



THANK YOU!

As you know, the State Bar of Texas Membership Department began accepting only online payment of membership fees this year. There were a few growing pains, but overall it was a huge success and the smoothest dues season yet.

Thank you, members, for learning the new payment process and for your patience as we implemented this change. The benefits are many:

- **Cost savings.** We reduced costs by not printing and mailing statements. We eliminated the need to hire temporary employees (usually three to four each year) and an outside mail processing company to handle the massive volume of mail and membership fee payments. And we reduced our permanent Membership Department staff by one employee.
- **Increased security.** Now, no bank account information is sent through the mail and fee payments are processed securely online. All payment information submitted online is delivered to our payment processor using industry standard encryption methods, and the State Bar does not have access to bank account or credit card information.
- **Real-time payments.** In the past, there was often a long delay between receipt and processing of check payments, due to the volume of checks received by mail and processed by the mail processing company and the Membership Department. When attorneys called or logged in to their My Bar Page, they would see an unpaid balance with no way to verify that their check had been delivered for processing. Some attorneys would pay online while their checks were in process, resulting in duplicate payments and the need for the State Bar to issue refunds. This year, attorneys' records with the State Bar reflected that their dues had been paid immediately upon attorneys processing their payments online, which effectively eliminated duplicate payments and the need for refunds.

GOVERNANCE INFORMATION

The Texas Legislature created the Committee on Disciplinary Rules and Referenda in 2017 to centralize the process for proposing a disciplinary rule. The committee conducts public meetings, accepts and reviews public comments, holds public hearings, and posts all meeting materials online in an effort to maximize transparency and encourage input. Go to texasbar.com/CDRR to learn more or to sign up to receive email updates, including notices of public hearings and published rules for comment.

The new Firm Billing Portal is another success story.

In the past, firm billing was a manual process of emailing rosters and invoices back and forth between the Membership Department staff and the firm coordinators, and firms could only pay their attorneys' membership fees by check.

This year, our Membership and Information Technology departments created an online portal for law firms that pay these fees. When the portal launched on March 4, firm coordinators took control to build their rosters and make payments by credit card or electronic funds transfers. We experienced a few glitches, but we also received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from firm coordinators.

With individual payments, we did hear from some lawyers who were unhappy with the change because they were used to mailing checks. In these cases, our staff was available to help them navigate the online system, and we created a tutorial video at texasbar.com to offer additional assistance.

So, while you learned the new system, we learned some things too. We appreciate all of your feedback, positive and negative, and will use it to improve the system moving forward.

Sincerely,

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