

MISSION

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

The WSBA's overriding purpose—its reason for existence

The mission of the Washington State Bar Association is to serve the public and the members of the Bar, to ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Core values that inform strategic goals and decision making

PRINCIPLE ONE

Professional Excellence

The WSBA supports licensed legal professionals to help them improve their delivery of legal services and achieve professional excellence and success.

PRINCIPLE TWO

Integrity

The WSBA fosters and maintains high standards of competence, professionalism, and ethics among its members to protect the public and improve the quality of legal services.

PRINCIPLE THREE

Access to Justice

The WSBA champions a legal system that is accessible to all and inspires public trust and confidence.

PRINCIPLE FOUR

Diversity

The WSBA promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal system and the legal profession to improve the quality of legal services available to the public and to improve public trust and confidence in the legal system.

PRINCIPLE FIVE

Fiscal Responsibility

The WSBA manages the business of the Bar Association in a prudent, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

PRINCIPLE SIX

Staff & Volunteer Support

The WSBA fosters an organizational culture that equips staff and volunteers to fulfill the organizational mission, consistent with these Guiding Principles.

STRATEGIC GOALS (2026-2029)

The areas of most urgent focus needed to operationalize the mission, refreshed on a 3-year cycle

1 ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Advance a fair, inclusive, effective, and accessible legal system for all people in our state — ensuring all Washingtonians have the resources, knowledge, and support needed to seek justice.

2 TECHNOLOGY

Provide legal professionals with education and resources to understand and optimally utilize emerging technologies to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality, ethical legal services, improve career satisfaction, and increase the public's access to legal services.

3 CULTURE

Foster a culture where inclusivity, belonging, civility, and wellness are foundational, ensuring that all legal professionals can thrive and serve their communities and clients with excellence and integrity.

4 GOVERNANCE

Commit to a continuous process to enhance and improve WSBA governance structures and processes to ensure transparency, accountability, and inclusive engagement, while effectively serving the needs of the legal profession and the public and appropriately preserving confidential information.

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Updated on 10/27/25

STRATEGIC GOALS (2026-2029)

The areas of most urgent focus needed to operationalize the mission, refreshed on a 3-year cycle

GOAL ONE

Access to Justice

Advance a fair, inclusive, effective, and accessible legal system for all people in our state — ensuring all Washingtonians have the resources, knowledge, and support needed to seek justice.

OUR OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Increase the public's knowledge of legal services, including when they are needed and how to access them.
- Provide meaningful tools, models, solutions, and support to legal professionals to expand legal services to communities lacking adequate access — including rural communities, criminal defendants, low- and moderate-income people, and historically marginalized groups.
- Educate, support, and inspire legal employers to cultivate workplace cultures that prioritize and incentivize pro bono and public service work.
- Promote systemic equity practices to ensure that all people have access to quality legal services and fair outcomes, regardless of identity or financial resources.
- Strengthen the accessibility, effectiveness, and funding of the courts, ensuring they are welcoming and equipped to serve all.
- Support funding and policy efforts to ensure that legal aid providers, are well-resourced, accessible, effective, and are able to serve people holistically across the civil and criminal systems.
- Encourage, support, and uplift partnerships and collaboration among legal aid providers and with justice-related and community-based organizations, Supreme Court commissions and boards, and across civil and criminal legal system providers.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- The public demonstrates increased knowledge of when legal services are needed and how to access them.
- Historically underserved and under-resourced communities express increased trust and confidence in the legal system.
- Historically underserved and under-resourced communities are increasingly able to successfully navigate the courts and legal system regardless of whether they are self-represented or represented by a legal professional.
- Legal professionals increasingly report that they themselves and their employers value and support pro bono and public service work.
- Case resolution time is improved.
- Public defenders are better able to meet the needs of the legal system while complying with the WSBA Caseload Standards.
- Prosecutors have improved capacity to meet the needs of the legal system.
- The capacity of civil legal aid is increased.

STRATEGIC GOALS (2026-2029)

The areas of most urgent focus needed to operationalize the mission, refreshed on a 3-year cycle

GOAL TWO

Technology

Provide legal professionals with education and resources to understand and optimally utilize emerging technologies to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality, ethical legal services, improve career satisfaction, and increase the public's access to legal services.

OUR OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Provide legal professionals with tools, models, solutions, and support to responsibly and effectively use emerging technologies, including competence with respect to cybersecurity, thereby enhancing career satisfaction and public access to legal services.
- Increase access to and participation in technology-focused education.
- Increase the effective, appropriate, and secure use of technology by legal professionals to expand meaningful and equitable access to legal services. This includes understanding the limitations of technology, including lack of access to technology and potential AI-driven discriminatory or biased treatment.
- Support efforts to ensure the effective, appropriate, and secure use of technology in the courts, other dispute resolution systems, and the broader legal system to expand meaningful and equitable access to justice across all jurisdictions and geographies. This includes understanding the limitations of technology, including lack of access to technology and potential AI-driven discriminatory or biased treatment.
- Monitor and address ethical challenges posed by emerging legal technology and develop accessible and meaningful ethics educational resources for legal professionals.
- Evolve and adapt our regulatory system to ensure the public can benefit from and is protected from harm by legal services delivered through emerging technology.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- Legal professionals demonstrate increased competence and confidence in utilizing emerging technology and managing cyber-security risk.
- There is increased utilization of WSBA tools, models, solutions, and support.
- Legal professionals express increased satisfaction with respect to WSBA tools, models, solutions, and support.
- Legal professionals express increased job satisfaction as a result of integrating emerging technologies into their practices.
- More low- and moderate-income people, including those in rural communities, experience equitable access to legal services through the effective, appropriate, and secure use of technology.
- Increased use of technology in the legal system that results in greater access, quicker case resolution, and improved satisfaction by court and other legal system users.
- There is increased public protection as a result of effective regulation of legal services delivered through emerging technology.

STRATEGIC GOALS (2026-2029)

The areas of most urgent focus needed to operationalize the mission, refreshed on a 3-year cycle

GOAL THREE

Culture

Foster a culture where inclusivity, belonging, civility, and wellness are foundational, ensuring that all legal professionals can thrive and serve their communities and clients with excellence and integrity.

OUR OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Collaborate with courts, law schools and other legal education providers to model, inspire, support and uplift a legal culture that is resilient to its unique challenges, model civility and integrity in resolving conflict, and careers that support a meaningful and joyful life.
- Educate, support, inspire, and recognize legal employers, including the courts, to cultivate workplace cultures that attract and retain a workforce reflective of the public we serve and foster belonging and wellness in the workplace.
- Support and inspire people to pursue careers in law by addressing barriers faced by underrepresented groups—including those from rural communities, first-generation professionals, and historically marginalized identities.
- Support and uplift legal professional groups, including affinity, county, and specialty bar associations, in their efforts to promote legal communities that foster belonging and wellness.
- Facilitate meaningful mentorship opportunities, host events, and develop resources that celebrate success stories while fostering professional connections.
- Evolve wellness-focused activities offered by WSBA to meet potential participants where they are at, address the specific needs of specific communities, and approach wellness broadly to include satisfaction with the practice of law.
- Increase awareness of and participation in wellness focused activities offered by WSBA and other organizations with the goal of promoting a culture within the legal profession that understands and prioritizes the value of wellbeing.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- Legal employers increasingly model inclusive, non-discriminatory hiring and retention practices that result in a workforce that reflects the diversity of Washington, including at the leadership level.
- Legal professionals report improved satisfaction and a sense of belonging at work and in the legal profession.
- Legal employers increasingly implement initiatives to support the wellness of their workforce.
- Legal professionals report improved work-life balance and a reduced sense of burnout.
- Legal professionals report greater professional enjoyment and appropriate treatment by legal colleagues.
- Applications for admission to law school and to the profession increasingly reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.
- The legal profession increasingly reflects the diversity of the state of Washington.

STRATEGIC GOALS (2026-2029)

The areas of most urgent focus needed to operationalize the mission, refreshed on a 3-year cycle

GOAL FOUR

Governance

Commit to a continuous process to enhance and improve WSBA governance structures and processes to ensure transparency, accountability, and inclusive engagement, while effectively serving the needs of the legal profession and the public and appropriately preserving confidential information.

OUR OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Enhance transparency (where appropriate) and accountability with improved mechanisms and strategies for communicating with and gathering input, feedback, and perspectives from members of the public and legal community.
- Optimize WSBA's governance structures and processes through updates of and revisions to bylaws, policies, and practices,
- Foster a partnership among staff, board and other volunteers built on a foundation of respect and role clarity.
- Deepen and broaden WSBA leaderships' ongoing commitments to addressing inclusion, belonging, and equity issues with respect to legal professionals and members of the public in the legal system.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- There is increasingly meaningful engagement with members of the public and legal community in WSBA decision making.
- Legal professionals, WSBA staff, board members and other volunteers, sections, Supreme Court Boards and other WSBA entities, members of the public, and other stakeholders report increased satisfaction and trust with respect to WSBA governance and decision making.
- Candidates for the Board and Board members demonstrate an understanding of their duties and the expectations of their role.
- There are improved accountability mechanisms for Board members and other volunteers.
- Board decision-making effectiveness and efficiency is improved.
- Volunteerism increases across WSBA and volunteers increasingly report that they feel they belong and their entities actively promote a culture of inclusion and belonging.
- Engagement in WSBA elections increases.
- WSBA's volunteer community better reflects the diversity of the State of Washington.