

# How to Form a Local/Affinity Bar, Section, or Committee

## Step 1: Check to see if the organization you are looking to form already exists

- **Local/Affinity Bar:** A list of all the affinity and local bar associations are available [here](#).
- **Sections:** A list of all of our sections is available [here](#).
- **Committees:** A list of the standing Alaska Bar Association Committees is in [Article VII Section 1 of the Bylaws of the Alaska Bar Association](#).

## Step 2: Know the difference between the various organization types

### **Local/Affinity Bar**

- *What is it:* Generally voluntary organizations of legal professionals that define their membership by particular characteristics such as geography, background, or interests.
- *Examples:* A list of all the affinity and local bar associations are available [here](#).
- *Membership:* Local and affinity bars get to choose who is a member. Membership can be formal with bylaws and dues or can be informal like an email list. If you would like examples of local/affinity bar bylaws contact the Executive Director of the Alaska Bar Association.
- *Benefits:*
  - Enhanced connection to other practitioners with your particular characteristics.
  - Organization gets control of the requirements.
  - Level of cooperation with the Alaska Bar Association is up to the local bar. Generally, the Alaska Bar Association can: advertise to Alaska Bar members, include news and updates in the Bar Rag, and help sponsor CLEs. There are some restrictions for participation.
  - Can choose to make political speech since they are not directly affiliated with the Alaska Bar Association.
- *Restrictions and Requirements:* Only those imposed by the people who formed the organization. To be listed on the Alaska Bar Association website, may not invidiously discriminate by excluding anyone seeking membership who shares that interest solely on grounds of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, handicap or sexual orientation.

### **Sections**

- *What is it:* The Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association established substantive law sections in areas pertinent to the practice of law.
- *Examples:* A list of all of our sections is available [here](#).
- *Membership:* Sections are open to all bar members and members of the public. All bar members can join one section for free and subsequent sections cost \$15. Members of the public have to pay \$15 per section.

## Continued: How to Form a Local/Affinity Bar, Section, or Committee

- *Benefits:* Enhanced connection to other lawyers in your practice area; continued legal education about practice areas; Bar will host meetings on zoom; meeting dates are advertised in Enews to Bar members; section members will receive and have access to information provided by section chairs.
- *Restrictions and Requirements:* Cannot make political speech unless authorized by the Board; required to host CLEs every two years; must hold regularly scheduled meetings.

### Committees

- *What is it:* Standing committees are established by the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association and generally support the regulation of law and function of the Bar.
- *Examples:* A list of the standing Alaska Bar Association Committees is in [Article VII Section 1 of the Bylaws of the Alaska Bar Association](#).
- *Membership:* All members of the Bar can join the committee. Committee solicitation starts every year in February and finishes in April. Members of the committee are appointed to three year terms by the President of the Board of Governors.
- *Benefits:* Get to help support the regulation of law in Alaska; Bar will host meetings.
- *Restrictions:* Cannot make political speech unless authorized by the Board; must hold regularly scheduled meetings.

### Step 3: Form (or request to form) your organization

- **Local/Affinity Bar:** No formal steps needed. Contact the Executive Director Alaska Bar Association if you would like support setting up your local/affinity bar. They may be able to:
  - Share bylaws of other local/affinity bars.
  - Put you in touch with other local/affinity bars.
  - Advertise your organization to Alaska Bar Association members.
  - Post updates in Enews or in the Bar Rag.
  - Add your organization to our [Adjunct Organization & Bar Associations](#) page.
  - Co-sponsor CLEs or events.
- **Sections:** Information on forming a section can be found on our website [here](#).
- **Committees:** Write a letter to the Board of Governors requesting the committee. The letter should outline the need for the committee and why the Alaska Bar Association is the appropriate organization to staff it. The request should be submitted to the President of the Board of Governors and the Executive Director of the Alaska Bar Association. Note: there is no guarantee if you form the committee you will be appointed to the committee.