



# Practical Skills for New Lawyers and Law Students

A Guide to Bar Association  
Programming in the United States

*Compiled by the NABE Task Force on New Lawyers & Law Students*



**NABE**  
National Association of Bar Executives  
Connecting Professionals, Providing Solutions

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Skills Training .....	3
Law Students .....	3
New Lawyers .....	4
Trial Advocacy .....	5
Law Students .....	5
New Lawyers .....	6
Mentoring Programs .....	6
New Lawyers .....	6
Financial Aid .....	8
New Lawyers .....	8
Counseling Services.....	9
Law Students .....	9
New Lawyers .....	9
Incubator Programs .....	10
New Lawyers .....	10

The NABE Task Force on New Lawyers and Law Students thanks all of the bar associations that provided information to help compile this Guide. While not all of the information was able to be included here, all of the responses were critical for helping the Task Force produce this Guide. The Task Force hopes this Guide becomes a living document that is supplemented by all NABE members as we all work to support law students and new lawyers as they transition into the profession.

# SKILLS TRAINING

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## Law Students

### 1. The Dallas Bar Association

Three-hour seminar for law students who are recent graduates.

<http://www.dallasbar.org/content/law-students-professionalism-program>

### 2. The Florida State Bar Professionalism Initiative

The Law Student Division and The Florida Bar's Standing Committee on Professionalism have teamed up in an effort to educate Florida law students on the importance of professionalism in the legal practice through a variety of educational events.

The professionalism events hosted at each law school, entitled "Balancing Life and Law," feature a panel of esteemed legal professionals and members of The Florida Bar who speak to law students regarding the realities of the legal profession. The program is an annual feature at each school and lasts from 1 to 2.5 hours. It is of no cost to law students.

The panelists share tips with the law students on how to keep a balanced life in the legal profession after law school. Past members of the panels have included Honorable Judge Edward LaRose of the Second District Court of Appeal, Honorable Judge Matthew Lucas of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, General Counsel to the Tampa Bay Lightning, and many more.

<http://www.flayld.org/students/LSD/programs/professionalism/>

### 3. The State Bar of Michigan: "Professionalism in Action"

Each year, the State Bar of Michigan (SBM) conducts a "professionalism in action" program during 1L orientations at each of Michigan's five law schools. The purpose of this event, which is mandatory for all 1Ls, is to demonstrate the importance of ethics and civility in the profession and to emphasize the priority these matters have in the profession.

The program tends to be a lengthy affair, lasting from 3-5 hours depending on the school. In the past the Secretary and Vice President of the State Bar have been featured panelists, as well as administrators from the schools themselves.

### 4. The Washington State Bar Association: Professionalism Presentations

The WSBA in collaboration with the three law schools in the state have a team of two lawyer volunteers and a staff member who speak in every ethics class at each law school each year. The presentation provides an overview of what it means to be a member of the only self-regulated profession in the United States as well as tips and information on how to navigate through the profession as a professional. The in-class presentation includes a Prezi presentation and reading materials are sent to the class prior to the presentation. These materials can be found at [http://www.wsba.org/-/media/Files/Legal%20Community/Committees\\_Boards\\_Panels/Professionalism%20Committee/Professionalism%20law%20school%20materials%202012.aspx](http://www.wsba.org/-/media/Files/Legal%20Community/Committees_Boards_Panels/Professionalism%20Committee/Professionalism%20law%20school%20materials%202012.aspx)

## New Lawyers

**1. The Chicago Bar Association: Basic Skills Training Seminar**

<http://lpmt.chicagobar.org/>

**2. The Erie County (NY) Bar Association: “Life After Law School”**

Designed to help new attorneys make a smooth transition from law school to legal practice and taught by some of Erie County’s preeminent legal luminaries, this popular seminar series covers “all the things you never learned in law school.” “Life After Law School: Basic Practice 101” meets the requirements for newly-admitted attorneys to take a mandatory transition CLE.

The program takes place over two days each of which costs \$107 for newly-admitted attorneys. Panelists are lawyers from the surrounding community who present on topics such as persuasive legal writing, the basics of bankruptcy practice, and mediation.

<http://www.eriebar.org/files/ErieLaw%20Life%20After%20Law%20School%202014.pdf>

**3. The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division: Basic Skills Course**

<http://www.flayld.org>

**4. The State Bar of Michigan: Young Lawyers’ Skills Training**

The State Bar of Michigan has an active skills training program through the YLS.

<http://www.michbar.org/younglawyers/>

**5. The State Bar of Montana: New Lawyers’ Workshop**

The New Lawyers’ Workshop brings together newly admitted lawyers with experienced Montana practitioners and judges in small groups to discuss practical aspects of the practice of law.

<http://www.montanabar.org>

**6. Oregon State Bar Professional Liability Fund: Learning the Ropes**

This practical skills seminar is for new admittees and takes place over a 2 ½ day period.

<http://www.osbplf.org>

**7. The Orange County Bar Association: The Fundamentals of Practice in Orange County**

This is a dynamic, intensive, two-day seminar specifically designed for new lawyers.

<http://www.orangecountybar.org/newlawyertraining>

**8. The Tennessee Bar Association: Solo Practice Toolkit**

TBA has developed a user-friendly guide to starting your own practice.

<http://www.tba.org/node/66492>

**9. The Texas Bar Association: AftertheBarExam.com**

After The Bar Exam is a free online resource designed for individuals who have recently taken the bar exam and are awaiting results. On the website, one can find resources from a variety of Texas Bar affiliate groups, including information in the form of legal how-to’s and online mentorships, as well as virtual CLEs.

<http://afterthebarexam.com/>

**10. The Texas Young Lawyers Association: “Hanging Out Your Shingle”**

This program is comprised of a book and 40 minute video that provides good ideas on how to run your solo practice.

<http://www.tyla.org/tyla/index.cfm/resources/lawyers/solo-lawyers/>

**11. The Virginia State Bar: First Day In Practice Seminar**

The “First Day In Practice” Seminar is a CLE offered by the VSB to lawyers every December right before admittance to the Bar – it covers such topics as law-office management and courtroom etiquette.

<http://www.vsb.org/site/conferences/ylc/first-day-in-practice-seminar/>

**12. The Virginia State Bar: Professional Development Series**

This program is a weekly podcast designed for newly licensed attorneys and presents basic skills training on a variety of issues.

<http://www.vsb.org/site/conferences/ylc/pds>

**13. The Washington State Bar Association: New Lawyer Education (NLE)**

NLE is designed to gear up new lawyers in their first four years of practice to successfully transition into practice. The WSBA offers practical skill-building seminars to new lawyers at special rates that include a variety of effective educational techniques including lecture, case studies, online research and small group discussions.

<http://www.wsba.org/WSBA-CLE/New-Lawyer-Education>

# TRIAL ADVOCACY

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## Law Students

**1. The Dallas Bar Association: Trial Skills Section**

The Trial Skills Section of the Dallas Bar Association holds monthly meetings, and focuses on the practice of trial advocacy. The section welcomes law students to take part in the section and attend related CLEs, which are usually free for members of the section.

<http://www.dallasbar.org/content/trial-skills-section>

**2. Several Models: Free CLE Programs**

The option of offering CLEs to law students for free allows Bar Associations to build rapport with law students and help to improve their advocacy skills, all inside of a low-cost system. Offering free CLE programs to law students is a common practice and is done by such Bars as the following:

- Washington State Bar Association: <http://www.wsba.org/Law-Students>
- San Diego County Bar Association: <https://www.sdcba.org/index.cfm?pg=LawStudents>
- Houston Bar Association: <http://www.hba.org/student-law-center>
- Illinois State Bar Association: <http://www.hba.org/student-law-center/>

**3. The State Bar of Michigan: Oral Advocacy Competition**

The State Bar of Michigan Law Student Section has teamed up with state law schools to conduct a 1L Oral Advocacy Competition each spring. Ten students from each of the state’s law schools spend an entire day arguing a preselected topic (e.g., Right to Work Legislation), while being judged by current Bar members.

<https://www.michbar.org/lawstudent/pdfs/ar2013.pdf>

<https://sites.google.com/a/cooley.edu/state-bar-of-michigan/grand-rapids/events-schedule/1l-oral-advocacy>

## New Lawyers

### 1. The Dallas Bar Association: The Trial Academy

The Dallas Bar Association's Trial Academy is a civil trial skills training program focused on helping new lawyers hone their advocacy skills.

The program attempts to do that through combining lectures and live mock trials by members of the academy. The lectures and demonstrations cover everything from voir dire, to opening statements, to closing arguments.

### 2. The Los Angeles County Bar Association: Trial Advocacy Project (TAP)

This series, which has been held four times a year since 1978, is designed to give attorneys hands-on experience with trial advocacy. It encompasses multiple different courses, one of which, Introductory TAP, focuses on lawyers with little-to-no experience. Introductory TAP takes place over 3 weeks, meeting twice a week in the evening, and costs \$995 for LACBA Members. It emphasizes mock trial performance and constructive feedback, while providing information on such trial advocacy skills as delivering opening and closing statements, conducting direct and cross examinations, and laying evidentiary foundation.

<http://www.lacba.org/showpage.cfm?pageid=4065>

<http://www.lacba.org/showpage.cfm?pageid=1794>

# MENTORING PROGRAMS

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## New Lawyers

### 1. The Arizona State Bar

<http://www.azbar.org/sectionsandcommittees/committees/mentorcommittee>

### 2. The Chicago Bar Association: CLE Mentoring Credit

Volunteer mentors receive up to 6 hours of MCLE professionalism credit for mentoring new lawyers.

<http://www.chicagobar.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Mentoring>

### 3. The Colorado Bar

This program is affiliated with the Colorado Supreme Court.

<http://www.cobar.org/index.cfm/ID/21965/DPMEM/Colorado-Mentoring-Program>

### 4. The Dallas Bar Association: Transition to Law Practice Program

The DBA's Transition to Law Program is a systematic mentoring program that helps new lawyers improve their professional abilities and succeed in the practice of law.

### 5. The Georgia State Bar Association: Mentoring Program [Also available for students]

The Georgia State Bar offers a three-tiered mentoring program focusing on mentorships for both law students and new lawyers. The primary part of the program consists of members of the American Law Institute, general bench, and bar serving as mentors for students at Georgia's five law schools and newly admitted lawyers. Through this program, which has been in place since 1991, law students are able to explore and address questions and concerns they may have about practicing law with seasoned lawyers. The second part of the program has the Chief Justice's

Commission on Professionalism assisting the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar in implementing mentoring programs where distinguished veteran lawyers make themselves available for advice and counsel to newer lawyers. Finally the mentoring program also features a Transition into Law Practice program similar to the above Nevada program. In this program, new lawyers are assigned a mentor for the first year of law practice, participate in a bridge-the-gap CLE, and develop a Mentoring Plan to be completed during the first year of practice.

<https://www.gabar.org/aboutthebar/lawrelatedorganizations/cjcp/mentoring.cfm>

**6. The State Bar of Michigan Mentoring Center**

<http://www.michbar.org/programs/mentorcenter.cfm>

**7. The Nevada State Bar Association: Transitioning into Practice**

This program operates from the mindset that the first years of practicing law are of the utmost importance for development of professional habits and practices. In helping to foster this development, newly admitted attorneys with less than five years' experience are required to participate in Transitioning into Practice (TIP). The program requires the remittance of a \$350 fee upon completion.

According to the Nevada State Bar Website:

“TIP is designed to provide transitional support to newly admitted attorneys as they enter practice. The program is not intended to provide substantive advice or training in the practice of law. Rather, the goals are to assist new lawyers in acquiring the practical skills and judgement necessary to practice in a highly competent manner; train new lawyers on Nevada-specific rules and procedures not specifically taught in traditional learning environments; sharpen and enhance the practical skills necessary to compete in today's legal environment; match new lawyers with more experienced lawyers for training in professionalism, ethics and civility; [and] provide support, foster relationships and create networking opportunities for newly admitted attorneys.”

The program seeks to accomplish those goals by assigning a mentor to a lawyer, ideally from their own firm, and over the course of six months follow a mentoring plan that sets forth areas of required activities in fields such as the legal community and practice management for the lawyer and mentor to work on with the multiple elective areas of study.

<https://www.nvbar.org/sites/default/files/TIP%20Mentoring%20Plan,%20Revised%20Dec%202013.pdf>

**8. The Oakland County Bar Association (Michigan): Pro Bono Mentor Match**

Lawyers with at least seven years experience mentor new lawyers on pro bono cases, in coordination with legal aid providers.

<http://www.ocba.org/Pro-Bono-Mentor-Match-Program-Packet.id.2491.htm>

**9. The Tennessee Bar Association**

<http://www.tba.org/programs/the-tba-mentoring-program>

**10. The Texas Bar Association: Transition to Practice**

<http://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm>

**11. The Utah State Bar: New Lawyer Training Program (NLTP)**

In the Utah New Lawyer Training Program, all new admittees who have not practiced for at least two years elsewhere must participate in a twelve month mentoring session with experienced lawyers. New lawyers meet for two hours every month with their mentors for personalized guidance on ethics, professionalism and various skills needed to practice law. For participating in the program, mentors receive 12 CLE credits and the program costs \$300 for the new lawyers. During the initial meeting, the mentor and mentee develop a mentorship plan and submit it to NLTP. The new lawyer also must attend a New Lawyer Ethics Program as a part of their participation in NLTP.

# FINANCIAL AID



## New Lawyers

### 1. The New York State Bar Association: Student Loan Assistance for the Public Interest (SLAPI) Grant

This program seeks to encourage new lawyers to pursue and remain in public service careers by awarding grants worth up to \$4,000 which are made annually and given in biannual payments. The awards, however, are not automatically renewed and recipients must apply each year for up to four years. In being awarded the grant, the recipient must agree to continue to work in public interest or governmental law for up to three additional years after the award is given.

In addition, if the recipient remains in the aforementioned qualifying employment, the loan awards will be forgiven. If a recipient does become ineligible, they will be responsible for paying back the loan award within six months of the date of ineligibility.

<http://www.nysba.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=44259>

### 2. The PA Bar Foundation: PA IOLTA Board Loan Repayment Assistance Program

This LRAP also seeks to incentivize lawyers at IOLTA-funded legal service organizations to remain in public service. In doing this, the PA IOLTA Board LRAP gives one-year loans, paid quarterly to attorneys practicing at IOLTA-funded organizations. It requires that they remain employed by the organization for at least 12 months and allows attorneys to receive up to 10 of these loans, which increase in size over the following two years, valued initially at \$3,500 and eventually increasing to \$6,000. Upon completion of the 12 month period, the amount of the loan, with all interest included, is forgiven and canceled.

<http://www.pabarfoundation.org/lrap/lrap.aspx>

<http://www.pabarfoundation.org/lrap/files/LRAP2014ProgramPolicies.pdf>

### 3. The Oregon State Bar Association: Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP)

This loan repayment assistance program seeks to attract and retain public service lawyers by helping pay educational debt. To be eligible, lawyers must be a practicing attorney in the state of Oregon working with civil legal aid organizations, non-profit organizations providing representation to low-income individuals, or as public defenders or deputy district attorneys. The program awards a forgivable loan worth up to \$5,000 annually for a maximum of three consecutive years. The program will forgive one year of loans if the recipient has been employed at a qualifying organization the prior year and has paid at least the amount of their LRAP loan on their students loans. Only one complete year of employment counts towards loan forgiveness.

<http://www.osbar.org/lrap>

(As the American Bar Association notes, similar programs are widespread throughout the US, and are held by both Bar Associations and Foundations in states such as Arizona, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York (two programs), North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia.)

# COUNSELING SERVICES

## Law Students

### 1. Pennsylvania: Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers

This program is found in many states and in PA they regularly speak to law students several times a year on campus.

<http://www.lclpa.org>

### 2. The State Bar of Wisconsin: Lawyers' Assistance Program

This program is available for law students and provides support at bar exams.

## New Lawyers

### 1. The State Bar of California: Lawyer Assistance Program

The Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP) aids attorneys affected by mental health issues, substance abuse, stress and other issues affecting their productivity. The LAP provides confidential and constructive peer group support, individual peer support and individual counseling tailored to the needs of the legal professionals. The program encompasses multiple different services such as Support LAP, a weekly peer group supervised by a mental health professional; Monitored LAP, for attorneys who need to satisfy monitoring or verification requirements imposed by employers, the Committee of Bar Examiners, or other entities; and Career Counseling, a program for attorneys who are having difficulty finding work in the current legal marketplace.

Most programs provided as a part of LAP are free of cost, but some, such as Monitored LAP, are provided for a small fee. Others, such as Career Counseling, are free for a limited amount of meetings.

<http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/MemberServices/LawyerAssistanceProgram.aspx>

### 2. The State Bar of Michigan Practice Management Resource Center

The web-based center offers a variety of resources especially useful to new, solo and small firm lawyers, supplemented by low-cost seminars, training, and personal consultation. The center also coordinates with local bars in providing services.

<http://www.michbar.org/pmrc/content.cfm>

The State Bar of Michigan's lawyer assistance services are also available to law students.

### 3. The Washington State Bar Association: Law Office Management Assistance Program

The Law Office Management Assistance Program (LOMAP) provides low-cost assistance on law office management and is highly recommended for solo or small firm practitioners. The program provides resources for opening, closing, and managing your practice.

LOMAP organizes CLEs for interested lawyers and also organizes speaking arrangements in front of local bars or informal groups of members. The program also provides personal consultations focusing on topics such as financial management, technology, staff issues, client relations, and business development.

<http://www.wsba.org/Resources-and-Services/LOMAP>

LAP services are also available to law students through the WSBA.

# INCUBATOR PROGRAMS

## *New Lawyers*

### **1. The Chicago Bar Foundation: Justice Entrepreneurs Project**

The Justice Entrepreneurs Project (JEP) is an incubator focusing on improving equity in legal representation by developing models with which to sustainably serve low and moderate income clients. The JEP features a strong pro-bono component and gives lawyers who have passed a competitive selection process training, resources, and support.

As a part of the JEP, lawyers spend 18 months working through legal aid organizations providing free legal services while developing their own client base. Participants are paid \$1,000 monthly stipends and explore such fields as family law, estate law, consumer law, immigration law, and employment law.

<http://chicagobarfoundation.org/jep/>

### **2. The Cleveland Metro Bar Association: Solo Law Practice Incubator Partnership**

The Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association has taken an alternate approach to incubator programs and has instead partnered with the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, a local law school, in creating an incubator program, one of the first in the country. In this incubator, located on campus, the CMBA provides participants with insurance coverage, mentorships, and vendor discounts in an attempt to help train future solo law practice attorneys.

### **3. The Columbus Bar Association: Columbus Bar inc Professional Development Center**

This incubator program – referred to as an “inc”, for short – provides office facilities, access to mentors, and specialized training to attempt to help lawyers build sound, successful practices over the course of one year. The Columbus Bar Association is the first to create one such program specializing in helping individuals wanting to establish a solo practice. It is free of charge to participate in it, but participants must both apply and agree to take on at least one pro-bono case during the term spent in the incubator.

[http://www.cbalaw.org/cba\\_prod/Main/Resources/Resources\\_for\\_Legal\\_Professionals/Columbus\\_Bar\\_inc\\_incubator\\_Program/Main/Resources/Legal-Professionals/inc/Index.aspx](http://www.cbalaw.org/cba_prod/Main/Resources/Resources_for_Legal_Professionals/Columbus_Bar_inc_incubator_Program/Main/Resources/Legal-Professionals/inc/Index.aspx)

### **4. ESQ.Build: Solo Practitioner Incubator for Memphis Law Grads**

ESQ.Build is designed for new attorneys who are in their first three years of practice to receive training regarding not only how to practice law, but how to manage a law office.

<http://www.memphis.edu/law/career/esqbuild.php>

### **5. Dauphin County Bar Association Incubator Program**

This incubator seeks to provide mentorship, space, and training for recent graduates of Widener University School of Law interested in pursuing careers in small firms or solo practices. The incubator provides legal services to low-income residents of the Harrisburg region and is based out of the Dauphin County Bar Association and provided with furnishings and technology. The incubator attorneys assist clients referred by MidPenn Legal Services, which screens clients for eligibility.

Participants in the incubator agree to participate for one year and provide 100 hours of pro bono service. They receive help from faculty at Widener and attorneys from the Bar Association. They also receive additional training from speakers provided by the bar association and law school. By the end of the year spent at the incubator, participants should be ready to establish their own practice.