

# ALABAMA STATE BAR

Lawyers Render Service



Informational Guide for New Members of the Alabama State

## A WORD FROM MEMBERSHIP SERVICES:

Congratulations, and welcome to the Alabama State Bar! Upon your admission to the Alabama State Bar, you will become part of a tradition of professional excellence and public service that dates back more than 150 years. The information contained in this booklet will help to acquaint you with the responsibilities, privileges and opportunities of bar membership that will mold your career.

We hope that you will take full advantage of the member benefits that are available to you, which include free and discounted rates on legal research capabilities, insurance, as well as opportunities for client referrals, networking, continuing education, community involvement and general camaraderie.

The Alabama State Bar is here to assist you in any way that we can, from something small like reminding you of your bar ID number or a phone number of a fellow attorney, to the larger issues addressed by the Practice Management Assistance Program and Lawyer Assistance Program. Please do not hesitate to contact us regarding any question or concern that may arise.

We wish you the best of luck in building a career that you will be proud of!

Justin Aday  
*Director of Admissions & Attorney Licensing*



[facebook.com/AlabamaStateBar](https://facebook.com/AlabamaStateBar)



[@AlabamaStateBar](https://twitter.com/AlabamaStateBar)



[@AlabamaStateBar](https://www.instagram.com/AlabamaStateBar)



[youtube.com/TheAlabamaStateBar](https://youtube.com/TheAlabamaStateBar)



[flickr.com/AlabamaStateBar](https://flickr.com/AlabamaStateBar)



## CONTENTS:

History of the Alabama State Bar .....	3
ASB Structure, Location and Staff.....	4
Part I: Responsibilities of Membership.....	5
Part II: Benefits of Membership .....	8
Part III: Opportunities of Membership	
Sections .....	12
Speciality Certification.....	16
Lawyer Referral Service .....	17
Volunteer Lawyers Program.....	18





## HISTORY OF THE ALABAMA STATE BAR

The Alabama State Bar (ASB) is the official statewide organization of lawyers in Alabama. The bar is dedicated to promoting the professional responsibility and competence of its members, improving the administration of justice and increasing the public understanding of and respect for the law through the guiding values of trust, integrity and service. ASB has long served a dual role as an advocate for the profession and the public. Since its creation as an integrated bar association, the bar has served as the voice of the legal practitioner in Alabama, and has initiated programs addressing a wide range of public concerns from merit selection of judges to securing adequate funding for representation of indigent defendants; from ensuring that non-lawyers sit on disciplinary panels to encouraging the use of mediation as an alternative method of dispute resolution.

The Alabama State Bar is composed of practicing attorneys, judges, law professors and non-practicing lawyers who are business executives, government officials and court administrators. It represents practitioners in specialized areas of law, as well as affiliated, law-related organizations and groups with special interests or needs.

On December 13, 1878, and January 15, 1879, delegates from the bar of each Alabama county met in the hall of the house of representatives in Montgomery for the purpose of organizing a state bar association. When these meetings concluded on January 20, 1879, the constitution and bylaws of the Alabama State Bar had been adopted and officers had been elected to serve until the first meeting, set for the first Tuesday in December 1879. W. L.

Bragg of Montgomery was elected to be the first president of the Alabama State Bar. On February 12, 1879, an act incorporating the Alabama State Bar was approved by Governor Rufus W. Cobb. At the first meeting in Montgomery on December 4, 1879, E. W. Pettus of Dallas County was elected president. Two years later, at the third annual meeting in 1881, at the suggestion of Thomas Goode Jones of Montgomery, a committee was created and charged with the responsibility of adopting a code of legal ethics for the bar which would be the first code of legal ethics in the country. The *Alabama Code of Ethics* was adopted by the bar at its annual meeting in 1887 and was the foundation of the canons of ethics ultimately adopted by the American Bar Association.

In 1923, the Alabama legislature integrated the Alabama State Bar with state government. Integration made membership mandatory in what had been a traditionally voluntary association, thereby, allowing the Alabama Supreme Court to better regulate the legal profession. In that regard, the Alabama State Bar is unlike a traditional state agency which ordinarily operates under the executive branch of government. The bar's enabling legislation appears in §§34-3-1 through 89, *Code of Alabama* (1975). As a result of this act, the first meeting of the Alabama State Bar Commission was held on January 8, 1924, when the Board of Bar Commissioners appointed the first Board of Examiners and adopted rules regulating requirements for admission to practice law and governing the conduct of attorneys in Alabama. Under the statute and rules of the Alabama Supreme Court, the state bar serves a dual role. First, the state bar protects the public by ensuring that lawyers who are granted licenses are not only

minimally competent to practice law, but also abide by the profession's ethical standards. Second, the state bar is a private association with responsibilities largely of a service nature (e.g. education, publications and improvement of the administration of justice) to benefit both the legal profession as well as the general public.

## ASB STRUCTURE

Although the Alabama State Bar is subject to certain legislative controls relating to its fiscal operations, the Board of Bar Commissioners exercises a judicial function under state law in administering the Supreme Court's rules and is subject to its oversight. For this reason, the Board of Bar Commissioners is an arm of the court and state bar members are officers of the court. The commission's employees are non-merit employees, as are employees of the judicial branch, fulfilling responsibilities entrusted to the commission by the Supreme Court. The Board of Bar Commissioners is composed of 75 members, drawn from every judicial circuit in the state. A list of the current bar commissioners is available at [www.alabar.org/about-the-bar/board-of-bar-commissioners/current-board-members](http://www.alabar.org/about-the-bar/board-of-bar-commissioners/current-board-members).

The Board of Bar Commissioners is directed by the Executive Council, composed of the ASB president, immediate past-president, president-elect, vice president, secretary/executive director and three members-at-large chosen from the board. All officers are elected to serve one-year terms which begin at the bar's Annual Meeting, usually held in July of each year.

The president is the official spokesperson in expressing policies of the state bar as determined by the commission. Unless otherwise provided, the president appoints the chairs and members of standing committees and task forces of the bar.

The president-elect performs duties as assigned by the president, or the duties of the president should the president become disabled and unable to perform the duties of office. The president-elect, not the vice president, succeeds the president at the conclusion of his or her term.

The executive director of the bar also serves as secretary of the Board of Bar Commissioners.

The state bar includes 31 substantive law sections, 18 standing committees and 21 task forces. Sections range in size from approximately 30 members to as many as 700 members and draw their membership from judges and lawyers with common professional interests. They address professional development, improvement of laws and continuing education in a variety of substantive law fields. They also sponsor conferences, monitor legislation, conduct studies and may make policy recommendations to the Board of Bar Commissioners.

## PHYSICAL LOCATION

The Alabama State Bar is located at 415 Dexter Avenue in Montgomery. The original building contained six offices, a library, an assembly room and a membership file room which are all fully paid and furnished through donations by bar members. A print shop was added in 1969. By 1980, the bar had outgrown the Dexter Avenue headquarters and another building was purchased and furnished, again with donations by bar members. That building, located at 1019 South Perry Street, across from the Governor's Mansion, was the original home of the ASB Center for Professional Responsibility.

In the fall of 1992, work was completed on a \$3.5 million addition to the headquarters building, which provided an additional 32,000 square feet of space, and allowed the Center for Professional Responsibility to return to Dexter Avenue. A second renovation in 1999 allowed the previously unoccupied portion of the third floor to be used for several of the bar's newest programs. Members may use this facility for client and other meetings without charge.

## STAFF

The Board of Bar Commissioners appoints the executive director, who supervises a professional and administrative staff of approximately 45 employees. The staff implements decisions of the commission in the administration of state bar business, assists members in carrying out their mandatory and voluntary activities and expedites the dissemination of information to the membership and to the public. A list of staff members is available at [www.alabar.org/about-the-bar/staff](http://www.alabar.org/about-the-bar/staff).







## PART I: YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER OF THE BAR

### ANNUAL INVOICE

The bar year runs from October 1 through September 30 of each year. You will be emailed each September for a payment of either the occupational license fee or special membership dues. The occupational license fee is \$325 and the special membership dues are \$162.50 annually. The deadline for payment is October 31. Payments received after that date are subject to a statutory late fee of \$48.75, which we have no discretion to waive under any circumstance. Failure to pay the occupational license fee (if you are actively engaged in the practice of law) or special membership dues (if you are not engaged in private practice) will result in the removal of your name from the roll of attorneys in good standing and our office will not be able to issue certificates of good standing on your behalf. Additionally, your name will be removed from the Alabama State Bar mailing list and you will not be listed in the online membership directory.

The practice of law is defined in Section 34-3-6, *Code of Alabama*, 1975, as amended. See also, Section 40-12-49, *Code of Alabama*, 1975, as amended, and Sections 34-3-17 and 18, *Code of Alabama*, 1975, as amended.

Many people confuse special membership with being an inactive member of the bar. As a special member, an attorney remains active and in good standing with the bar. Electing to become voluntarily inactive means that you are no longer a member in good standing.

### ADDRESS CHANGES

As a member, you are required to keep Membership Services informed of your current address, telephone number, fax number and email address. All requests for address changes must be submitted in writing and will be accepted by fax, email to [ms@alabar.org](mailto:ms@alabar.org) or via our website at [www.alabar.org](http://www.alabar.org).

### BAR IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

You are automatically assigned an Alabama State Bar identification number on the date of your admission to the bar. This number is to be used when reporting MCLE credit, paying license fees and membership dues and to log in to access your personal information at [www.alabar.org](http://www.alabar.org).

### COURT IDENTIFICATION CODE

Not to be confused with the bar identification number, Alabama State Bar members are also assigned a six-digit court identification code by the Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) that is to be used to keep up with civil case filings as well as other cases handled by the attorney. The code is composed of the first three letters of the attorney's last name followed by a sequential three-digit number. This number may be obtained by calling the AOC at 1-866-954-9411.

### CLIENT SECURITY FUND MANDATORY ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

The Client Security Fund was established by the Alabama State Bar to provide a remedy for clients who have lost money or other property as a result of the dishonest conduct of practicing

attorneys. The Alabama State Bar recognizes that the legal profession depends on the trust of clients, and although very few attorneys breach that trust, it is important that the profession's reputation for honesty and integrity be maintained and protected. The Client Security Fund serves this function by providing some reimbursement to clients whose money or property has been wrongfully taken by attorneys licensed to practice law in Alabama.

The Alabama State Bar is authorized by Rule VIII of the Client Security Fund Rules to impose an annual fee of \$25 on each lawyer admitted in Alabama in order to support the Client Security Fund. Failure to pay this fee by the due date may result in summary suspension of an attorney's license to practice law. The full text of the Client Security Fund Rules can be found at [www.alabar.org/membership/mandatory-client-security-fund-assessment/security-fund-rules](http://www.alabar.org/membership/mandatory-client-security-fund-assessment/security-fund-rules).

## IOLTA ACCOUNT CERTIFICATION

Alabama is one of 34 states that has a mandatory Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program. An IOLTA account is a commingled client trust account that pays interest to the IOLTA Program, which is administered by the Alabama Law Foundation, the charitable arm of the state bar created by the Alabama Supreme Court in 1987.

Financial institutions remit the interest earned on lawyer trust accounts to the foundation which awards grants of these funds for law-related charitable purposes. Lawyers who hold any funds they receive on behalf of clients in separate client trust accounts must hold those funds in IOLTA accounts. Any bar member who purchases an occupational license is also required to annually certify that they either have an IOLTA account or are exempt from having an IOLTA account; if they have an IOLTA account, they must designate whether the interest earned on those funds is to be paid to the Alabama Law Foundation or the Alabama Civil Justice Foundation.

IOLTA certification is done online and does not require a fee. Failure to certify your IOLTA account may result in summary suspension of your license to practice law. For more information about the Alabama Law Foundation and IOLTA accounts, visit [www.alabamalawfoundation.org](http://www.alabamalawfoundation.org).

## MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE)

As a member of the bar, you are subject to Alabama's Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Rules and Regulations. The full text of these rules and regulations may be found at [www.alabar.org/membership/mcle](http://www.alabar.org/membership/mcle). If you feel you are exempt due to your occupation or otherwise, please refer to the rules and regulations or contact us.

- A. **You are exempt through December 31 of the year of your admission.**

Attorneys are exempt from the MCLE Rules and Regulations for the balance of the calendar year in which they were admitted. For example, if you were admitted on May 22, 2014, you will be exempt through December 31, 2014.

- B. **Thereafter, an attorney must earn at least 12 MCLE hours (including one hour of ethics) annually.** Beginning in January of the year following your admission, for any calendar year or portion in which you hold a regular occupational license, you must earn a minimum of 12 hours of approved MCLE credits annually (including 1 hour of ethics). A list of approved seminars may be found at [www.alabar.org/membership/mcle/approved-courses](http://www.alabar.org/membership/mcle/approved-courses).
- C. **You must complete the Mandatory Professionalism Course within one year of admission.** Alabama MCLE Rule 9 also requires new admittees to complete the three hour Alabama Mandatory Professionalism Course within one year of admission to the bar. This seminar is administered by the University of Alabama (CLEAlabama) in even numbered years and Cumberland School of Law in odd numbered years. To register, contact CLEAlabama (1-800-627-6514) or Cumberland (1-800-888-7454). While this course is mandatory regardless of your membership status, the hours earned at this seminar will count toward your overall 12 hour MCLE requirement for that year. However, if you have recently completed a similar course in another state where you are licensed, you may be eligible for a waiver of this requirement.
- D. **You may be eligible to claim an exemption from these requirements under MCLE Regulation 2.7.** Alabama MCLE Regulation 2.7 provides that any attorney who resides and maintains a principal office for the practice of law in another state that requires mandatory continuing legal education and who can demonstrate compliance with the MCLE requirements of his or her principal state of practice is exempt from these rules. If you believe you are eligible to claim this exemption, please contact us in writing. Alternatively, you may request a general waiver of the MCLE requirements for the coming year, which may be granted upon good cause shown.
- F. **Reporting Your Hours**  
If you earned credits during the first year of your admission and want these credits to carry forward to the next year, then you must report those hours to the Alabama State Bar. Please check your MCLE transcript online within 30 days of a MCLE seminar. If you find an error on your transcript, notify our office immediately.

## ALAFILE

In 2011, the Supreme Court of Alabama issued an administrative order requiring all practicing attorneys in the state to register for AlaFile. In 2012, the court issued two additional administrative orders: 1) requiring that all documents filed in all civil divisions of circuit and district courts be filed through the AlaFile application; and 2) providing for a hardship exception for attorneys who cannot file electronically due to exceptional circumstances. Copies of these orders are available online or by submitting a request to Membership Services.

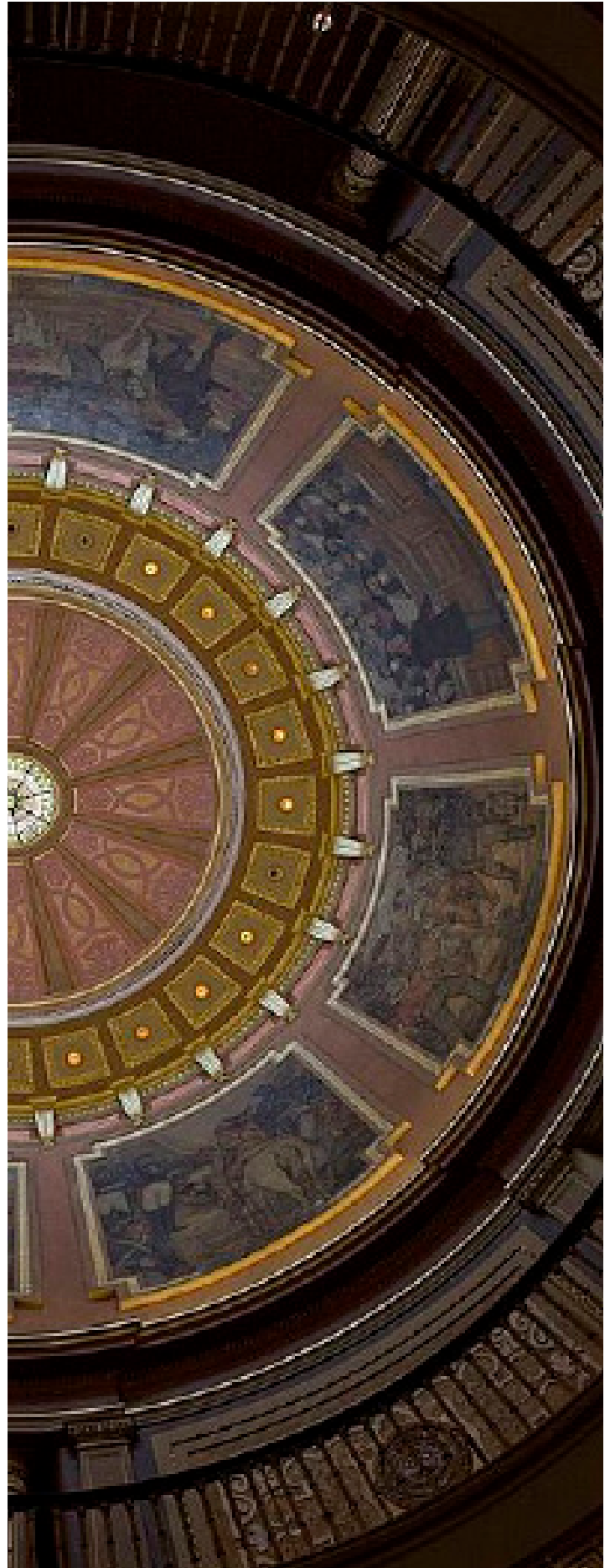
## COPIES OF ADMISSION RECORDS & BAR EXAM SCORES

All requests for copies of scores on the Multistate Bar Exam (MBE), the Multistate Essay Exam (MEE), the Multistate Performance Test (MPT) and the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) must be directed to the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE). In the event that such scores are not available from the NCBE, they cannot be provided by the Alabama State Bar.

Alabama is one of approximately 30 states that has adopted a policy requiring that copies of MPRE scores must in all cases be obtained directly from the National College of Bar Examiners (the “NCBE”). To the extent that such scores are no longer available from the NCBE, they cannot be provided by the receiving jurisdiction. The reason for this policy is that the receiving jurisdiction neither administered the MPRE nor generated the scores of the MPRE and, therefore, as merely a third-party recipient, can make no representation as to the accuracy of those scores.

However, recognizing that this policy could result in inconvenience to some members of the Alabama State Bar, we will attempt to minimize that inconvenience by the issuance of a certificate stating that, at the time of his or her admission, the MPRE was a required component of the Alabama Bar Exam and that an individual attorney would have been required to achieve a satisfactory minimum score on the MPRE in order to be admitted to practice.

All requests for copies of individual Alabama bar examination applications must be made in writing by the original applicant and accompanied by a \$10 processing fee. The Alabama State Bar will only provide copies of available documents submitted by the applicant on his or her original bar exam application. No third-party documents will be provided in response to such requests.







## PART II: BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAR

### LEGAL RESEARCH

#### **Casemaker® Free Legal Research**

Casemaker is a free, internet-based legal research service available to all Alabama State Bar members. In addition to Alabama case law beginning with 1 So., the Alabama Code, constitution, rules of court, and Administrative Code and regulations, Casemaker also contains a federal database including U.S. Supreme Court cases, case law from the federal circuit and district courts, U.S. Bankruptcy Court opinions, federal court rules, the U.S. Code, the Code of Federal Regulations and other federal materials. And because Casemaker is the product of a multi-state consortium of bar associations, it also contains cases and statutes from all 50 states.

Casemaker also provides three tools that will enhance your legal research capabilities. Those tools include:

#### **CaseCheck+™ Citations**

CaseCheck+ is Casemaker's negative citatory system that lets you know instantly if the case you're reading is still good law. CaseCheck+ returns both positive and negative treatments and allows you to quickly review the citation history for both state and federal cases.

#### **CasemakerDigest**

CasemakerDigest helps you keep up with the latest cases in your practice area. Within 12–24 hours of publication, Casemaker editors deliver daily summaries of state and federal appellate cases. Classified by practice area, choose one, a few or all, and get just the information you need, when you need it.

#### **CiteCheck™ Brief Analyzer**

Before you file, upload your brief to Casemaker. In moments you will have up-to-the-minute information on all cases in your brief and you will know if they remain good law. Upload your opposition's brief, too. You may discover something interesting

For help getting logged into Casemaker, call (334) 517-2106.

### ETHICS, COUNSELING AND ADVICE

#### **Informal and Formal Ethics Opinions**

Informal ethics opinions are provided by phone and only to the attorney requesting the opinion. These opinions are not published. Calls requesting this type of opinion are confidential. There is also a library of formal advisory ethics opinions available at online. Opinions are searchable by number, year issued, ethical rule, subject matter or keyword.

CONTACT: (334) 269-1515 • [www.alabar.org/resources/office-of-general-counsel/formal-opinions](http://www.alabar.org/resources/office-of-general-counsel/formal-opinions)



### **Alabama Lawyer Assistance Program (ALAP)**

The ALAP provides immediate and continuing confidential help to lawyers, judges and law students who suffer from addiction, depression and other mental health issues. Services are strictly confidential. The sole aim of the program is recovery.

CONTACT: (334) 517-2238 • 24-hours at (334) 224-6920 • [www.alabar.org/programs-departments/alabama-lawyer-assistance-program](http://www.alabar.org/programs-departments/alabama-lawyer-assistance-program)

### **Trust Accounting for Alabama Attorneys**

The *Trust Accounting for Alabama Attorneys* handbook provides a general overview and answers commonly-asked questions about IOLTA accounts and includes information on setting up a trust account and establishing proper bookkeeping procedures.

CONTACT: 334-517-2106 • [pmap@alabar.org](mailto:pmap@alabar.org) • [www.alabar.org/assets/uploads/2016/09/Trust-Accounting-2016\\_v2.pdf](http://www.alabar.org/assets/uploads/2016/09/Trust-Accounting-2016_v2.pdf)

### **Client-Keeper Handbook**

This nuts-and-bolts resource guide was developed to assist attorneys in improving client relations and minimizing the likelihood of claims for legal malpractice and complaints alleging violations of the *Rules of Professional Conduct*. It also contains information on fee agreements and file maintenance, closing and destruction procedures.

CONTACT: (334) 517-2106 • [pmap@alabar.org](mailto:pmap@alabar.org) • [www.alabar.org/assets/uploads/2014/08/Client-Keeper-2013.pdf](http://www.alabar.org/assets/uploads/2014/08/Client-Keeper-2013.pdf)

## **PRACTICE MANAGEMENT RESOURCES**

### **Practice Management Assistance Program (PMAP)**

PMAP serves as a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information about the effective management of the modern law office. It was created to serve the needs of solo and small-firm practitioners, and to protect the public from lawyers whose management skills are inadequate to allow them to deliver competent legal services in a timely manner. PMAP staff can provide you with information on management, marketing, finance and technology for the small law practice, make referrals to management and technology consultants and answer your practice management questions.

CONTACT: (334) 517-2106 • [pmap@alabar.org](mailto:pmap@alabar.org) • [www.alabar.org/programs-departments/practice-management-assistance-program-pmap](http://www.alabar.org/programs-departments/practice-management-assistance-program-pmap)

### **Clio Practice Management**

Clio is the most widely-used, cloud-based practice management system in the world. Every day, tens of thousands of lawyers use Clio to schedule meetings, organize cases, track time, and invoice their clients. Accessible from your Mac or PC, Phone or Tablet, Clio allows lawyers to take control of their practice from any device, in any location, at any time. Clio even integrates seamlessly with other popular applications like LawPay, QuickBooks Online, Gmail, and Office 365. Alabama State Bar members receive a 10% lifetime discount.

CONTACT: 888-858-2546 • [landing.goclio.com/alabar](http://landing.goclio.com/alabar)

### **CosmoLex**

CosmoLex combines practice management, billing and accounting, all in one login – making it the total solution that solo and small law firms can rely on to run their entire practice. Cloud access lets you get work done in the office or on the road. Small Law firms in all 50 states use CosmoLex to make their practice more compliant, efficient and profitable. And, when you use CosmoLex in conjunction with Casemaker and LawPay, you can record your research time in one click and avoid many of the problems of processing client credit cards, respectively. ASB members receive a 10% lifetime discount.

CONTACT: 866-878-6798 • [www.cosmolex.com/register?a\\_aid=alabar](http://www.cosmolex.com/register?a_aid=alabar)

### **MyCase**

MyCase is an affordable, intuitive and powerful legal case management software designed for the modern law firm. Give your law firm the advantage of a complete case management software solution – get organized with contacts, calendars, cases, documents, time tracking and billing. MyCase also includes a first of its kind integrated client portal so everyone stays informed and connected. ASB members receive a free 30-day trial, training with a dedicated software specialist and a 10% lifetime discount.

CONTACT: 866-463-6110 • [learn.mycase.com/lp/133/AlabamaBar.html](http://learn.mycase.com/lp/133/AlabamaBar.html)

### **Rocket Matter Practice Management**

Rocket Matter is an online legal practice management and time and billing software solution with a simple, unique and beautiful interface. It allows you to seamlessly bill time as you go about your usual activities. Every activity you perform, whether calendaring, tasks, documents or other type of legal work, is captured via its Bill as you Work™ technology. Compatible with PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone and Android, Rocket Matter supports trust account management, time and expense keeping, case management, calendaring and much more with military-grade reliability and security. ASB Members receive a 25% discount for the first 6 months. Use discount code **AL6MOS**.

CONTACT: 866-710-1845 • [www.rocketmatter.com](http://www.rocketmatter.com)

### **Corel**

Corel offers special savings on custom software solutions. Some of the best products are available at up to 50 percent off! You can get productivity-enhancing tools for word processing, Tables of Authorities creation and PDF publishing – all at special savings.

CONTACT: 1-877-582-6735 • [www.wordperfect.com/us/pages/bar-association](http://www.wordperfect.com/us/pages/bar-association)

### **LawPay Credit/Debit Card Processing Merchant Account**

The ability to accept debit and credit cards for legal fees and expenses is a great way to attract clients, improve cash flow and reduce collection efforts. A LawPay merchant account provides credit card processing designed for attorneys which allows you to direct payments to either your trust or operating account, as appropriate, and also safeguards your trust account from processing charges and chargebacks. Plus LawPay helps attorneys with PCI compliance and offers highly competitive rates.

CONTACT: 866-376-0950 • [www.lawpay.com/alabar](http://www.lawpay.com/alabar)

### **Ruby Receptionists Virtual Receptionist Service**

Ruby® Receptionists is the perfect solution for solo and small law firms. We're the bright, friendly team of live virtual receptionists that provide top-notch service at a fraction of the cost of an onsite receptionist. Best of all, your callers will think they work in your office. How Ruby® helps attorneys answer your calls with your custom greeting, let you know who's on the line before transferring, transfer callers to you live wherever you are, answer FAQs about your firm, route calls based on the type of call (new clients, current clients, people from the court, etc.), send voicemail messages to your email inbox, promptly relay messages to you via email or text, gather brief intake for potential clients and return calls on your behalf to confirm appointments, gather info or relay a message. ASB members enjoy their first 21 days free, an 8% discount on plans A and B, free setup (a \$95 value) and unlimited voicemail boxes at no risk.

CONTACT: 866-611-7829 • [hello@callruby.com](mailto:hello@callruby.com) • [www.callruby.com/asb.html](http://www.callruby.com/asb.html)

## **MARKETING YOUR PRACTICE**

### **Lawyer Referral Service**

The Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) prescreens potential clients and provides you with an excellent means of earning fee-producing work. LRS members are private attorneys who charge their regular rates after providing an initial half-hour consultation for no more than \$50. This is an ethical and inexpensive way to market your practice. See page 18 for more information.

CONTACT: (334) 517-2140 • [www.alabar.org/membership/lawyer-referral-service](http://www.alabar.org/membership/lawyer-referral-service)

### **LocalLawyers.com (Internet-based client development)**

LocalLawyers.com is a legal internet marketing company, located in Birmingham, Alabama, that develops city and statewide Lawyer and Law Firm profile websites with lawyer referral capabilities and a reputation discovery application which helps lawyer members manage their online reputations. LocalLawyers has partnered with the Alabama State Bar to provide all ASB members with a free, uniform, basic online legal directory listing. In addition, LocalLawyers.com's Alabama City Network provides BirminghamLawyers.com, HuntsvilleLawyers.com, MontgomeryLawyers.com and MobileLawyers.com. Any lawyer whose address falls within one of these municipalities is also entitled to a free, basic city listing. These free listings are handled automatically for all Alabama lawyers holding a regular license to practice law, and you do not have to do anything to obtain yours. However, if you do not actively practice or otherwise do not wish to participate, you may opt out of the directory. In addition to the free listings, ASB members may purchase Law Firm Profiles and Lawyer Profiles, all as a member benefit. Social media management services are also available.

CONTACT: 888-529-0520 • [jan@locallawyers.com](mailto:jan@locallawyers.com) • [www.locallawyers.com](http://www.locallawyers.com)

### **Client Information Brochures**

The ASB offers public information brochures to provide information (not legal advice) to your clients and the public about various areas of the law. Many of the brochures are available in Spanish. You can download these brochures, without charge, in PDF format to email or print yourself, or purchase printed copies.

CONTACT: (334) 269-1515 • [www.alabar.org/for-the-public/brochures](http://www.alabar.org/for-the-public/brochures)

### **American Bar Association (ABA) Publications**

Through a partnership with the American Bar Association, the ASB offers a full selection of materials from the ABA Web Store, including great books on law firm finance, management, marketing and technology. Enter source code ALABAR to receive the 15 percent discount.

CONTACT: 800-285-2221 • [shop.americanbar.org/ebus/default.aspx](http://shop.americanbar.org/ebus/default.aspx)

## **CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION**

### **CLE Calendar and Search Engine**

If you are looking for a CLE seminar on a particular subject, by a particular provider or on a particular date or in a particular location, you may search the CLE Calendar for programs that meet your needs.

CONTACT: (334) 517-2144 • [www.alabar.org/membership/mcle/approved-courses](http://www.alabar.org/membership/mcle/approved-courses)

### **ASB Annual Meeting & Legal Expo**

Attending the Alabama State Bar's Annual Meeting & Legal Expo is the best chance you have during any 12-month period to earn all of your MCLE credit, learn from unique educational programs, network with other lawyers, see the latest products and services for the modern law practice and enjoy family recreational activities.

CONTACT: Legal Expo (334) 517-2242 • [legalexp@alabar.org](mailto:legalexp@alabar.org)



## PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

### Volunteer Lawyers Program (VLP)

The VLP offers an easy way to fulfill your responsibility to make civil legal counsel available to indigents, individuals and families consistent with a true sense of professionalism and Rule 6.1 of the Alabama Rules of Professional Conduct.

CONTACT: (334) 517-2246 • [www.alabar.org/programs-departments/volunteer-lawyer-program](http://www.alabar.org/programs-departments/volunteer-lawyer-program)

## NETWORKING

### Networking and Leadership

Expand your professional contacts. Increase your expertise. Share ideas. You can join one or more of the 32 sections that focus on a particular area of substantive law or a specific segment of the bar. Each section draws its membership from lawyers and judges with common professional interests.

Administrative Law  
Appellate Practice  
Bankruptcy and Commercial Law  
Business Law  
Business Torts and Antitrust  
Construction Industry  
Criminal Justice  
Disabilities Law  
Dispute Resolution  
Elder Law  
Elections, Ethics and Government Relations

Environmental Law  
Family Law  
Federal Court Practice  
Government Contracts  
Health Law  
In-House Counsel and Government Lawyers  
Intellectual Property, Entertainment and Sports Law  
International Law  
Labor and Employment Law  
Leadership Forum  
Litigation

Non-Resident Members  
Oil, Gas and Mineral Law  
Real Property, Probate and Trust  
Senior Lawyers  
Solo & Small Firm  
Taxation Law  
Women's Section  
Workers' Compensation  
Young Lawyers

CONTACT: 334-517-2142 • [www.alabar.org/membership/sections](http://www.alabar.org/membership/sections)

## ALABAR.ORG

The bar's website is continually updated with a wealth of information accessible both to bar members and the public. Member search for contact information, online classifieds, contact information for judicial officials, formal ethics opinions, information on bar programs are just a few of the things available on the bar's website. When you log into your personalized My Dashboard page, you have access to your MCLE transcript, request a Certificate of Good Standing, update your contact information, pay your bar dues in September and access to Casemaker (free online legal research for bar members). Many other tools are available to you through the website. Be sure to check out the events calendar for items of interest in your area.

CONTACT: 334-517-2106 • [eric.anderson@alabar.org](mailto:eric.anderson@alabar.org) • [www.alabar.org](http://www.alabar.org)

## INSURANCE

### GEICO® Auto Insurance

As an ASB member you could qualify for a special discount. GEICO is able to help you find auto, homeowners, renters, personal umbrella and even motorcycle insurance.

CONTACT: 800-368-2734 • [www.geico.com/landingpage/member-discount/?logo=17883](http://www.geico.com/landingpage/member-discount/?logo=17883)

### ISI Major Medical, Life, Disability, Business Overhead, Umbrella and Other Insurance

Through its administrator, ISI Alabama, a division of Insurance Specialists, Inc. (ISI), the Alabama State Bar provides access to a variety of insurance programs including major medical, term life, association group long term disability, association individual disability income, business overhead expense, accidental death & dismemberment, comprehensive accident, personal umbrella and disaster recovery. These plans offer association based products through which applicants receive discounted rates as a benefit of membership. Underwriting and coverage issue is typically simplified, with programs of the highest quality backed by the leading carriers writing in the nation. These plans are all available to ASB members and most are also offered to member spouses, employees and eligible family members.

CONTACT: 800-241-7753 • [www.isi1959.com/Associations/Alabama-State-Bar.aspx](http://www.isi1959.com/Associations/Alabama-State-Bar.aspx)

## OTHER DISCOUNTED PRODUCTS & SERVICES

### Legal Directories Alabama Blue Book

Legal Directories Alabama Blue Book is the official hard bound printed directory of Alabama lawyers. Also available in a digital version.

CONTACT: 800-447-5375 • [www.legaldirectories.com/DirectoriesPublished.aspx](http://www.legaldirectories.com/DirectoriesPublished.aspx)

### The UPS® Savings Program Ship and Save with UPS®

Let the Alabama State Bar improve your bottom line with competitive rates on UPS® shipping services. Save up to 34%\* on a broad portfolio of services, including air, international and ground services. Plus, savings begin at 70%\* on UPS Freight® shipments over 150 lbs. UPS understands how important speed, reliability and cost are to meeting your business goals and your customers' needs. Put the

power of logistics to work for you.

CONTACT: 800-636-2377 • [savewithbups.com/asb](http://savewithbups.com/asb)

### **ABA Retirement Funds**

Does your retirement plan offer no out-of-pocket expenses, professional fiduciary services, a broad range of investment options and full-service administration? Ours does! The ABA Retirement Funds Program ("The Program") has been providing affordable 401(k) plans exclusively to the legal community for 50 years. The Program's bundled approach allows your firm to keep its focus on the success of the practice. We provide you with trustee, record keeping, tax reporting, compliance testing, investment management and participant communication services – all from a single source – at no additional cost to your firm. Maybe it's time to find out what's inside your 401(k). CONTACT: 866-812-3580 • [abaretirement.com/welcome/alabama.html](http://abaretirement.com/welcome/alabama.html)

### **Brooks Brothers**

Alabama State Bar members save 15% on regular priced merchandise at Brooks Brothers U.S. branded stores nationwide, by phone or online at [BrooksBrothers.com](http://BrooksBrothers.com). Enroll online at [Membership.BrooksBrothers.com](http://Membership.BrooksBrothers.com). Enter the ASB Organization ID# 12384 and Pin Code 22060. Enroll by telephone by calling Corporate Incentive Services toll-free at (866) 515-4747, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET. Please have the ASB Organization ID# and Pin Code available. Your Brooks Brothers Corporate Membership benefit is valid at Brooks Brothers U.S. branded stores nationwide, by phone or online at [BrooksBrothers.com](http://BrooksBrothers.com). Savings cannot be combined with any other offer, discount or promotion or for purchases of the gift card.

CONTACT: 866-515-4747 • [www.brooksbrothers.com](http://www.brooksbrothers.com)

## **SPECIAL SAVINGS**

### **Visiting Lawyers' Offices and Conference Rooms**

As an ASB member you have full access to the bar's four conference rooms (which can accommodate six to 30 people), as well as a visiting lawyer's office available for business or client use. Wireless internet access is available in all of the public meeting rooms at the state bar.

CONTACT: Alex Rice at (334) 517-2218 • [alex.rice@alabar.org](mailto:alex.rice@alabar.org)

### **Classifieds**

In addition to job openings, members may list positions wanted, and will also find ads for office space available/wanted, items for sale/lease, items or services wanted, and services offered.

CONTACT: Hunter Harris at (334) 517-2192 • [hunter.harris@alabar.org](mailto:hunter.harris@alabar.org) • [www.alabar.org/membership/classifieds](http://www.alabar.org/membership/classifieds)

## **GIVING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Alabama Lawyer Assistance Foundation**

The Alabama Lawyer Assistance Foundation (ALAF) is a nonprofit corporation {501(c)(3)} under the management of an elected board of directors. The goal of the foundation is to work with the Alabama Lawyer Assistance Program (ALAP) and the Alabama Lawyer Assistance Committee to ensure lawyers in need receive the financial help necessary to secure treatment. The ALAF is committed to assisting colleagues in getting appropriate care so they can return as valuable members of the profession and the community.

CONTACT: (334) 517-2244 • [www.alabar.org/programs-departments/alabama-lawyer-assistance-program/alap-foundation](http://www.alabar.org/programs-departments/alabama-lawyer-assistance-program/alap-foundation)

### **Alabama Law Foundation**

The Alabama Law Foundation is a charitable, tax-exempt organization composed of several separate programs, each providing ways for lawyers to better their profession and their community. The foundation makes annual grants to organizations that provide free legal aid to the poor in civil cases, for projects that improve the administration of justice and for law-related education.

There are three law school scholarship funds to help the next generation of lawyers. They are the Cabaniss Johnston Scholarship, Justice Janie L. Shores Scholarship and W. Verbon Black Scholarship. The Kids' Chance Scholarship Fund helps the children of injured workers

## **PART III: PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AS A MEMBER OF THE BAR**

### **ASB SECTIONS**

The bar provides opportunities to enhance your skills in your particular practice area by becoming a member of a section. Membership applications are available at [www.alabar.org/membership/sections](http://www.alabar.org/membership/sections).

#### **Administrative Law**

Section members are lawyers interested in administrative proceedings at the federal and state level. Members include government attorneys

as well as private practitioners. The section presents a program during the annual meeting of the state bar, and has been active in the implementation of the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act. The section also sponsors the Eugene W. Carter Medallion, an award given annually to a former public servant for excellence in balancing the rights of individuals against the interests of government.

#### **Appellate Practice**

The Appellate Practice Section was created March 14, 2003, for the purpose of fostering communication among lawyers and judges





matters pertaining to appellate practice. The section hopes to improve the quality of appellate practice in Alabama. The section also acts as a resource group for the Alabama appellate courts and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals to assist in rules evaluations and amendments, pro bono appointments, appellate mediation and other programs. The section seeks to attract members from private practice, both civil and criminal, plaintiff and defense, government attorneys and appellate judges.

#### **Bankruptcy and Commercial Law**

The Bankruptcy and Commercial Law Section facilitates communication among its members concerning bankruptcy and commercial law matters and legal decisions with a view toward promoting consistent application of these laws in the various districts and circuits of Alabama. The section has four standing committees: bankruptcy practice, commercial practice, CLE/annual meeting and communications/newsletter. Additional committees are appointed on an ad hoc basis. The section sponsors CLE programs, law school writing competitions and is also involved in promoting legislation needed in the commercial law practice.

#### **Business Law**

The section serves members of the Alabama State Bar who provide legal services to corporate clients, either as in-house corporate attorneys or as attorneys in private practice who regularly advise clients and attorneys in private practice who represent clients in a variety of business legal matters. In addition, the section works with the Alabama Law Institute in a regular review of the corporate laws of Alabama and recommendation for revision of same from time to time as appropriate.

#### **Business Torts and Antitrust Law**

This section is concerned with business litigation, including antitrust, trade regulation, interference with business relations, defamation of business and employment relations. An annual seminar is usually held, entitled Antitrust and Business Torts.

#### **Construction Industry**

The Construction Industry Section provides opportunities for the exchange of views among lawyers representing the various aspects of the construction industry; provides educational services to lawyers and clients; works through committees to suggest development of laws and regulations; works to advance learning with regard to the construction industry; and works with federal and state courts to develop ways to efficiently resolve disputes arising out of construction projects. Members submit articles for publication in *The Alabama Lawyer* and share information about the industry and construction law with interested members of the Alabama State Bar.

#### **Criminal Justice**

Created in 2013, the Criminal Justice Section serves as a nonpartisan, policy advisory group that seeks to improve the quality of legal service available to the people of Alabama. The section seeks to be a voice on criminal justice issues in Alabama, educate the public about the system, enhance professional growth of section members and increase the diversity, balance and strength of the section's membership and leadership. This section promotes the objectives of the Alabama State Bar within the field of criminal justice not assigned by the Board of Bar Commissioners of the Alabama State Bar to any other section, or to a committee or task force of the bar.

### **Disabilities Law**

Created in 1995, this section is open to attorneys who serve the needs of a variety of individuals, corporations and municipalities in the rapidly developing field of disabilities law. Members have the opportunity to network with attorneys of similar interests and attend professional educational seminars as well as access to forums to exchange ideas and information.

### **Dispute Resolution**

The Dispute Resolution Section addresses various aspects of dispute resolution: negotiations, mediation, arbitration and other techniques to either resolve or simplify the resolution of disputes. The section exists to emphasize to both providers and users of legal services that the Alabama State Bar recognizes the importance of efficient, cost effective resolution of disputes and the role of lawyers in that process.

### **Elder Law**

Formed in early 1997, this section's mission is to develop, promote and enhance the quality of legal services for the elderly in Alabama. By joining this section, attorneys have an opportunity to identify a network of practicing professionals interested in serving the needs of the elderly, and to create a forum for communication and timely dissemination and exchange of updates and changes in substantive law, policy interpretations of administrative agencies and areas of special interest.

### **Elections, Ethics and Government Relations**

The members of this section are attorneys interested in elections, ethics, campaign finance, lobbying and government contracting disclosure issues at the federal, state and local level. Attorneys in this section wish to foster communications and assist in the education of state bar members on these subjects, and serve as a resource for organizations and officials to assist in evaluating forms, rules, requirements, training programs and proposed changes to the law.

### **Environmental Law**

Services and activities of the Environmental Law Section include professional improvement in the field of environmental law, reporting to members recent developments in the field and communication with other lawyers practicing in the environmental law area.

### **Family Law**

The Family Law Section of the Alabama State Bar was established in 1984. It publishes a newsletter for the benefit of family law practitioners. It also has a legislation subcommittee whose function is to consider state and federal legislation in the area of family law and the law of domestic relations and to suggest needed reforms. The section has a legal education subsection which presents programs for the members.

### **Federal Court Practice**

This section promotes the objectives of the Alabama State Bar within the field of federal court practice. The section serves as the Alabama State Bar's liaison to the federal courts, the standing committee of the Federal Judicial Conference, the Federal Bar Association chapters throughout Alabama and those members of

the Alabama State Bar interested in federal court practice. The section fosters communications between lawyers and judges on matters pertaining to federal practice; reviews and offers comment on proposed changes to federal rules including local federal rules; and offers educational programs and publications designed to improve the federal court practice experience of Alabama State Bar members.

### **Government Contracts**

The purpose of this section is to better equip members of the Alabama State Bar to resolve issues that require special expertise involving federal, state and local government contracts. In addition to educating our members, the section focuses on possible federal reforms that can be leveraged to improve Alabama's economy and possible state reforms that serve the purpose of gaining the confidence of the citizens of Alabama that their tax dollars are not being abused.

### **Health Law**

This section is open to members of the bar who are interested or involved in the ever-broadening interface between law and health care including, but not limited to, various state and federal issues such as Medicare fraud and abuse, payment problems, merger and acquisition of health care entities, antitrust, fiscal management, peer review, provider malpractice, individual rights and supreme court actions.

### **In-House Counsel and Government Lawyers**

This Section exists to promote the objects of the Alabama State Bar for those who practice as in-house counsel or as government lawyers which are not otherwise assigned by the Board of Bar Commissioners of the Alabama State Bar to any other Section or Committee or Task Force of the Alabama State Bar.

### **Intellectual Property, Entertainment & Sports Law Section**

Established in 1998, this section focuses on intellectual property, entertainment and sports law. The section includes the following divisions: copyrights, trademarks, patents, trade secrets, film and television, music, sports, internet and technology, literary publishing and new media and a newsletter division.

### **International Law**

Acknowledging that the globalization of the world economy has become a reality, this section held its organizational meeting in January 1996. The mission statement of this section is "to enhance understanding of public and private international law principals that undergird the world economy—including international trade and transactions, international law and treaties, and immigration and nationality law—to educate the membership by conducting programs and to build a state and global network of international legal professionals, thereby improving the delivery of legal services to our clients."

### **Labor & Employment Law**

This section includes lawyers from throughout the state whose practice involves work in the areas of labor law, fair employment law, employee benefits law and occupational safety and health law. In addition to providing a forum for the exchange of information and ideas, the section sponsors an annual two-day



labor and employment law seminar and, with similar sections of various state bars, co-sponsors an annual multi-state labor and employment law seminar.

### **Leadership Forum Alumni**

The Leadership Forum Alumni Section promotes the objectives of the Alabama State Bar within the field of leadership. Specifically, it provides a community of lawyers within the state bar committed to the ideals of servant leadership; promotes communications among section members on matters pertaining to development of leadership skills and professionalism; provides continued leadership training and education for section members; assists in the education of general practitioners and other attorneys with respect to leadership; and provides an interface between lawyers and community leaders for on-going discussions relating to the challenges facing our state. This section is open to all members in good standing of the Alabama State Bar who are graduates of the Leadership Forum.

### **Litigation**

The Litigation Section seeks to provide a forum where all trial attorneys may meet and discuss common problems, provides an extensive educational program to improve the competency of the trial bar and works to improve the efficiency, uniformity and economy of litigation and curb abuses of the judicial process.

### **Non-Resident Members**

The Non-Resident Members Section serves the more than 3,200 Alabama State Bar members who reside outside of Alabama by helping them stay current on developments in Alabama law, procedure and ethics; provides opportunities to meet and network professionally with other members of the bar, both inside and outside the state; and improves communication between the state bar and non-resident members, as well as providing a vehicle through which out-of-state ASB members can become more involved in bar activities.

### **Oil, Gas and Mineral Law**

The Oil, Gas and Mineral Law Section was established in 1976 and consists of an oil and gas division and a hard minerals division. The primary purpose of the section is to keep its members apprised of the developments in the law which is accomplished by co-sponsoring an annual seminar on oil, gas and mineral law with CLEAlabama.

### **Real Property, Probate and Trust**

This section cooperates with and assists the Cumberland Institute for Continuing Legal Education in preparing and presenting programs relating to real property, trust and probate matters for members of the Alabama State Bar. The section, also in cooperation with the Cumberland School of Law, publishes a periodic newsletter reviewing recent court decisions dealing with real property, trust and probate matters and reports other matters of current interest relating to these topics. An annual seminar is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the state bar.

### **Senior Lawyers**

The purpose of this section is to promote the interests of senior lawyer members of the Alabama State Bar, 55 years of age and older. To provide an appropriate forum for senior lawyers to raise issues pertinent to their circumstances, provide a willing pool of mentors to younger members of the bar, promote participation by retired and active member practitioners in public interest or volunteer service and pro bono programs to offer information on transitioning to retirement, which may involve dissolving or winding down an active practice and financial planning.

### **Solo and Small Firm**

The Solo & Small Firm Section of the Alabama State Bar was established in 2015 to facilitate statewide networking among the members of small law firms, to provide a forum to address the problems and opportunities that are specific to firms of this size, and to promote participation in Alabama State Bar activities by lawyers in small firms. Offerings for members include low-cost continuing legal education courses and technology training, an email discussion list and other networking opportunities and a bank of legal forms.

### **Taxation Law**

Membership in this section is primarily composed of tax practitioners. The section gives special emphasis to Alabama tax matters and has been involved in changing Alabama law and assisting the Alabama Department of Revenue in writing tax regulations.

### **Women's Section**

The Women's Section was created to meet the needs of all female members of the Alabama State Bar. The purpose of the section is to provide its members with opportunities to network and communicate, enhance their level of bar participation and promote the advancement of women in the legal profession. Section membership is open to all ASB members.

### **Workers' Compensation Law**

The Workers' Compensation Law Section seeks to raise the awareness and understanding of the bar community with regard to workers' compensation legal matters.

### **Young Lawyers Section**

The Young Lawyers Section of the Alabama State Bar is composed of all lawyers who are 36 years of age and under or who have been admitted to the bar for three years or less. The section conducts various seminars throughout the year for lawyers and other professionals. It also sponsors service projects designed to aid in understanding of the law, assist in solving legal problems, and promote community service.

The purpose of the Young Lawyers Section is to encourage the participation of newly admitted lawyers in the practice of law; enhance relationships among young lawyers, Alabama State Bar members, the public and businesses; promote the professional, personal and civic development, welfare, interests and education of the section and the bar; and to provide an environment which fosters cooperation between and among young and

newly admitted lawyers in the profession thereby enhancing the profession as a whole.

## SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION

A quick glance through the attorneys section of any Yellow Pages directory will make it clear that many lawyers concentrate in one or more specific type of legal matter. In fact, most limit the range of matters they handle. An increasing number of lawyers are choosing to be recognized as having special knowledge and experience by becoming certified specialists in certain fields of law. Specialty certification could be part of your professional goals.

Lawyers who are certified as specialists have been recognized by independent professional certifying organizations as having an enhanced level of skill, as well as substantial involvement in established legal specialty areas. Certifying organizations require lawyers to demonstrate special training, experience and knowledge to ensure that recognition as a certified specialist is meaningful and reliable.

Specialty certification programs available to lawyers are growing both in numbers and variety. In 1993, the American Bar Association (ABA) adopted a set of voluntary national standards, along with a set of procedures to accredit specialty certification programs. The standards were designed to establish reasonable and valid criteria to accredit programs that grant specialty certification to qualified lawyers and to provide state authorities with a basis for approving programs which seek recognition in their jurisdictions.

### What does ABA accreditation mean?

ABA accreditation signifies that a certifying organization's program has been reviewed by the ABA and found to meet the Standards for Accreditation of Specialty Certification Programs for Lawyers. The accreditation standards were developed to provide both lawyers and clients with a way to identify those certification programs that employ adequate methods and criteria to reliably recognize experienced legal specialists. To obtain ABA accreditation for a program, a certifying organization must show, among other things, that:

- It is dedicated to the identification of lawyers who exhibit an advanced level of skill and expertise, and that it is dedicated to the development and improvement of the professional competence of lawyers.
- It possesses the organizational and financial resources to carry out its certification program on a continuing basis, and that the key personnel have - by experience, education and professional background - the ability to direct and carry out such programs.
- The requirements and procedures for certifying lawyers are not arbitrary, can be clearly understood and easily applied and that they do not discriminate against any lawyers seeking certification on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.
- Each specialty area in which certification is offered is an area of the law in which significant numbers of lawyers regularly practice

and is described in terms which are understandable to both lawyers and potential clients.

### ABA accredited specialty certification programs require their lawyers to:

- Provide evidence of substantial involvement in the specialty area.
- Provide references from lawyers and judges.
- Pass a written examination covering the substantive and procedural law in the specialty area.
- Demonstrate completion of at least 36 hours of continuing legal education courses in the specialty area in the three year period preceding the lawyer's application for certification.
- Be admitted to practice in one or more states and be a member in good standing.
- Be recertified at least every five years and be subject to revocation or certification if they fail to meet program requirements.

Please visit [www.alabar.org/resources/specialization](http://www.alabar.org/resources/specialization) for the list of certifying agencies approved in Alabama and a list of the available fields of specialization. Absent specialty certification, an Alabama lawyer may not represent that they are "specialized" in a particular area of the law.





## LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE

The Lawyer Referral Service is a program of the Alabama State Bar which strives to match members of the public who can afford to pay an attorney, but do not have one, with an attorney who can handle their specific legal issue. A person who has a legal problem and cannot afford to pay for legal counsel is directed to contact either Legal Services or the ASB Volunteer Lawyers Program.

When a potential client calls the Lawyer Referral Service, he or she is asked to briefly explain his or her legal problem. The Lawyer Referral Service representative asks the caller's name, address and telephone number and gives the caller the name of one lawyer who practices in the appropriate area of law if one is available in that county. The LRS representative then immediately notifies the lawyer by email and includes the potential client's contact information. Potential clients may also obtain a referral online at [www.alabar.org/lrs-form](http://www.alabar.org/lrs-form).

Lawyers who participate in the LRS agree to charge no more than \$50 for an initial 30-minute consultation. You may elect to waive the initial consultation fee if that is your normal practice, but you are not required to do so. The purpose of the initial consultation is to help the client assess his or her legal problem, determine if additional legal services are needed and explain the client's legal options. If the problem requires legal work beyond the initial consultation and you decide to accept the client, you and the client must negotiate your fee as you normally would with any other client. Be sure to discuss any additional fees if you feel that additional legal work is needed. The Lawyer Referral Service encourages you to obtain a signed written fee agreement from

the client before you proceed with any legal work beyond the first 30-minute consultation.

All panel members of the Lawyer Referral Service must be licensed in Alabama, must be members in good standing of the Alabama State Bar and must maintain professional liability insurance coverage of at least \$100,000/\$300,000 in order to be considered for referral.

ASB members renew membership in the service in September of each year. The fee for membership is \$100 per year and includes up to 10 practice areas. Additional practice areas are available for \$5 each per year.

In order to support the advertising activities of the service, members of the service agree to remit a percentage fee to the service in large cases. The percentage fee is 5% of each fee between \$1,000 and \$5,000 received as a result of a referral from the service. No remittance is required on fees of less than \$1,000 and no percentage fee shall exceed \$250 (5% of \$5,000).

You may join the Lawyer Referral Service by filling out an application and returning it with a copy of your professional liability declaration page and a check for \$100 (plus the fee for any additional practice areas over the 10 included ones) to the attention of the Lawyer Referral Service Representative, or by going online to [www.alabar.org/membership/lawyer-referral-service](http://www.alabar.org/membership/lawyer-referral-service).

We urge you to join the Lawyer Referral Service. By doing so, you will help to improve the administration of justice while also having the opportunity to engage in ethical client development activities.



# VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM

Alabama lawyers are unique in many ways and one of the most important is that Alabama lawyers give back. Each year, thousands of Alabama lawyers donate their professional skills, time and expertise to assist low-income families and individuals who cannot afford to hire a lawyer and would otherwise be unable to receive access to civil legal assistance. Volunteer Lawyers Programs across Alabama makes it possible for lawyers in Alabama to provide meaningful, organized and exceptional pro bono service by screening individuals in need and carefully matching qualifying clients with volunteer attorneys. This pro bono work is critical for families living in poverty and highly fulfilling for the attorneys who provide the service.

Currently, Alabama has five Volunteer Lawyer Programs (VLPs): Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program, Volunteer Lawyers Program Birmingham, Madison County Volunteer Lawyers Program, Montgomery County Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program and South Alabama Volunteer Lawyers Program. We rely on the generosity and expertise of approximately 3,650 volunteer attorneys to fulfill our mission.

By conservative estimates, there are more than 723,000 persons living below the federal poverty level in Alabama. With limited staff and budgets, Alabama's federally funded Legal Services program cannot handle all of the legal problems of Alabama's low income population. As a result, individuals find themselves waiting for or even going without legal representation in matters crucial to their well-being.

You are the answer! By contributing even a small amount of your expertise, you could solve the life-shattering legal problems that confront many of the low-income persons living in our state. As we welcome you to the practice of law in Alabama, we hope that you will consider becoming a member of this community of service by voluntarily agreeing to handle no less than two civil case referrals over the next 12 months. If this is impossible for you right now, other options are available through the programs to serve low-income Alabamians, such as volunteering at an "advice only" legal clinic, serving as a speaker at a VLP sponsored training seminar or even answering legal questions posted online at [AlabamaLegalAnswers.org](http://AlabamaLegalAnswers.org).

The VLP offers you a simple, well-organized mechanism for fulfilling your professional responsibility to make legal counsel available to indigents consistent with a true sense of professionalism and Rule 6.1 of the *Alabama Rules of Professional Conduct*. Equally important, our volunteer attorneys gain excellent client and courtroom experience since they are fully in charge of their pro bono cases. Cases accepted by volunteer attorneys are covered by the program's malpractice insurance. Additionally volunteers receive CLE credit for cases handled

through the program. Most important of all, VLP attorneys gain great personal satisfaction from helping the less fortunate and from making a positive, visible difference in their communities.

Please consider joining today with many of your peers who have already volunteered their services through these important programs.

## Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program



(serving 60 counties)  
415 Dexter Avenue  
P.O. Box 671  
Montgomery, Alabama 36101  
334-269-1515  
1-888-857-8571 (client intake line)  
[www.alabar.org](http://www.alabar.org)



## Birmingham Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program (serving Jefferson County)

2021 2nd Avenue North  
Birmingham, Alabama 35203  
205-250-5198  
[www.vlpbirmingham.org](http://www.vlpbirmingham.org)



## Madison County Volunteer Lawyers Program (serving Madison County)

P.O. 2913  
Huntsville, Alabama 35804  
256-539-2275  
[www.vlpmadisoncounty.org](http://www.vlpmadisoncounty.org)



## Montgomery County Volunteer Lawyers Program (serving Montgomery County)

251 South Lawrence Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104  
334-265-0222  
[www.montgomeryvlp.org](http://www.montgomeryvlp.org)



## South Alabama Volunteer Lawyers Program (Serving Baldwin, Clarke, Mobile and Washington counties)

56 St. Joseph Street, Suite 312  
Mobile, Alabama 36602  
251-433-6693  
[www.savlp.org](http://www.savlp.org)



---

[www.alabar.org](http://www.alabar.org)

415 Dexter Avenue • Montgomery, Alabama 36104