



2026 SECTION LEADERSHIP GUIDE

Mission of the MSBA

The Maine State Bar Association promotes the honor, dignity and professionalism of lawyers, advances the knowledge, skills and interests of its members, and supports the public interest in a fair and effective system of justice.

Congratulations! You are a leader of a Maine State Bar Association section. Leading a section is a prestigious career benchmark and an important task. As a member of the MSBA leadership team, your work will be a substantial service to your colleagues and can provide a public service as well.

Your energy, initiative and resourcefulness will be the driving forces that determine what your section will accomplish during your tenure. We encourage you to set goals, establish a timetable for achieving them and decide how to motivate your members.

This guide addresses these items and provides useful information regarding the MSBA resources available to you. All members who have joined your section have already expressed an interest in your area, providing a built-in incentive. Your challenge is to harness their energy and expertise to meet your objectives.

Sections keep Association members up to date on developments in substantive areas of the law. As voluntary groups within the MSBA, they nominate their own officers for appointment by the Board of Governors and choose their areas of activity. You must be familiar with the bylaws governing the MSBA and those of your section.

Key Dates and Meetings for Section Leadership

- Winter Bar Conference: **January 28-30, 2026** @ The Westin, Portland
- Section Leadership Orientation: **February 12, 2026** @ 12:00pm via Zoom
- Section Budget Meeting: **June 4, 2026** @ 12:00pm via Zoom
- Summer Bar Conference: **June 24-26, 2026** @ Samoset Resort, Rockport
- Section Legislative Meeting: **November 5, 2026** @ 12:00pm via Zoom

Section Leaders are Expected to...

- Attend Winter Bar Conference on **January 28-30, 2026** at the Westin, Portland.
- Submit an Annual Report no later than **March 1, 2026** for previous calendar year section activities.
- Attend Summer Bar Conference on **June 24-26, 2026** at the Samoset Resort, Rockport.
- Submit a Section budget by **July 15, 2026** for the upcoming fiscal year (fiscal year is Oct. 1-Sept. 30).
- Develop section-sponsored continuing legal education programs.
- Keep MSBA informed of all changes in section leadership.

- Submit articles and section news for the MSBA publications: The Maine Bar Journal and *The Supplement* monthly newsletter.
- Monitor section-related legislative issues in coordination with the MSBA Legislative Counsel (if applicable).

While each section maintains a degree of autonomy, all business must be conducted in accordance with the [bylaws of the Association](#) and with the approval of the Board of Governors, including action on legislative issues, co-sponsorship of events with an outside group or organization, and any program or event that requires the expenditure of funds.

MSBA Board of Governors

The MSBA's policy-making body is its 23-member board of elected governors. The Board has 13 governors representing 11 districts created along county boundaries (including three representing Cumberland County), one governor each representing the New Lawyers Section, Women's Law Section, BIPOC Lawyers Section, public service sector lawyers, and in-house corporate attorneys. The Board also includes the president, president-elect, vice president, immediate past president, and treasurer. Elected biennially to two-year terms (officers are elected to one-year terms) by the Association's members, the Board meets approximately 6 times each year to review MSBA activities and chart its short- and long-range future.

Membership

Section membership is only open to Association members. Section leaders oversee and coordinate the work of the section and plan programs for the year. You are encouraged to stimulate involvement in your section using [MEBarConnect](#) (the MSBA's online community). As a leader of your section, it is important for you to know and be able to discuss the benefits of section membership with current and potential members.

What are the benefits of section membership?

- A forum for members to pursue their interests in specific areas of law and share professional experiences.
- Notice of and participation in meetings/social events.
- Networking opportunities.
- Continuing legal education opportunities.
- Opportunities to hear speakers and discuss with colleagues' timely issues impacting their practice area.

Administrative Support

The MSBA's [Sections & Committees Coordinator](#) is available to assist you with all administrative needs for your section. Administrative support provided by the MSBA may include:

- Section meeting planning and coordination. The MSBA provides virtual meetings (Zoom), an online communication platform (MEBarConnect), and direct email campaigns to connect with section members.
- Financial accounting for section activities, including dues processing.
- Assistance with annual budget planning.

- Posting of content to section's page on the MSBA's online community, MEBarConnect.
- Clerical and administrative support for section meetings and CLE programs.
- Coordination of section notifications.
- Online event registration support.
- Assistance with membership development and marketing.

Section Dues

Annual dues help defray routine section expenses. Section dues cover the administrative overhead costs associated with supporting sections. These costs include coordinating registration and staffing of section events, reporting CLE credits, Zoom fees, electronic communications, and marketing section meetings and events. Administrative expenses do not need to be included in your section's annual budget proposal. All section dues are billed directly to individual members as part of their annual dues statement. There are no dues for New Lawyers Section membership or for membership in a new section during its first year.

Financial/Budget

The Maine State Bar Association's fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30. A very important part of the MSBA's budgeting process involves putting together reliable budgets for the MSBA's sections, which are included in [Sections Budget Policies and Procedures](#).

MSBA sections fulfill a valuable purpose in serving their members and the Association as a whole. The Finance Committee and the Board of Governors are committed to supporting section activities that further the MSBA mission. **As your section submits its budget request for the coming fiscal year, we ask that you provide an overview of what the section hopes to accomplish during the year.** A solid understanding of your section's goals and objectives will allow the Finance Committee to ensure adequate support and funding for the administration of section activities.

The Budget Policies and Procedures will assist you with the preparation of your section's budget. Please note that your budget will not include CLE activities offering more than one hour of credit, which must be approved by and offered through the MSBA CLE Department.

Sections do not have their own bank accounts. The MSBA maintains a ledger for each section's finances and is available upon request. ****Please note: budgeted funds do not carry over to the next fiscal year.***

Legislative Affairs

During each session of the Maine Legislature, the MSBA reviews hundreds of pieces of proposed legislation as bills are printed and referred to one of the 17 Joint Standing Committees. Some of these bills are of interest to the MSBA as a whole, and some are of interest to sections due to changes in substantive areas of law. The [Legislative Affairs Procedures](#) will provide you with the steps and requirements necessary should your section want to track a bill, take a position on legislation or provide testimony during a committee hearing.

Continuing Legal Education (CLE)

Sections are allowed to **host up to two section-sponsored CLEs per fiscal year**. Every year, sections should aim to sponsor at least one CLE for their members. Section-sponsored CLEs are typically 1-hour programs for section members only and are offered at low or no cost. Occasionally these programs are lunch or dinner events that have a featured speaker on a substantive topic. At the request of the section, the MSBA may apply for up to 1 hour of CLE credit for such section events. These events are considered in-service programming marketed and directed to section members, rather than CLE programming, which is widely advertised and directed to the entire membership.

We encourage sections to consider larger programming that benefits not only their members, but also the Association as a whole. If Section leadership is interested in developing larger CLE programming and content for the general MSBA Membership, contact the [Sections & Committees Coordinator](#) and he will help start the planning process and connect you to CLE staff.

Additionally, the CLE Committee may call upon you/your section to produce a program in response to member CLE requests and learning needs.

Business Meetings

Sections may hold business meetings in-person and/or hybrid/virtually via Zoom, as a standalone event, or in conjunction with other MSBA events (e.g., Winter/Summer Bar Conference). Please coordinate your business meeting with the [Sections & Committees Coordinator](#) as soon as possible to ensure there are no conflicts with other MSBA events and allow the MSBA enough time for adequate promotion of the meeting. Attendance and minutes should be taken at these events and submitted to the Sections & Committees Coordinator. Business meetings **do not** qualify for CLE credit (See [Maine Bar Rule 5](#)).

Communications

The work of your section may be of great interest to other lawyers in the MSBA. MSBA staff can bring important business and information regarding your activities to the attention of your colleagues throughout the state using electronic state bar resources. The MSBA supports open and frequent communication with its members and encourages you to contact the [Sections & Committees Coordinator](#) with your MSBA-related news items.

Online Communities

[MEBarConnect](#) is the MSBA's online community platform where section members can connect, share ideas, discuss challenges, post questions and search for all members. **Please use this as your main communication tool with your section.**

Publications

The [Maine Bar Journal](#) is the association's professional journal, which is published four times per year and covers substantive areas of Maine law. You are invited to propose articles or focus issues for consideration by the Maine Bar Journal Editorial Advisory Committee. Additionally, many section CLE presentations can be converted into educational and substantive articles. Please contact the [Sections & Committees Coordinator](#) for further details.

The Supplement, the MSBA's electronic newsletter, is published monthly and covers newsworthy information about our members, section events, membership meetings, CLE seminars, and membership benefits. Please contact the [Sections & Committees Coordinator](#) to submit information about your section for this electronic publication.

Media Relations

The president of the MSBA is the official spokesperson for public comment on Association policies and positions. As a practical matter, other individuals may be designated to provide factual information on behalf of the MSBA, as required by demands of timeliness or expertise. These individuals may include other officers, the executive director, MSBA staff members, or section and committee chairs. **Specific guidelines limiting statements by MSBA members are established in [Article XV of the Association's Bylaws](#).**

The MSBA may occasionally be the source of information regarding the legal profession for news reporters. All communication with reporters, except those conducted directly by the president, is handled by the Association's communications director in consultation with the Board of Governors and/or the executive director. All written statements disseminated to the media are specifically reviewed and approved by the executive director.

When a news reporter contacts the Association with a factual question or needs information on a specific area of law, the Communications Director will refer the reporter to the appropriate section chair, or a designee, for an answer or comment. You can assist reporters by providing straightforward, factual information. **Any personal observations should be clearly explained as your own views and not those of the Maine State Bar Association.**

Please reach out to the [Sections & Committees Coordinator](#) with any questions. Again, thank you so much for participating in MSBA section leadership. We truly appreciate your enthusiasm.