2017 STATE & LOCAL BAR BENCHMARKS

Membership, Programming and the Legal Profession
2017 State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey: Membership, Programming and the Legal Profession

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The 2017 State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey: Membership, Programming and the Legal Profession is designed to share information on the dues structures and mandatory fees of state and local bars, and other membership-related data. This edition also includes information on entities that address issues of importance to the legal profession including the judiciary and the justice system, access to justice and governmental affairs.

All state bar associations and local bar associations with over 300 members were surveyed. Responses were received from 53 state bar associations (34 unified and 19 voluntary) and 111 local bar associations. Thank you to all the responding bar associations; we would not be able to publish this information without your input.

CATEGORIZATION OF RESPONDENTS

The results are presented by type and size of bar using these categories:

**UNIFIED STATE BARS:**
- Unified state bars with 50,000 or more members (4 respondents)
- Unified state bars with 20,000-49,999 (9 respondents)
- Unified state bars with 10,000-19,999 (7 respondents)
- Unified state bars with 5,000-9,999 (9 respondents)
- Unified state bars with fewer than 5,000 members (5 respondents)

**VOLUNTARY STATE BARS:**
- Voluntary state bars with 20,000 or more members (5 respondents)
- Voluntary state bars with 10,000-19,999 (7 respondents)
- Voluntary state bars with fewer than 10,000 members (7 respondents)

**LOCAL BARS:**
- Local bars with 8,500 or more members (6 respondents)
- Local bars with 4,000-8,499 members (13 respondents)
- Local bars with 1,700-3,999 members (23 respondents)
- Local bars with 700-1,699 members (38 respondents)
- Local bars with fewer than 700 members (31 respondents)
To provide an overview of each responding bar and the categories of respondents, we collected information on membership size, full-time staff, total budget for current fiscal year, number of sections and standing committees, and organization type.

**THE DATA**

Please note:

- The Executive Summary that follows compares cumulative data from all responding unified state, voluntary state, and local bar associations and highlights trends and significant findings. Following the executive summary are separate chapters for unified state, voluntary state, and local bars which provide charts detailing each bar’s response.
- In the Total Cost to Practice Section, states with unified bars are reported together and states with voluntary bars are reported together. Unified state bars are grouped by whether or not they perform regulatory functions. The total cost to practice in voluntary states does not include dues, as membership in the bar is not required to practice law in those states.
- Each section is bookmarked, as is each summary and chart within that section. Click on the link to the left to go directly to any section.
- N/S (not specified) indicates that a bar did not respond to a question which was applicable to it. N/A (not applicable) indicates that the question did not apply to the responding bar association.
- When applicable, trends and observations are noted referencing data collected in the 2013-2015 State and Local Bar Membership, Administration and Finance Surveys (MAF), the 2016 State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey: Membership, Leadership and Governance and the 2012 Bar Activities Inventory (BAI). Note that the universe of respondents for voluntary state bars and local bars was not uniform in 2013-2016.

**THE SURVEY**

The link to the online survey was distributed through email in June 2017 to executive directors. We offer a sincere thank you to all bar associations that provided the information to make this report possible. We hope you find it useful and welcome any suggestions for improvements.

Joanne O’Reilly  
Editor

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