

Certification Link

Your ABA Specialization Connection

Is Your Certification Program Prepared for a Disaster?

Dian Gilmore, Executive Director, American Board of Certification

Disaster will never happen to me – isn't that how that old saying goes? Think again, it can happen. Everyone knows that the Midwest is "tornado alley". The thought of having a flood seemed unthinkable until it actually occurred on June 13th. It is very sobering to see your office building on CNN and the Weather Channel.

Fortunately, the American Board of Certification was prepared for disaster. In 2007, the ABC staff, with the assistance of two college interns, scanned all of ABC's documents. Every document of the American Board of Certification was scanned, dating back to the very beginning of the organization in 1992.

In addition, our server is backed up every fifteen minutes, and a copy of our server is in a secure location in Baltimore, Maryland and the Phoenix, Arizona metropolitan area.

Our headquarters has moved to a temporary location, but we were able to have our server reconnected and operate our business. When you turn on the computers, the entire organization is right there on our computer screens in a digital format.

Our office is located on the 9th floor of the building, but there is no timeline as to when the building will be ready for occupancy. All of the utilities were located three levels below the basement, and three weeks later, power is still not restored to downtown Cedar Rapids.

I know that scanning is a very time-consuming and expensive expense, but it is definitely worth the effort. Some of my Board Members have first-hand knowledge about a natural disaster. Our former Chairman, Rudy Cerone located to the Houston, Texas branch office from New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, and two additional Board Members had a tornado go through their downtown offices in Indianapolis, Indiana and Fort Worth, Texas.



The certification process can actually be paperless – the American Board of Certification has weathered our first natural disaster and is able to operate efficiently. Please contact us at (319)365-2222 if we can ever be of assistance.

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Going Paperless - It saved ABC in Iowa, it can also save your organization!

Go green, green initiatives, LEED Certified, paperless, carbon foot print - AHHH -- it's so much to learn! Well, don't let it scare you -- whether you do one green thing in your office or home, or overhaul your entire life, every little bit helps. As you read on the front page of CertLink, going paperless is a huge benefit for more than one reason - but it's also very labor intensive and expensive if you don't already have the technological supports in place.

Here are some basic tips that you can use when turning over a new green leaf:

- Educate, Educate, Educate! Make sure the staff knows why you are doing this and about all the benefits, i.e. environmental, technological, preparing for natural disasters, financial, etc.
- Get a commitment from all those involved - it won't work if only some participate.
- Think PDF -- with the technological advances of today, who needs to print off documents and mail them. Turn them into a PDF and email them if applicable.
- Do do it all at once. If you have more than one department in your organization, do one department at a time. Set realistic goals or people will get overwhelmed and abandon the mission. It takes most mid-size organizations six months or more to make the change.
- Don't leave staff behind. Some staff are less familiar with computer programs, saving files, scanning documents, etc., -- get them the proper training now, so that major mistakes are diverted in the future
- Don't print every email you get. Ask yourself, "Do I really need to print this, or can I just save it in a 'To Do' folder on my desktop?" If you must print, print double-sided.
- Do your research. Find a server and a back-up system that works for your organization. There are companies that solely specialize in going paperless - call on them to help.
- Once your organization has gone paperless, offer your expertise to others -- this is becoming a common theme amongst most workplaces, and sharing the wealth will benefit everyone!



If this doesn't appeal to you, consider going paperless!



Opens New Jurisdictions

The NACC Child Welfare Law Certification Program recently opened in four new jurisdictions: North Carolina, Iowa, Connecticut, and the District of Columbia. This means that the NACC is currently accepting applications in 8 states: California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Tennessee. The NACC plans to have a Certification presence in all 51 jurisdictions by December 2009. Please click on the following link to the NACC Certification website where you can find the State Status Chart: <http://www.naccchildlaw.org/training/certification.html>.

As we all know, some states are "certification friendly" meaning that the states have well-developed state programs or readily welcome private programs accredited by the ABA – like the NACC. The NACC has learned that other states are either reluctant to embrace specialty certification for a variety of reasons, or simply haven't considered the issue for so long and therefore must develop or rediscover a procedure for authorizing a new private Certification program.

In expanding the NACC Child Welfare Law Certification Program, the NACC wants to reach as many attorneys as quickly as practical, in the most efficient way. When prioritizing states, the NACC looks for: a critical mass of interested child welfare attorneys; a culture of improving practice; support from the Bench; the specialty certification regulations in a state (whether a state is "certification friendly"); the availability of funding to pay for or supplement attorney application fees.

In other news, the NACC administered the Child Welfare Law Certification exam in three jurisdictions in Spring 2008: Tennessee, California, and New Mexico. Thirteen Californians, forty-three Tennesseans, and three New Mexicans took the exam. The NACC will announce the new Child Welfare Law Specialists (CWLS) in June 2008.

Child Welfare Attorney Specialization is a program of the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) whereby the NACC certifies qualified attorneys as Child Welfare Law Specialists (CWLS).

TAX LAW BOARD CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE CONDUCTS TRIAL RUN FOR POST-EXAM PEER REVIEW

In order to encourage a greater number of applicants for Florida Bar tax law certification, the Board of Legal Specialization and Education and the Tax Law Certification Committee are deferring the solicitation of peer review until after the successful completion of the tax law certification examination.

According to BLSE Chair Michael G. Tanner, the post-exam peer review process is on a trial basis for all 2008 tax law certification applicants only.

"This is a pilot program to help us determine if concerns over peer review have a substantial impact on applications for board certification," said Tanner. "We will be reviewing the results carefully."

Applicants still must submit complete applications no later than August 31, 2008. The certification committee will review all application information other than peer review prior to the examination. All application and exam information is confidential.

North Carolina Partners with University for Exam Assistance

By Denise Mullen

The NC Board of Legal Specialization (NCBLS) is pleased to announce a working agreement with the Department of Educational Research Methodology at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. The Department offers graduate degree programs as well as a Center for Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE). The Center provides educational research, development, and evaluation services to public and private agencies, including school systems, state education agencies, testing organizations, private foundations, and corporations. Since its inception in 1980, the CERE personnel have conducted research and evaluation studies supported by grants and contracts valued in excess of \$2.5 million.

NCBLS is working with Dr. Terry Ackerman, Department Chair, and Deb Bartz, Director of CERE to review some of our recent exams and provide detailed psychometric evaluation information to help improve both reliability and validity. Ackerman and Bartz, as well as Kinge Mbella, a Doctoral student, presented a workshop to specialization committee members in May. The workshop focused on exam writing and grading procedures and included a handbook with detailed examples that committees will use as they update exams each year.

NCBLS is thrilled to have located psychometric expertise at a local university that can provide excellent service at a reasonable cost. You can read more about the UNC-G programs at <http://www.uncg.edu/erm/ermCERE.html>



TESTING DATES!

DUI Defense Law Certification Examination Application

Deadline: August 31, 2008
Examination:
NCDD 2009 Winter Session
Atlantis Hotel
Paradise Island, Bahamas
January 14, 2009



Application can be found on the NCDD Website www.ncdd.com Contact Rhea Kirk for more information:

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