-going assessment of the necessity of security, parking and environmental improvements.

G. Continue the emphasis on the diversity and quality within all levels of the staff of the State Bar.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Statement of Purpose

The State Bar shall conduct its fiscal affairs in conformance with the best management practices observed by Texas state agencies and by bar associations of similar size and scope.

Goals

A. Identify and pursue methods to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of managing the State Bar's financial resources.

B. Identify and pursue methods to conserve State Bar assets and forestall increases in member dues for as long as possible while providing appropriate services to the public and State Bar members and supporting the infrastructure necessary to efficiently provide those services..

C. Develop a long-term financial plan for the State Bar of Texas.

D. As a top priority, through competent financial staff and through Board oversight, ensure the best possible financial and internal audits.

E. Through the Board Audit & Finance Committee, annually review the State Bar's financial and reporting requirements to ensure effective and efficient compliance with the State Bar Act.

F. Improve communication with and staff support to the State Bar sections in all areas, including but not limited to financial management and reporting.