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COVID-19 Resources for Bar Leaders from the ABA & Other Bar-Related Organizations

Recent COVID-19 News, Resources for Lawyers and Bars

As the COVID-19 crisis continues to evolve, the ABA, its entities, and bar-related organizations are addressing the challenges that it presents for bars, the legal profession, and access to justice. For example, last week, ABA President Judy Perry Martinez sent a [letter](#) to the director of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, asking that, in the event of a national "stay at home" order, legal services be included in the definition of "essential services." Lawyers are embracing technology and working from home as much as possible, she wrote, but some legal services must be delivered in person, whether because state law requires it or because it is a best practice. The recording from last week's [Leading in a Time of Crisis webinar](#), led by John Phelps and co-presented by the ABA Division for Bar Services and the National Conference of Bar Presidents, is now available. Also, the ABA Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness has updated its [resource page](#) with pandemic-specific information for the legal profession.

Michigan Eliminates Mental Health Questions for Bar Applicants, Starting Next Year

Beginning in February 2021, bar applicants in Michigan will be asked specifically whether their conduct and behavior in the past five years could affect their ability to practice law, rather than being more broadly required to disclose any mental health conditions and treatment history. The change, which is in line with recommendations from the Conference of Chief Justices, the ABA, and the National Task Force for Lawyer Well-Being, was made earlier this month via an order issued by the Michigan Supreme Court. [The Detroit News](#) has more details, including quotes from a statement by Chief Justice Bridget McCormack on the subject of mental health and well-being among law students and new lawyers, and why this change was needed.

Lockdown in New York Leads to Online Elections for State Bar of Texas and Texas Young Lawyers Association

In an emergency order issued last week, the Texas Supreme Court said that voting in the president-elect races for both the State Bar of Texas and the Texas Young Lawyers Association must be conducted online only, because the New York-based election vendor that processes the organizations' paper ballots has been affected by COVID-19. The problem isn't that anyone at the vendor company is known to have the virus, but that the company is subject to New York's lockdown order, and the bar felt uncertain that the vendor's staff would be back at work in time to count the paper ballots. The high court also extended the voting period until May 29; the bar will use the additional time to get the word out to members about this change in procedure. What does Texas bar President Randy Sorrels have to say about this surprising effect of COVID-19? Find out at [Texas Lawyer](#).

Legal Tech Companies Offer COVID-19 Funding, Tools, Information

Last week, legal tech company Clio announced that it is committing \$1 million toward

helping law firms meet the challenges that lie ahead, related to business continuity and remote work because of COVID-19. According to [Above the Law](#), Clio envisions this aid taking a variety of forms, such as acting as a connection point for individuals and organizations to share expertise and mental health resources, helping firms get set up on Clio's platform, and providing direct financial aid to law firms, legal support organizations, and charities. Also last week, the technology subsidiary of the law firm Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati launched a free tool to help businesses develop pandemic-related policies for working from home, sick leave, and other issues, using automated policies created by the firm's employment attorneys and a questionnaire system that can gather information from employees. At [LawSites](#), learn more about the COVID-19 tool and about the tech subsidiary, called SixFifty. Meanwhile, online legal research company Fastcase has created a [COVID-19 resource hub](#), offering free legislative and government updates and pandemic-related content from a variety of media outlets.



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