

Alaska Bar Association

2023 Annual Report



Bar members by the numbers

The Alaska Bar Association has 4,789 members in the following categories:

By Status:

Active in Alaska.....	2,294
Active Outside.....	911
Inactive in Alaska	184
Inactive Outside	621
Retired.....	779

Active in Alaska by Judicial District:

District 1	249
District 2.....	23
District 3.....	1,811
District 4.....	211

Active in Alaska by Gender:

Female Attorneys	977
Male Attorneys	1,313
Other	4

Active in Alaska by Race/Ethnicity:

Alaska Native	49	Hawaiian Native or other	White.....	879
Asian.....	34	Pacific Islander	Other	1
Black or African American.....	23	India Subcontinent	Not reported	1,253
Hispanic or Latino.....	30	Native American.....		18

Admissions/Licensing

Alaska administers the **Uniform Bar Exam (UBE)** with a passing score of 270.

2023 BAR EXAM RESULTS

Date	Applicants	Passed
Feb. 2023	36	27
1st time takers	22	17
July 2023	52	30
1st time takers	44	28

Applicants Approved for Admission:

- Bar Exam: 57
- UBE Score Transfer: 66
- Admission on Motion: 43

Temporary Practice Waivers Issued:

- Pro Hac Vice (Civ.R. 81): 240
- ALSC Waivers (B.R. 43): 5
- Supervised Practitioner (B.R. 44): 50
- 10-Month (A.S. 08.08.210): 9
- Legal Intern (B.R. 44): 44

Member Services

- **The Alaska Bar Rag:** The Bar's newspaper is published and sent to Bar members quarterly.
- **The Alaska Law Review:** Published online by Duke Law School.
- **ALPS (Attorney Liability Protection Society):** Bar endorsed malpractice insurance company.
- **E-News:** Electronic bulletin is sent weekly to Bar members.
- **Fastcase:** All Bar members have free access to this online legal research service.
- **Practice Management Tools:** All Bar members have discounted access to **Clio** (case management tool) and **LawPay** (payment solution for attorneys).
- **Insurance programs:** Bar sponsored group disability and life insurance programs for Bar members.

CLE

In 2023, the AK Bar Continuing Legal Education (CLE) department presented a total of 34 programs, comprising 27 virtual sessions, six in-person events, and one hybrid program combining in-person and virtual elements. Among these offerings, 20 programs were provided free of charge.

The 2023 Annual Bar Convention was held in Fairbanks. It had 203 attendees who participated in at least one CLE or social event.

The Alaska Bar offered 65.5 general CLE credits and six Ethics credits through the facilitation of 74 section meetings.

Beyond the live Alaska Bar CLE programs, convention and section meetings, the CLE department extends its educational reach through partnerships with CLEWebinars. Additionally, it maintains a comprehensive Video-on-Demand catalog, ensuring accessible and diverse educational resources for its members.

CLE Attendance by Program Format

Live AK Bar CLEs (virtual & in-person)	1,665+
Convention	203
Section Meeting CLEs	1,652+
Live webinars by CLEWebinars	56
Video-On-Demand purchases	2,450

Committees and Sections

- In 2023 there were 27 active substantive law sections, with a total individual membership of 2,977 for all sections. The total, including members with multiple sections (and non-Bar members) was 3,711. The Alaska Bar Association held 79 section meetings with over 1,721 attendees.
- There are **ten standing Bar committees** and **five Bar Rule committees**.

Mandatory Continuing Legal Education

Active Bar members are required to:

- earn at least 3 CLE ethics credits and report MCLE compliance annually
- encouraged to earn an additional 9 credits
- In 2023, Bar members report their MCLE compliance for 2022

99.53% reported compliance

50.95% reported earning at least 12 credits

21.29% reported earning between 3 and 11 credits

27.76% reported earning only 3 ethics credits

14 Bar members were administratively suspended for failure to comply

Starting January 1, 2025, active Bar members will be required to earn twelve CLE credit hours per year. Three of those twelve CLE credits must be ethics credits.

Awards

Board of Governors

Distinguished Service – Judge Niesje Steinkruger

Professionalism – Michael O'Brien

Layperson Service – Steven Reilly

Robert Hickerson Public Service – Danielle Ryman

Judge Nora Guinn Award

Magistrate Judge Jeffrey May

Bryan P. Timbers Pro Bono

Private practitioner – Michael Mitchell

Lifetime Achievement – Stoel Rives LLC

Public sector – Andrea Hattan

Alaska Bar Foundation Jay Rabinowitz Public Service

Judge Stephanie Rhoades

Pro Bono Services

- **Martin Luther King Day:** The Bar hosted the 14th annual MLK Day free legal clinic in four communities throughout Alaska: Anchorage, Bethel, Fairbanks, and Juneau. During the events, 85 volunteers provided 265 volunteer hours to 185 low to moderate income Alaskans with civil legal needs.
- **Elizabeth Peratrovich Legal Clinic:** The Bar hosted the 10th annual free legal clinic during the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention for convention attendees in Anchorage. During the event, 16 volunteers provided 48 volunteer hours to 33 clients.
- **Alaska Free Legal Answers:** Provided assistance to 258 Alaskans by 25 volunteer lawyers who work with low-income Alaskans on a free web-based legal clinic where clients can ask up to three civil legal questions in one year.

Public Service

Lawyer Referral Service: The service had 39 attorneys in 29 practice areas. The Lawyer Referral Service provided referrals to 3,078 callers. The most frequently requested areas were divorce/custody; labor relations; and negligence.

Bar Foundation: Distributed IOLTA (Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts) grants to Alaska Legal Services Corporation (\$37,500) and Alaska Institute for Justice (\$12,500).

Youth Law Guide: The Law Related Education Committee updated and maintained this public education resource which helps young Alaskans understand the law and how it may affect them. 68,947 users accessed the guide online in 2023, an increase of 23,556 from 2022.

Scholarships: The Scholarship Fundraising and Implementation Committee offers law school scholarships to current 1st or 2nd year law students who demonstrate ties to Alaska, and an intent to return to Alaska. Since inception in 2019, the Scholarship Committee has raised a total of \$40,155 and has awarded 74 scholarships ranging from \$100-\$2,500.

Cover art: "Angle Rocks" by Linda Weis. Linda Weis is a Fairbanks based printmaker. She ventured into the world of art after moving to Alaska. Linda's work is largely focused on creating multi block relief prints. The subjects of Linda's work are typically found in the forest around her home. Fungi and lichen, ravens and sandhill cranes, and berries and flowers are all reoccurring images in her art.

Financial & Administration

2023 Bar Dues Breakdown for Active Members

Bar Dues: \$660			
Discipline	\$259	LFCP	\$10
Administration	\$204	Fastcase	\$7
CLE	\$61	Bar Rag	\$6
Pro Bono	\$36	Communications	\$4
Fee Arbitration	\$24	Sections	\$2
BOG	\$20	MLK Day	\$1
Lawyer Referral	\$14	Committees	\$1
MCLE	\$11		
Total general fund revenue: \$3,182,820			
Total expenses: \$2,747,479			
Net Gain: \$435,341			

Attorney Discipline

The Discipline Section processed 218 new grievances against lawyers in 2023 compared to 181 grievances in 2022, a 20% increase.

Of the 218 new grievances, 127 were thoroughly reviewed but did not warrant investigation, 29 were opened for formal investigation.

Caseload:	Grievances	Lawyers
Open for Investigation on January 1, 2023	32	
Files Opened for Investigation*	+30	
Closed by Disbarment	0	0
Closed by Suspension by Alaska Supreme Court	0	0
Closed by Public Censure	0	0
Closed by Private Reprimand	0	0
Closed by Written Private Admonition	2	0
Dismissed after Formal Investigation	2	(2 lawyers)

*Includes matters filed previous to 2023

The change in open caseload increased by 84% in 2023.

The Discipline Section tracked 168 contacts with the public in 2023.

Fee Arbitration

Clients may invoke the Bar's mandatory fee arbitration process if they have a fee dispute with their lawyers.

Caseload:	Fee Arbitrations
January 1, 2023 Pending	26
New Matters Opened	+38
Closed Matters	-34
December 31, 2023 Pending	30

Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection

The Lawyers' Fund is responsible for reimbursing clients or others who have lost money or property due to a lawyer's dishonest conduct. The program had one claim in 2023 which is currently pending. The Fund may also pay for the fees and expenses of trustee counsel who are appointed to assist clients of a deceased or unavailable attorney. No expenses were paid in trustee counsel fees in 2023.

Bar Bylaws, Regulations, and Court Rules Acted On in 2023

The Board of Governors:

There were no Bar Bylaws amended in 2023.

The Alaska Supreme Court:

The Supreme Court signed SCO 2002 amending Bar Rules 2, 4, and 5 to lower the Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) passing admission score from 280 to 270.

ETHICS GUIDANCE

The Board of Governors adopted two formal ethics opinions proposed by the Bar's standing Ethics Committee in 2023. Formal ethics opinions provide the Bar Association's official position on ethics issues.

In addition, Bar Counsel's office responded to 867 requests from lawyers for informal ethics guidance in the course of the year.

2023 Board of Governors

- Jeffrey Robinson, President
- Rebecca Patterson, President-Elect
- Ben Hofmeister, Vice President
- Bill Granger (Public Member), Treasurer
- Aimee Oravec, Secretary
- Jed Cox (Public Member)
- Rachel Espejo
- Grace Lee
- Nicholas Ostrovsky
- Meghan "Sig" Tapqaq
- Diana Wildland
- Ambriel Sandone, New Lawyer Liaison
- Vacant (Public Member)