Coordinated by the State Bar of Texas Local Bar Services Committee

Entry Deadline: 5 p.m. CDT on April 30, 2025

Purpose

The State Bar of Texas presents the Stars of Texas Bars Awards to recognize local bar associations for outstanding community involvement, commitment to increasing access to justice, and dedication to the profession for the time period: May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025. The awards include the following:

- ★ **Award of Merit**
- ★ **Star of Achievement**
- ★ **Outstanding Partnership Program**
- ★ **Publication Awards**
- ★ **The Judge Sam Williams Award** (separate call for entries)

Each local bar association has the opportunity to receive awards based on its division. Divisions are broken down by the size of local bar membership.

- ★ **Division I** – Local bars with 500 or fewer members
- ★ **Division II** – Local bars with 501-900 members
- ★ **Division III** – Local bars with 901-5,000 members
- ★ **Division IV** – Local bars with more than 5,000 members

Judging

The Local Bar Services Committee will judge the award entries. Committee members will not judge entries from a category/division in which their local bar association is competing. Winning entries will be chosen based on the criteria listed for each award. The judging panel may or may not elect to present awards in each category. Each entry will be judged individually. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted. If you are submitting multiple entries, one flash drive or email for all entries will be accepted, but files must be clearly labeled.**

Texas Access to Justice Commission Deborah G. Hankinson Award Entries

The Award of Merit Access to Justice portion of your entry may also be used for the Deborah G. Hankinson Award. The Hankinson Award entries will be judged separately based on the Access to Justice Commission's criteria and divisions. If you would like to be entered for this award, please check the box on the attached entry form. See **texasatj.org/awards** for more information.

Award of Merit

One Award of Merit will be presented in each division. This is an overall award for a local bar association's programming and projects. Each local bar association may submit only one entry in this category.

Please submit the following: (1) the entry form; (2) explanations of the criteria below; and (3) any exhibits. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted.** The explanations for each criterion must be 500 words or less. In addition, local bar associations may submit **two** exhibits each for Access to Justice, Law Student/Young Lawyer Outreach, Communications, and Social, as well as **four** exhibits each for Member Services and Community Service. An exhibit is defined as a standard 8½ x 11-inch document, which may include photos, descriptions, or other relevant information.

- ★ **Member Services:** Explain programs and projects that served members. ..... (20 points)
- ★ **Community Service:** Describe community service projects outside of the legal realm and initiatives that raised awareness of the legal system. ..... (20 points)
- ★ **Access to Justice:** Describe how the association improved access to justice and explain pro bono efforts for the year.* ..... (20 points)
- ★ **Law Student/Young Lawyer Outreach:** Describe how the local bar association encouraged participation of law students and young lawyers. Include information on mentoring and professionalism outreach. ..... (15 points)
- ★ **Social:** Describe the social events that the association implemented and their impact on the association. ..... (15 points)
- ★ **Communications:** Describe how the local bar association communicated with its members, the public, and the media. Include examples of positive press for the local bar association and the legal profession. .. (10 points)

** To be considered for the Texas Access to Justice Commission Deborah G. Hankinson Award, please check the box on the attached entry form.*

Star of Achievement

Five Star of Achievement awards will be presented. The Star of Achievement recognizes outstanding member service and public service projects by local bar associations in all divisions. Each bar association may submit up to **two** entries in this category.

Please submit the following for each entry: (1) the entry form; and (2) an explanation that addresses the questions below. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted.** The overall explanation must be 500 words or less, and exhibits will not be accepted.

- ★ What was the project's overall impact on the local bar association or the public? ..... (20 points)
- ★ How did the project specifically benefit the local bar association or educate the public? ..... (20 points)
- ★ What level of membership was involved in the project? ..... (15 points)
- ★ What was the project and its purpose? ..... (15 points)
- ★ How was the project promoted by you and recognized by others? ..... (10 points)
- ★ What makes the project original or creative? ..... (10 points)
- ★ Is the project easy to replicate? ..... (10 points)

Outstanding Partnership Program

One Outstanding Partnership Program award will be presented in each division. The award recognizes noteworthy partnership efforts between local bar associations and non-legal entities. Each local bar association may submit up to **two** entries in this category.

Please submit the following for each entry: (1) the entry form; (2) an explanation that addresses the questions below; and (3) any exhibits. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted.** The overall explanation must be 1,000 words or less. In addition, local bar associations may submit up to **six** exhibits. An exhibit is defined as a standard 8½ x 11-inch document, which may include photos, descriptions, or other relevant information. **Please do not submit more than six exhibits in total.**

- ★ How did the project promote the judicial system and legal profession? ..... (40 points)
- ★ Does evidence of a strong partnership exist? ..... (20 points)
- ★ What impact did the project have on the community? ..... (10 points)
- ★ What level of membership was involved in the project? ..... (10 points)
- ★ How did the media cover the project? ..... (10 points)
- ★ What makes the project original? ..... (10 points)

Publication Awards

The Publication Awards honor one local bar association per division in each category for exceptional reporting from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025. Each local bar association may enter each category one time only. One local bar association per division will receive recognition. **All publication entries and award criteria must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. If you are submitting multiple publication entries, one flash drive or email for all entries will be accepted, but files must be clearly labeled**.

Best Overall Newsletter

Please submit the following: (1) the entry form; (2) a digital copy of every newsletter/publication published from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025; and (3) a summary of the publication's purpose and a brief explanation of how it meets that purpose. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted.** The summary must be 250 words or less.

- ★ Overall Quality of Publication – e.g., overall design, content originality, informative ..... (25 points)
- ★ Overall Quality of Writing – e.g., clear, concise, focused, organized, well-developed, eloquent, and proper grammar/punctuation ..... (25 points)
- ★ Meets Purpose of Publication ..... (15 points)

Best Overall Newsletter - continued

- ★ Graphics Originality – cover and throughout the publication ..... (10 points)
- ★ Contributions by Membership ..... (10 points)
- ★ Interest to Membership ..... (10 points)
- ★ Ease of Locating Information ..... (5 points)

General Interest Story

Please submit the entry form and a digital copy of the general interest story. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted.**

- ★ Impact on Legal Profession ..... (40 points)
- ★ Overall Quality of Writing – e.g., clear, concise, focused, organized, well-developed, eloquent, and proper grammar/punctuation ..... (30 points)
- ★ Interest to Intended Audience ..... (20 points)
- ★ Originality of Topic ..... (10 points)

News Article

Please submit the entry form and a digital copy of the news article. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted.**

- ★ Impact on Understanding of Legal Topic ..... (40 points)
- ★ Overall Quality of Writing – e.g., clear, concise, focused, organized, well-developed, eloquent, and proper grammar/punctuation ..... (30 points)
- ★ Interest to Intended Audience ..... (20 points)
- ★ Timeliness and Newsworthiness ..... (10 points)

Series of Articles – Substantive Law

Please submit the entry form and up to three articles associated with the series. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted.**

- ★ Impact on Understanding of Legal Topic ..... (40 points)
- ★ Overall Quality of Writing – e.g., clear, concise, focused, organized, well-developed, eloquent, and proper grammar/punctuation ..... (30 points)
- ★ Strength of Connection of Articles ..... (10 points)
- ★ Timeliness and Newsworthiness ..... (10 points)
- ★ Interest to Intended Audience ..... (10 points)

Series of Articles – General Interest

Please submit the entry form and up to three articles associated with the series. **All award entries must be submitted on a FLASH DRIVE OR VIA EMAIL ONLY. No hard copies will be accepted.**

- ★ Impact on Understanding of Legal Topic ..... (40 points)
- ★ Overall Quality of Writing – e.g., clear, concise, focused, organized, well-developed, eloquent, and proper grammar/punctuation ..... (30 points)
- ★ Strength of Connection of Articles ..... (10 points)
- ★ Timeliness and Newsworthiness ..... (10 points)
- ★ Interest to Intended Audience ..... (10 points)

Deadline

All entries must be received by the Local Bar Services Department by **5 p.m. CDT on April 30, 2025. All award entries and criteria must be submitted on a flash drive or via email. If you are submitting multiple entries, one flash drive or email for all entries will be accepted, but files must be clearly labeled.**

Entry Form

Please include a digital copy of this form with each entry.

Name of Local Bar Association _____

Number of Local Bar Members _____

Name of Local Bar President _____

Name of Person Submitting Entry _____

Email Address _____

Address _____

_____

Person to contact about award (if different than above) _____

Phone Number _____

This entry is submitted for the following award _____

Entry Title (if applicable) _____

Entry Word Count (if applicable) _____

Author(s) of Publication (if applicable) _____

_____

☐ Please check here to be submitted to the Texas Access to Justice Commission Deborah G. Hankinson Award entries. **texasatj.org/awards**

Please include a digital copy of this form with your entry and send your flash drive or email to the State Bar of Texas. **The deadline for submission is 5 p.m. CDT on April 30, 2025.** Please note, you will receive email confirmation once we have received your entry. If you do not receive an email confirmation, please contact the Local Bar Services Department before 5 p.m. CDT on April 30, 2025.

If mailing your flash drive via USPS:
State Bar of Texas
Local Bar Services
P.O. Box 12487
Austin, TX 78711-2487
512.427.1514
localbars@texasbar.com

If sending your flash drive via Fed-Ex or UPS:
State Bar of Texas
Local Bar Services
1414 Colorado St.
Austin, TX 78701
512.427.1514
localbars@texasbar.com

Winners will be honored at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 19, 2025, at the JW Marriott Hill Country Resort in San Antonio.

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All entries must be received by the Local Bar Services Department by **5 p.m. CDT on April 30, 2025**. All award entries and criteria must be submitted digitally only, on a flash drive or via email.

Questions

Submit all questions concerning the Stars of Texas Bars Awards to **localbars@texasbar.com**. The Local Bar Services Committee will answer all questions, and answers will be emailed to all local bar associations. Representatives from each local bar association may opt out of receiving the answers by emailing **localbars@texasbar.com** or by calling **512.427.1514.**