

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

WSBA ENTITY ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2022: October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

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

Instructions: In accordance with the WSBA Bylaws, Committees, Other Bar Entities (excluding Regulatory Boards¹), Councils, and Sections must submit an annual report to the Executive Director. The information below should reflect the activities and outcomes from the fiscal year October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022. Information in the annual report will be provided to the Executive Director and Board of Governors, and may be published for other purposes, such as *Bar News*, volunteer recruitment messaging, and other WSBA activity-based reporting.

It is recommended that completion of the annual report be a collaborative effort with members of your entity, the BOG liaison, and staff liaison.

Submission Deadline is Monday, October 17: Please submit by emailing to Sections Program Specialist Carolyn MacGregor at carolynm@wsba.org.

Name of Entity:	WSBA Family Law Section
Chair or Co-Chairs:	Elizabeth Helm
Staff Liaison: <i>(include name, job title, and department if known)</i>	Carolyn MacGregor
Board of Governors Liaison:	Sunitha Anjilvel and Kari Petrasek
Purpose of Entity: <i>May be stated in Bylaws, Charter, Court Rule, etc.</i>	
The purpose of the Family Law Section is to involve all interested members of the WSBA in order to benefit its members, their clients, and the general public by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing the opportunity and forum for the interchange of ideas in all areas of law affecting families and juveniles;• Initiating and implementing common projects, including but not limited to an annual meeting;• Reviewing pending legislation and court rules, providing input and timely responses to pending and proposed legislation and court rules and development of proposed statutory enactments to improve and to facilitate the administration of justice within the Section's area of interest and expertise.	

- Host CLE’s to improve the quality of family law practice; and undertaking such other service and participation of our members as may be of benefit to the members, the legal profession, and the public.

Strategy to Fulfill Purpose:

Legislative Efforts: FLEC works with BOG staff and the legislative review process to promote and enhance our ability to perform the section’s legislative duties. Of particular importance is to identify potential unintended consequences of draft legislation. FLEC’s BOG liaison reports monthly to our committee members and this contributes, we believe, to ongoing communication with current BOG members and keeping our membership informed. FLEC strategy is to work collaboratively with a variety of legislative, judicial, other section and bar association or community groups on a variety of legislative and educational issues of interest to our membership.

Education Programming and CLEs: Despite the ongoing pandemic, we continued to present the annual Family Law Midyear program (virtually again in 2022) with the capable assistance of WSBA technical staff. We did not present a Basic Skills seminar this past year due to Covid-19 limitations and because we are updating the curriculum to include guidance as to best practice for both in-person and video litigation practices and in particular to address race equity programming concerns. We look forward to an in person (possibly Hybrid) 2023 Mid-Year. We also plan to put on a winter CLE and continue to work on developing our CLE programming.

Workgroups and Collaboration: Our members continue to be involved in important and impactful collaborations. (i.e. Workgroup with Judge Forbes on simplifying/streamlining RCW 26.09.191).

Member Engagement: We continue to evaluate and seek input from our membership and other members of the legal community to better serve our communities. We host a list serve for our members which offers an important forum for sharing information and expertise. We are improving our presence on the Family Law Section website. We are also considering whether to implement either a lunchtime CLE series or a quarterly newsletter to our membership. We also have discussed having a law student representative on FLEC.

How does the entity’s purpose help further the mission of the WSBA “to serve the public and the members of the Bar, to ensure integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice”?

We seek to recruit new members to the executive committee to emphasize diversity, including age and length of time in practice, geographic representation and encourage legal professionals of all of diverse backgrounds to participate, to assure that in our service, we incorporate and honor diverse perspectives in our work. It is our goal in the upcoming 2022-2023 year to make even more headway to advance the WSBA’s REJI goals and to challenge structural inequities. We maintain a list serve for section members to discuss legal issues and to build community. This gives practitioners, particularly in a pandemic, a safe way to seek advice and information from other legal professionals. We have surveyed our membership to gather a wide range of viewpoints and to help guide the section’s future activity. We work to provide education and scholarship to new members or those who are disadvantaged in our community so that attendance can be broad-based. We are currently in the process of revamping our Basic Skills Seminar to assist new legal professionals or those new to family law and to be more comprehensive providing training for both virtual practice/in-person practice and

around equity concerns. We provide scholarship grants for this seminar as well as our annual mid-year. We provide a means of membership engagement at seminars; list serves and at informal settings (pandemic permitting). We believe these efforts contribute to professionalism and collegiality. We have circulated the civil legal needs report and the legal deserts report to assist our development of activities and be mindful of ways in which we can work in partnership with others in our legal community to assist the public and our members. We worked this past year with the legislature (UUCCTA, UFLAA, HB 1901), in virtual workgroups, on the simplification/streamlining of RCW 26.09.191. We continue to advocate for WSBA policies which recognize the sections expertise and the need for timely comment on pending legislation to avoid unintended negative consequences. We have been an active part of the discussions around bar structure and maintain our position that a unified bar will most benefit our membership. These collaborative activities demonstrate FLEC’s efforts to foster professionalism and collegiality. Our committee members also actively participate and respond on the Section list serves and at the Section Leaders monthly meetings and this approach keeps membership educated, engaged in legal discussions in civil forums, up-to-date and interacting with our legislators and trial courts and is an integral part of contributing to justice.

2021 -2022 Entity Accomplishments:

In a year where multiple organizations were challenged by a reduction of volunteers (generally believed to be a result of pandemic fatigue), the Family Law section continued its active work. The annual mid-year was a success with attendance maintained at our historic levels. We continued our annual analysis of pending legislation in our subject areas and maintained relationships with influential legislators. Our greatest accomplishments with respect to legislation included UUCCTA, UFLAA and HB 1901. We strengthened our relationships with WSBA staff while asserting our perspective on a variety of issues. WSBA was dealing with a number of “big picture” policy considerations such as long-range planning and structure analysis. Throughout those processes, FLEC made sure that section considerations were not forgotten. In fact, we made sure that sections were protected in these critical areas. FLEC itself held regular meetings that generally lasted most of a day (far longer than those by other sections) and our process allowed for deep discussions on all of our issues with input from various perspectives. FLEC meetings are conducted with respect for all members’ input, an approach that is not always mirrored at other WSBA meetings. We continue to build and maintain relationships with other sections. We continue to have membership interest in serving on FLEC, a sign of our section’s wellbeing. Our finances are maintained in a thoughtful manner with budget considerations discussed by the entire FLEC. In the past year, our executive committee invited guest speakers to help us be informed and to enhance our work for the family law community – In 2021-22 these speakers included: • Michael Cherry, Practice of Law Board, re Artificial Intelligence • Judge Jennifer Forbes, Superior Court Judges Association, re CONDUCT (CJC) CANON 2, RULE 2.2-IMPARTIALITY AND FAIRNESS AND RULE 2.6-ENSURING THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD • Jim Wilcher, Web Design, re possible update to Section website. We anticipate a very active 2023 as we continue our work on behalf of the Family Law Section members and the general family law community and the public.

Looking Ahead: 2022-2023 Top Goals & Priorities:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Improve Member Engagement and Communication with specific emphasis on advancing diversity, equity and inclusion to achieve the organizational goals as set forth in the WSBA Diversity Council’s recommendations and the REJI commitments that the WSBA has endorsed. Access to Justice remains a central goal of the work we do on FLEC and within our section to advance our service to the public. |
|----------|---|

2	Improve legislative relations impacted by WSBA policy. Continue to review, comment and testify regarding family-law related legislation. Continue to review and comment regarding proposed court rules.
3	Collaborative Participation with Judicial and Legislative Workgroups. Work to improve FLEC’s relationship with BOG. FLEC’s liaison to BOG has worked hard to improve the existing relationship and those efforts will continue.
4	Partnership with organizations (internal and external) to Improve practice opportunities and public service in legal deserts and marginalized communities.
5	Revamp current curriculum for Basic Skills to address diversity and equity concerns and consider additional scholarship opportunities to enhance more diverse and broad-based attendance. Continue to present high quality education and seminars to our membership and the legal community. Continue to emphasize equity, diversity and inclusion and the need to address structural inequities not only as to FLEC itself but also with respect to all FLEC activities.

Please describe how this entity is addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion:

How have you elicited input from a variety of perspectives in your decision-making? What have you done to promote a culture of inclusion within the board or committee? What has your committee/board done to promote equitable conditions for members from historically underrepresented backgrounds to enter, stay, thrive, and eventually lead the profession? Other?

We have implemented surveys to our membership to broaden input from a variety of perspectives and circulated both the civil legal needs reports (2003 and 2015 updates) and small town and rural deserts report to members for consideration in our future work. We are currently revamping our CLE curriculum (Basic Skills) for new practitioners to family law to promote and incorporate consideration of race equity concerns. We are exploring the use of scholarship funds to enhance attendance to CLE programming for those from marginalized and traditionally underrepresented communities to implement in the 2021 year. We have engaged in a concerted effort to engage and recruit committee members of diverse background to our committee and help us to hear a wider range of viewpoints. We continue to evaluate our practices and our recruiting methods to better engage with underrepresented communities and to ensure that we are connecting with and responding to the needs of all family law attorneys in Washington State.

Please share feedback regarding the support and engagement provided by WSBA.

For example:

- *Quality of WSBA staff support/services, including technology solutions*
- *Involvement with Board of Governors, including assigned BOG liaison*
- *Ideas you have on ways WSBA can continue to strengthen/support your entity.*

For the most part since the inception of the Family Law Section, FLEC has maintained a regular presence at the Board of Governors meetings. Our current Liaison – Nancy Hawkins – has continued a strong Family Law Section presence at the meetings. We are pleased with the improvements we have seen in our relationship with the BOG; we are dedicated to moving in a positive direction. FLEC works well with WSBA staff and makes payments to

WSBA to cover the cost of any staff support we receive. They are routinely helpful in identifying CLE locations, obtaining budget and contract information, and handling administrative issues we otherwise would struggle to navigate. Our staff liaison has been professional, knowledgeable and provided consistent and courteous assistance. They are timely in responding to any questions we ask and also help us to understand WSBA policy and navigate our obligations. WSBA staff played a critical role in the success of the Midyear CLE which was managed remotely again this year. They have also been responsive to feedback from our Section regarding WSBA policies and how they impact the Section, membership recruitment and participation. We continue to hold the same concerns regarding BOG support of our Section and how BOG implemented policy may negatively impact our ability to serve our membership. FLEC works with WSBA staff and makes payments to WSBA to cover the cost of any staff support we receive.

SECTIONS ONLY: Please quantify your section's 2021-2022 member benefits: <i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3000 Scholarships, donations, grants awarded; • 4 mini-CLEs produced 	0	Newsletters/publications produced
	0	Mini-CLEs produced
	1	Co-sponsored half-day, full-day and/or multi-day CLE seminars with WSBA
	0	Co-sponsored half-day, full-day and/or multi-day CLE seminars with <i>non</i> -WSBA entity
	0	Receptions/forums hosted or co-hosted
	0	Recognitions/Awards given
	0	New Lawyer Outreach events/benefits
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Other (please describe):
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Other (please describe):
SECTIONS ONLY: Please quantify your section's 2021-2022 legislative activity.	7	Bills reviewed
	7	Bills tracked
	9	Comments proposed
	0	Bills proposed/drafted
Entity Detail & Demographics Report:		

To Be Completed by WSBA Staff	
Size of Entity:	17
Membership Size: (for Sections Only) <i>(As of September 30, 2022)</i>	1013
Number of Applicants for FY23 <i>(October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022)</i>	7
Number of current volunteer vacancies for this entity	0
FY22 Revenue (\$): For Sections Only: <i>As of September 30, 2022</i>	\$60,602.50
Direct Expenses: <i>As of September 30, 2022. For Sections, this does not include the Per-Member- Charge.</i>	\$21,701.72

ⁱ Supreme Court Boards (Access to Justice Board, Disciplinary Board, LLLT Board, Limited Practice Board, MCLE Board and Practice of Law Board) provide annual reports to WSBA to support its responsibility under [GR 12.3](#), to provide oversight and monitor compliance with applicable rules and orders. Boards have the option to use the WSBA template or to share their annual reports to the Washington Supreme Court.