



# Division for Bar Services

## Impact of Economic Downturn on State and Local Bars Survey

March 2009

All responding bars (58)

### 1. Please indicate your bar association type:

Answer		%
Unified state bar		20%
Voluntary state bar		9%
Local bar with 2,000 or more members		36%
Local bar with less than 2,000 members		35%

**2. How have your membership numbers been**

### affected by the economic downturn?

Answer		%
Our membership has increased		11%
Our membership has decreased		15%
Too soon to tell		24%
Our membership has remained relatively static		51%



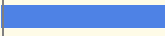

### 2. Have you noticed a downturn in attendance at any of the following events?

Question	Yes	No	Too early to tell/don't know
Annual meeting	7	15	29
CLE programming	15	28	10
Social events	9	28	15

**3. Please indicate any other events at which you have recently experienced a change in attendance/participation:**

- We have actually seen a marked increase in our CLE programming, because more people are staying home and attending local versus traveling to other locations.
- Fundraisers
- For some reason we had more attendees at our recent Bench-Bar Retreat than we've ever had (the price did not increase).
- We're on a calendar year and found that 2008 came in right on budget for our CLE program Also, while we have only held a few CLEs in 2009, we are about on budget with them (one had twice as many as we budgeted!) We're only slightly behind our dues collections, based on previous years. Our goal is to be indispensable to lawyers and we are about to see how we're doing in accomplishing that.
- Much harder to sell tickets to fund raisers for the bar. Firm tables are down, individual tickets are up, but maybe not enough to offset.
- Re-designed our gala with new giving levels and attendance will be excellent (210)though our net will probably go from \$52,000 to \$40,000.....but it will actually be an even more personal event and have a huge feel good component/heavy audience interaction.
- We have actually seen an increase in CLE attendance...we attribute that to the big firms stopping travel and thus the turn to the local association.
- No perceptible downturns or upturns.
- General Dinner Meetings
- law firm patrons for events more difficult to get but stayed same - number of exhibitors for conference down - small business sponsors for events down
- Nothing yet but we expect to see a higher than usual drop of members in August when our dues renewal is finished.
- So far we have not seen a reduction in attendance at our own live and video CLE programs. Attendance at all day video CLE programs from an outside vendor is down substantially.
- Our Lawyer Referral Service has grown by about 17% already this year.
- As a mandatory bar we don't have issues with attendance or participation. Anecdotally we are hearing stories that our lawyers are at risk for losing their jobs.
- HUGE increase in all section and committee meetings and receptions, especially those with a social/networking.
- Firms willing to sponsor our big event of the year were 1/2 of the previous year. No commercial sponsors this year. They all backed out.
- Possible upswing in CLE as people can't afford to travel.

**4. Have you created any of the following programs to assist your members in dealing with the economic crisis?**



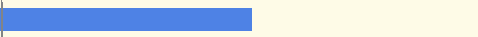
Answer		%
Dues waiver, payment plans or other options for payment of dues for those facing financial hardship		72%
Special membership rates or discounts (i.e., 15 months at 12 month rate)		21%
Career counseling		34%
Personal counseling		21%

**5. Please describe any other programs or services you have developed to assist your members in dealing with the economic crisis or provide further details on the programs listed above.**

- Our Lawyer Assistance Program is advertising that attorneys may contact that service to assist with stress and other economic issues.
- Grants for MCLE seminars. There have been more grant applicants this year.
- More networking luncheons and social functions, more free CLE. Created an improving your practice series - rainmaking, client relations, renegotiating your lease, hanging out your shingle, and marketing on a small budget. Basic CLE courses for those switching practice areas - Bankruptcy Basics for the Non-Bankruptcy practitioner, etc. Career Counseling for those members that have been laid off or switching practice areas. Improved Career Center on website. Articles in monthly publication about career development. Offer reduced dues/payment plan for those that have been laid off or dues payment cut from their firm/organization budgets. First year of practice - free membership. Conducting a membership survey on needs and challenges of our members
- Increased "Lunch and Learn" CLE on very targeted topics. Low fee.
- We held a free CLE program, "How to Survive the Crash" and our members loved it. Our core purpose is to "Advance the professional interests of members . . ." so even during good economic times, we are trying to help members economically. Our OfficeKeeper program gives practice aids; Casemaker is a free online research tool, etc.
- Two new member benefits programs have been implemented: discounted disability insurance and deep discounts on office supplies.
- Existed previously. The expectation is that many more will pay the "hardship" dues rate.
- Plan to include career advice/counseling on website. Reduced fee to attend Bench Bar Conference for Juvenile Court attorneys who are facing loss of job on July 1.
- We are currently evaluating this. Our goal will likely be to come up with two packages of benefits. The first to members, the second on a limited time basis, to non-members. These would be services benefits at reduced or no cost basis.

- We will make a bigger push to let people know about partial dues waivers--when they get their notices in June. We have provided free CLE program to about 1,000 members on surviving the crash; had about 125 at live program and around 400 on web cast, two times.
- Special CLE seminar by Dustin Coles; seminars on foreclosure law.
- Got laid off, talk to us and we'll comp you.
- Marketing in a Down Economy--for the unemployed...a networking, learning seminar by the bar.
- Dues waiver. Reduction in dues for government service.
- Payment Plans. Members are able to purchase a CLE Passport which allows them to attend any CLE sponsored solely by the Bar Association at a cost that is less than the cost of two full-day CLEs. We sponsor between 14 and 16 CLEs each fiscal year.
- Dues and seminar discounts for member who are under or unemployed.
- Offered special discounts on selected CLE programs.
- Waiver is a scholarship program with limited funds. Starting to get a lot of requests. PMA is doing career counseling and does also personally consult with others on the phone.
- Payment Plans. We also offer a "CLE Passport" to our members which allows them to attend any CLEs solely sponsor by our bar association. We routinely sponsor 14 to 16 CLEs each fiscal year.
- Creating a solo & small firm seminar to address how attorneys can "hang their single" for the first time. Many of the large firms have down-sized resulting in attorneys looking for employment.
- Peer Assistance Committee is planning more programs about coping during this time. We plan on doing something for the folks who are not employed, such as a panel to discuss job interviewing techniques and the like. We will have a panel on how the economic times are affecting the law firms. We allow those who call with financial problems to pay their dues out or have reduced them depending on the situation.
- We have been cutting costs to avoid asking for a dues increase (less travel to ABA meetings!). We are trying to have fewer meetings to put less demand on our volunteers. We are polling the Executive Committee for votes on important matters, rather than holding meetings.
- We have two counseling groups now -- 8 attorneys each working with one of our LAP therapists -- these are all unemployed lawyers in the group. We had a huge response to the program and have numerous people on a waiting list.
- We've had dues waiver for years, but usage has tripled this year. We brought in a number of people from calls to members who were about to lapse. Structured payment plans have worked for two bigger firms and one government agency that were on the fence because of budget issues.
- For those who were late with their dues payment (March 1) we have offered the opportunity to make payment although that does include a late fee of \$25. But stretching the payments out over about 7 months will be helpful.
- We haven't CREATED new programs -- we have always worked with members having financial difficulties to allow for payments over a period of time.

## 6. What adjustments, if any, have you made to your budget as a result of the economic downturn?

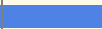



Answer		%
Increased budget over last year		11%
Decreased budget over last year		36%
Budget has remained the same		53%

## 7. If you have decreased your budget, in what areas did you make those reductions?

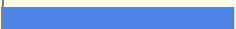


- Staff compensation and retirement benefits, staff travel, volunteer travel, printing, various member oriented programs.
- Our budget has not yet been set. An audit committee has been established. That committee will be asked to address the issue of a budget reduction.
- Unfortunately, salaries, staff, CLE income, placement income.
- One full-time employee is now two part-time hourly positions with no benefits. Reducing the number of tickets we purchase for community events. Reducing travel.
- On the revenue side, we reduced our budget for investment income, advertising income and CLE income. On the expenses side, we have made several changes and plan to make even more, such as holding one-day board meetings to eliminate the need to pay for hotel rooms, cut staff executive travel, and a few other things. We have a few "back-pocket" items to use if things go worse than we expect.
- Membership dues, own recognizance privilege, legal placement service, CLE, social events.
- We are freezing salaries of staff, my recommendation to board is freeze will not include those staff making under \$35,000. They will get 2% increases. I am suggesting to board cut backs in reimbursements to them. Also, some committee cuts are recommended. Board has not had opportunity to see or consider these recommendations yet.
- Printing - mailing - no raises. Moved the office to a smaller space and cut lease by 50%.
- Budget will be same but we asked departments to give us a "fall back" budget which would cut 20% if we determine in August (about two months after dues notices go out--we should be able to tell by then if we have a problem) that we have to cut.
- Law related education, public services
- We will develop the budget next month and how we do through March will determine where we will cut. Fiscal year ends June 30. So far we are a little behind budget but not enough to suggest draconian measures. Anticipating a deficit for sure just don't know how much. We are also at that point in the year where income generating programs have by and large been completed so it's show time.
- Revenues from legal advertising (Legal Notices publications), CLE revenues
- Staff reductions; more electronic communication
- Social events, meeting refreshment

- Travel budget to ABA meetings set to ZERO, membership dues, interest income, CLE revenue, and no budget for staff or leader development/training.
- We have a hiring freeze in place, and all non essential training and travel is cancelled.
- We have not decreased it, but we are watching it carefully and cutting out some of the perks we used to have - such as less food at receptions, maybe no booze, if we can get by with it! Really it is too early right now to tell. I think 2010 is going to be the year that we are going to feel it a lot more as folks begin preparing their budgets this year, in a down time for that year.
- Since our fiscal year begins October 1, our current budget (passed summer 2008) is unaffected by the down economy. We do anticipate a reduced budget next fiscal year, however. We probably will budget for lower CLE, LRS and dues income. Since our budget already are pretty bare bones, cuts will be difficult. All expenses will be analyzed more than usual, but personnel costs are the most likely to be reduced.
- Travel and eliminating funding for adding extra staff.
- Capital, travel, staff
- Our budget was projected to increase, but we have succeeded in keeping it level with last year's expenditures and hopefully will do even better in actual expenses. We have cut travel; we are closing the Northern Virginia office and having our four attorneys work from home offices; there are no salary increases or raises this year or next; cutting out miscellaneous expenditures such as bond letterhead, sodas, teas, etc.
- We are bracing for a 15% decline in dues revenue and a 20% drop in large event attendance. With job consolidation and a hiring freeze, we are now operating with 20% fewer staff than we had a year ago.
- We anticipate next year not providing a printed newsletter.

### 8. Has the economic downturn had an impact on any of the following programs?

Answer		%
Law-related education		21%
Pro bono		43%
Lawyer referral service		25%
Lawyer assistance program (LAP)		11%

### 9. If you have a bar foundation, please indicate how contributions to the foundation have been affected:



Answer		%
Contributions have remained about the same		49%
Contributions have decreased		46%
Contributions have increased		5%

## 11. If any of the above programs have been affected, please indicate how:

- We have had many new attorneys sign up for the lawyer referral to try and build their business or try new areas.
- We will have fewer staff members in the near future due to not replacing employees voluntarily leaving, and cannot participate in a proposed statewide pro bono program.
- CLE programs are down. We do not have a pro bono program. That is being established with the assistance of our Supreme Court. Numbers are down for those participating in the lawyer referral service. Our LAP program is before The West Virginia Supreme Court for approval.
- Have offered live seminars on mortgage foreclosures. Videotaped a "Legal Action" television program on foreclosure, which is now available via our website and You Tube.
- Interest rates that banks pay are so low that IOLTA will have a lot less money to give in 2010 which will affect our pro bono project.
- Increase in clients, increase in numbers of call the Bar is fielding and forwarding to providers.
- In Ohio, none of the above is done by the OSBA. Other organizations handle these functions.
- Budget reduced by 60%
- So far it's ahead of budget and I am knocking on wood.
- Significant increase in the requests for pro bono services. Our LRS has experienced a small drop in calls and requests for attorneys.
- Poor attendance
- Increased requests for assistance. Reduction in amount of grants.
- Our lawyers' client trust fund accounts earn such a low interest rate that it has drastically decreased the revenue which is passed on to legal aid services in Oregon.
- Many of our firms are either single or two person firms: The economic picture has had a chilling effect on taking on non fee-generating cases.
- More attorneys are expressing an interest in our pro bono programs.
- More people seeking pro bono attorneys.
- Increased request for assistance in many areas. The amount of the grants awarded has decreased.
- Low interest rates have affected IOLTA
- We have seen a reduction in the number of referrals being made, and have referred more people to pro bono programs.
- Lawyer Assistance Program calls are up; depression regarding economic conditions confronting the callers.
- Loss of IOLTA revenue has hurt funding for pro bono and legal services and LRE. More burden on the bar association.
- We don't do a lot of in-house CLE, except at the Annual Meeting. We have an affiliated organization, Virginia CLE, which does CLE. It reports a downturn in attendance. I have not heard that pro bono efforts have decreased. I haven't heard about an upsurge in use of the lawyer referral services. We do not have a LAP program.
- More demand for our group sessions.

- More lawyers have joined the LRS while fewer are being retained by clients. Many clients cannot afford the minimal consult fee.
- More lawyers signing up for referrals

**12. Have you offered CLE programming to assist members in dealing with practice issues related to the economy? (i.e., bankruptcy, foreclosures, etc.)**

Answer		%
Yes		49%
No		51%

**13. If yes, what types of CLE have you offered?**

- Foreclosure CLE
- Bankruptcy, foreclosure
- Fee collection
- Have cooperated in producing a number of free foreclosure seminars.
- Bankruptcy, foreclosure and law practice management.
- Foreclosure, bankruptcy, practice management
- As stated above, we held a free CLE on "How to Survive the Crash."
- Bankruptcy
- Foreclosures, debtor creditor issues, efficiency in law firm management.
- Through the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, our educational arm, we are offering both fields of practice. Our pro bono department is also offering foreclosure programs in conjunction with some local bar associations.
- Special CLE seminar by Dustin Coles; seminars on foreclosure law
- Foreclosure training
- We are anticipating working on a 'mortgage crisis' CLE in the near future.
- Foreclosures, Family law...impact of lost income on support, etc.
- Basic bankruptcy law, saving the distressed homeowner, stand out in a stagnant economy.
- CLE regarding foreclosures
- Bankruptcy, practicing law in tough times
- LPM program, "Surviving the Economic Downturn."
- We are working on a "Mortgage Crisis" CLE in the near future.
- We are still planning our programs for 2009. We are on a calendar year.
- Marketing Yourself in Hard Economic Times and other types of similar programming for solo and small firm practitioners
- Financial planning, alternate career
- Virginia CLE is planning on offering such programs.
- We are planning to do training on foreclosures, though.
- Bankruptcy, career development skills.

- Planning a lunch program on the economic meltdown and recovery, offering a CLE on Mechanics Liens
- We plan on offering a CLE on collecting fees.

**14. Please provide any additional comments or information on how the economic downturn has affected your members and your bar association.**

- Our next budget year begins May 1, and we are anticipating about 8% to 10% less revenue. There will be no staff raises this year, and we anticipate making no contribution to the employee 401k account after over 20 consecutive years of contributing.
- The Bar Foundation is operated separately from The West Virginia State Bar. Our income numbers are down dramatically from interest income and pro hac vice admissions.
- Numerous comments specifically from members practicing in real estate and family law.
- We are searching for ways to assist our membership short of giving them money!
- Our Foundation does not engage in fundraising.
- There is a local ad campaign with the slogan, "It's better here." Graduating law students seem to have picked up on this, as there has been a slight increase in law student members and an influx of resumes and/or students seeking job search advice.
- It has adversely impacted the level of our reserves, which negatively impacts investment income that is used to help fund operating budget. All this makes us even more conservative than we already were.
- It's just a bit too soon to tell.
- Can't tell quite yet although we hear discouraging words. In past recessions, dues were not affected, but we are hearing that this one is "different" in that it will be deeper and longer-lasting. Again, we won't know impact until end of July probably.
- IOLTA revenues drastically reduced to Foundation
- Our columbuslawyerfinder.com has grown when I would have thought members would have hesitated in paying the monthly fee of \$150. So, it must be working for current subscribers and the word is getting out. Comment to the question above on membership. I said relatively static because the number drop is only 2%.
- We have received notice from a couple large sponsors of our annual golf outing that they are pulling out this year. So far we have lost \$15,000 in sponsorship dollars.
- It sounds like they have longer accounts receivables. We're going to include economic questions in our spring membership survey.
- IOLTA is suffering tremendously: Wyoming has recently implemented an Access To Justice Commission and studying ways of financing improvements in service to the target population.
- Real estate attorneys are the worst hit. Many are closing their offices and practicing from home. We note that applications to join our 18B Assigned Counsel Plan are increasing. Our sponsors and advertisers have greatly reduced their involvement and sponsorship of programs of our bar association.
- We had to call all year end contributors for the first time and the calling was successful.

- We seem to be getting more calls from young lawyers looking for paid or unpaid internships. Our law firms who normally hire 30 clerks have only hired 10. Jobs are hard to find and lawyers and law students are taking unpaid jobs.
- Many attorneys have commented on how much their business has dropped. While we haven't seen attorney layoffs, a number of firms have reduced their support staff through layoffs and attrition. Over the past several years, it was not uncommon to see 4 to 6 job ads at any given time for legal support staff. Now it is rare to see even one.
- Big events down, small events are up. Structured giving seems steady; annual appeal is down. Named funds seem to be doing all right.
- The real answer to the question is "yes" and "no" -- we just completed a fundraising campaign (\$180,000 to be paid over a 3-year period) to continue a full-time attorney at our local legal services office (handling custody cases). We actually surpassed our goal by almost \$2,000. However, the "voluntary" \$15 contribution we tack on to our dues billings has generated less revenue than in the past -- firms seem to be reading the fine print and deducting the voluntary contribution.

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