



NEW YORK STATE  
BAR ASSOCIATION

# The Path to Leadership in the New York State Bar Association



# Committee on Leadership Development Co-Chairs

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[nysba.org/committees/committee-on-leadership-development](https://nysba.org/committees/committee-on-leadership-development)

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## Committee on Leadership Development

As a former member of NYSBA's Committee on Leadership Development, I know that its mission to identify, encourage and mentor prospective leaders of our Association is a noble and valuable one. This Committee serves as a resource to assist the President and current leadership in making appointments to committee and task force positions consistent with the goals of enhancing diversity among Association leaders.

NYSBA is the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation, and its membership is diverse on many levels. The Committee can help ensure that this diversity is reflected in our Association's leadership.

In addition to identifying new bar leaders, the Committee also plays a key role in engaging with former officers, Section and committee chairs by fostering participation. With increased involvement, we want all members of the Association to feel that their voices are heard.

Scott M. Karson  
*President, New York State Bar Association*

# The Path to Leadership in the New York State Bar Association

## It's *YOUR* Bar Association!

*Why* become a Bar Association leader?

- To **benefit your legal practice** through networking, building your legal skills, expanding your knowledge, influencing legal developments.
- To **benefit the legal profession and your community** by promoting increased pro bono service, advancing legal procedural and substantive reforms, and increasing professional as well as judicial standards.
- To **benefit your bar association** by advancing its mission, by identifying and initiating new projects that benefit the association and by giving your association more visibility.
- To **benefit yourself** by making friends, meeting colleagues, obtaining CLE credit, providing satisfaction, achievement and professional advancement.

## It's *YOUR* Bar Association!

**You** can become a bar leader, and we'll tell you **how** to do it. Don't **just** be a member, become an active member. Here's how to start on the leadership track—and then climb further:

- Join one or more NYSBA Sections.
- Join one or more Committees (NYSBA Committees and the specialized Committees of NYSBA Sections).
- Within your local or specialty bar association, volunteer for a committee or a project.
- Attend Section/Committee meetings/events and work on their projects. Bring ideas. Speak up at the events and/or to the Committee leadership and talk to NYSBA staff and Executive Committee liaisons.
- Write for publications of NYSBA or a Committee or Section.
- Participate in NYSBA CLE programs and webinars.

Once you have become engaged in Bar Association activities, and demonstrated your ability, consider the available leadership positions. If active in a local association or a NYSBA Section, speak to its leaders or liaisons about becoming a leader within that association/Section, or representing that association/Section in NYSBA. Specifically, consider the following opportunities:

- **NYSBA Section**—Seek election to the Section’s Executive Committee, and, ultimately, seek to become a Section officer and/or Section representative in the House of Delegates.
- **NYSBA Committees**—Seek to become chair of an Association-wide committee (e.g. Professional Ethics, Animals and the Law, Mandated Representation).
- **NYSBA House of Delegates**—The House of Delegates is the governance and decision-making body of NYSBA. The House determines NYSBA policies and develops positions on issues that affect the law and the legal profession. The House meets four times per year on Saturday mornings, in April (generally in Albany), June (in Cooperstown), November (in Albany) and the following January (Friday morning in New York City). Most Members of the House of Delegates are selected by county or local bar associations or NYSBA Sections, although some are nominated by the Nominating Committee or appointed by the NYSBA President.
- **NYSBA Nominating Committee**—The Nominating Committee develops a slate of nominees to serve as NYSBA Officers, at-large members of the Executive Committee, and elected Delegates to the House of Delegates. The Nominating Committee meets twice a year in September and in November.
- **NYSBA Executive Committee**—Its members are primarily chosen by, and represent, the individual judicial districts. In addition, eight Executive Committee members, including two who are specifically designated as minority representatives, are elected at large. Two members-at-large are also selected from the NYSBA Sections, and one member-at-large from the Young Lawyers Section. NYSBA Officers also serve on the Executive

Committee, and all members of the Executive Committee serve in the NYSBA House of Delegates. The Executive Committee meets at least four times per year, including prior to the meeting of the NYSBA House of Delegates.

- **NYSBA Officers** — Officers include Vice Presidents elected from each judicial district, with two from the First Judicial District, as well as the Secretary, Treasurer, President-Elect (who presides over the House of Delegates) and President. Each Officer also serves on the NYSBA Executive Committee and in the NYSBA House of Delegates.
- **NYSBA Members of the American Bar Association House of Delegates** — The ABA House of Delegates is the policy-making body of the ABA. Its members are chosen by, and represent, state bar associations, major local bar associations and ABA Sections. New York has the largest state delegation in the ABA House, and NYSBA representatives comprise about one-third of the New York delegation. Each NYSBA Member of the ABA House of Delegates also serves in the NYSBA House of Delegates.
- **Local or specialty bar association** — Seek to become an executive committee member or officer and then to represent your judicial district in the State Bar House of Delegates.

## It's *YOUR* Bar Association!



# Road to Participation in New York State Bar Association Governance

## Overview

### *House of Delegates*

#### **County/Local Bar Delegates**

- 1 per 100-299 NYSBA members in county
- 2 per 300-999
- 3 per 1,000-1,999 with 1 for each additional 1000 or major fraction thereof

For counties with less than 100:

- 1 per aggregate 50-299
- 2 per 300-999
- 3 per 1,000 plus 1 for additional 1,000 or major fraction thereof

\*Elected by county/local bars

\*May designate 1 alternate; 2 alternates for bars with 6 or more delegates

#### **Sections**

- 1 for 1,500 or fewer members
- 2 per 1,501-2,000
- 3 per 2,001-3,500
- 4 for 3,501 or more
- 4 for Young Lawyers Section
- 2 for Judicial Section

\*Most elected; some appointed by Chair

\*May designate 1 alternate



## Elected Delegates

- 3 per district

\*Nominated by Nominating Committee with due consideration to recommendations from district members

## Diversity Seats

- 12 seats, at least 2 and no more than 4 from each judicial department

\*Appointed by the President, subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee

## Non-Resident Seats

- 2 seats

\*Appointed by the President, subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee

*All members of the House of Delegates begin their terms on June 1 of each year*

In addition to treasured lifelong friendships I have made in the Association, I am so grateful for the leadership training I have gained through my membership, from running a large meeting utilizing Robert's Rules of Order, to drafting, to project management. These are all skills that have directly enhanced my work in the nonprofit sector and now in the government sector where I run a New York City agency. In sum, NYSBA membership is an essential part of a New York State lawyer's professional development and career advancement."

**Edwina Martin**

Pursuing leadership opportunities has provided me not only the many benefits that come with active NYSBA membership, but also greater opportunity to develop professional and personal relationships with attorneys and judges across the state that I will cherish for the rest of my career, and long after. Leadership has also provided me with opportunities to develop and sharpen skills easily transferable to my pursuits outside of the law profession. Committed leadership within NYSBA can certainly open many doors of opportunity. And the pathway is available to all members, right up to the presidency!"

**Andrew Brown**

# Executive Committee

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>President-Elect</b>                         | 1-year term; nominated by Nominating Committee<br>Elected at Annual Meeting<br>Informal upstate/downstate rotation<br>Becomes President the following year  |
| <b>Secretary</b>                               | 1-year term (4-year maximum)<br>Nominated by Nominating Committee<br>Elected at Annual Meeting  |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                               | 1-year term (4-year maximum)<br>Nominated by Nominating Committee<br>Elected at Annual Meeting  |
| <b>Vice Presidents (14)</b>                    | 1-year term (4-year maximum)<br>Recommended by each District delegates<br>(2 in 1st Judicial District) with due consideration by<br>Nominating Committee<br>Elected at Annual Meeting   |
| <b>Members at Large (6)</b>                    | 2-year term (4-year maximum)<br>At least 2 from 1st Judicial District<br>Efforts toward geographic/ethnic/gender diversity<br>Nominated by Nominating Committee<br>Elected at Annual Meeting<br>Two additional members-at-large are selected by<br>NYSBA Sections and serve staggered terms<br>One additional member-at-large is selected from the<br>Young Lawyers Section |
| <b>Members at Large<br/>Diversity Seat (2)</b> | 2-year term (4-year maximum)<br>May not be from the same Judicial District<br>Nominated by Nominating Committee<br>Elected at Annual Meeting  |

*All members of the Executive Committee begin their terms on June 1 of each year*

# Procedures in Seeking Positions

## *President-Elect*

### **Eligibility**

- Must be at the time of selection, or have been within the five years preceding nomination, or serves as, a member of the House
- Is not eligible for nomination while serving on the Nominating Committee

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV; Article VIII, Section 1(B)*

### **Terms**

- 1-year term
- Maximum of 1 term in this capacity; then succeeds the President

*Source: Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2*

### **Selection procedure**

- Those seeking this position file a declaration of candidacy with the Secretary no later than September 1 of the year in which the Nominating Committee will consider candidates
- Nominating Committee presents slate of nominees (at the November House meeting)
- Election by the House at the Annual Meeting (late January) (N.B. If elected at the Annual Meeting, the candidate would become President-Elect on June 1 of that year and then President on June 1 of the following year)

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 1; Article XI*

### **Duties**

- Chairs the House
- Co-Chairs the President's Committee on Access to Justice
- Serves ex-officio on the Finance Committee with voting rights
- Assists the President in meeting with local bars, overseeing Sections and Committees and activities of the Association

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV, Section 2*

# Secretary

## Eligibility

- Is not eligible for nomination while serving on the Nominating Committee

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV; Article VIII, Section 1(B)*

## Terms

- 1-year term
- Maximum of 4 consecutive terms

*Source: Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2*

## Selection procedure

- Candidacies submitted to the Nominating Committee
- Nominating Committee presents slate of nominees (November)
- Election by the House at the Annual Meeting (late January)

*Source: Bylaws, Article XI*



## Duties

- Service on the Executive Committee and House
- Issues notice of meetings; maintains records of proceedings and other matters

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV, Section 4*

## Treasurer

### Eligibility

- Is not eligible for nomination while serving on the Nominating Committee

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 1(B)*

### Terms

- 1-year term
- Maximum of 4 consecutive terms

*Source: Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2*



## **Selection procedure**

- Candidacies submitted to the Nominating Committee
- Nominating Committee presents slate of nominees (November)
- Election by the House at the Annual Meeting (late January)

*Source: Bylaws, Article XI*

## **Duties**

- Service on the Executive Committee and House
- Member of the Finance Committee
- Maintains the funds and accounts of the Association
- Reports on the financial condition of the Association at the Annual, at Association Annual, Executive Committee and House meetings

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV, Section 5*

# *Vice Presidents*

## **Number of Seats**

- 14 (1 for each of the 13 judicial districts, except for the First Judicial District, which has 2)

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV, Section 3(A)*

## **Eligibility**

- *Must have been or currently serves on the House of Delegates*
- *Is not eligible for nomination while serving on the Nominating Committee*

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV, Section 3; Article VIII, Section 1(B)*

## **Terms**

- 1-year term
- Maximum of 4 consecutive terms

*Source: Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2*

## **Selection procedure**

- The Nominating Committee members from the particular district recommend a nominee for Vice President for the Committee's consideration. In selecting the nominees, the Bylaws call for the Committee members to consult with the members of the House from that jurisdiction by a meeting no later than 90 days before the House meeting held during the Annual Meeting

- The district members of the Nominating Committee file a written report with the Nominating Committee Chair concerning the nominee and manner of soliciting and consulting views, at least 10 days in advance of the meeting at which the nominations will be made
- In making the nominations for Vice President, “the Nominating Committee shall give due consideration to the recommendations of the district representatives from each respective district;” the Nominating Committee reports its nominees for Vice President
- Election takes place at the House meeting during the Annual Meeting (late January)

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII, Article XI*

## **Duties**

- Service on the Executive Committee and House of Delegates
- Promotion of communication and cooperation between the Association and local bar associations and any federation in the district, working in collaboration with elected delegates; visitations and other initiatives to stimulate coordinated efforts with local bars
- Representation of the President or arranging for meetings in the district for the President, as requested

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV, Section 3(B) and (C)*



# Members-at-Large of the Executive Committee

## Number of seats

- 11, including not less than 2 from the First District

*Source: Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1(F)*

- Two of the members-at-large shall be selected to further ethnic and racial diversity and may not be drawn from the same Judicial District
- Two members-at-large serve as section delegates to the House of Delegates within three years of their selection; initial terms are staggered, with one member selected to serve a two-year term and one member selected to serve a one-year term
- One member-at-large serves as a section delegate to the House of Delegates from the Young Lawyers Section within three years of the time of selection

*Source: Bylaws, Article VII, Sections 1(F)(1), 1(F)(2) and 1(F)(3)*

## Eligibility

- Membership on the House of Delegates or service on the House, or, for the Section members-at-large, service as a Section Chair at the time of selection or within three years preceding selection

*Source: Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1(F)*

- Is not eligible for nomination while serving on the Nominating Committee

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 1(B)*

## Terms

- 2-year term
- Maximum of 4 years of combined service as Vice President and member-at-large of the Executive Committee; members-at-large may serve no more than 2 consecutive terms in that capacity

*Source: Bylaws, Article VII, Section 4*

## Selection procedure

- Candidacies submitted to the Nominating Committee
- The Nominating Committee nominates members-at-large
- Election takes place at the House meeting during the Annual Meeting (late January)

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII; Article XI*



## **Duties**

- Service on the Executive Committee and House of Delegates

*Source: Bylaws, Article IV, Section 3; Article V, Section 3(G)*

# *Elected Delegates to the House of Delegates*

## **Number of seats**

- 39 (3 from each judicial district)

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3(C)*

## **Terms**

- 1-year term
- Maximum of 4 consecutive terms of combined delegate capacities, with membership on the Executive Committee tolling this computation

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 4*

## **Selection procedure**

- The Nominating Committee members from the particular district recommend nominees for 3 Elected Delegates for the Committee's consideration
- In selecting the nominees, the Bylaws call for the Committee members to consult with the members of the House from that jurisdiction by a meeting no later than 90 days before the House meeting held during the Annual Meeting
- The district members of the Nominating Committee file a written report with the Nominating Committee Chair concerning the nominee and manner of soliciting and consulting views, at least 10 days in advance of the meeting at which the nominations will be made
- The Nominating Committee reports its nominees for Elected Delegates. In making the nominations for Elected Delegates, "the Nominating Committee shall give due consideration to the recommendations of the district representatives from each respective district"
- Election takes place at the House meeting during the Annual Meeting (late January)

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII; Article XI*

## **Duties**

- The House manages the business and affairs of the Association, determines Association policies, and develops positions on reports on issues affecting the law and profession
- Delegates review and present views on issues under consideration

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3*

# *Local Bar Representatives to the House of Delegates*

## **Number of seats**

- Delegates: Varies depending on NYSBA membership population of local bar
- Membership calculated as of December 31 of year preceding selection
- 1 delegate for county bars with 100-299 NYSBA members
- 2 delegates for county bars with 300-999 NYSBA members
- 3 delegates for county bars for first 1,000 members plus 1 delegate for each additional 1,000 members or major fraction thereof

In a judicial district where county bars have less than 100 NYSBA members, delegates are designated cooperatively by those county bars according to aggregate membership.

- 1 delegate for 50-299 NYSBA members
- 2 delegates for 300-999 NYSBA members
- 3 delegates for first 1,000 members, plus 1 delegate for each additional 1,000 or major fraction thereof

New York City Bar Association and the New York County Lawyers' Association are entitled to the same number of delegates.

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3*

## **Alternates**

- 1 alternate for local bars with up to 5 delegates
- 2 alternates for local bars with 6 or more delegates

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3(L)*

## **Eligibility**

- Active or non-resident Association membership
- Other criteria as set by particular local bar association

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3*

## **Terms**

- 1-year term, with maximum 4 consecutive terms in any combination of delegate capacities for regular delegate; further term limits within the 4-year cap may be set by particular local bar
- Service as an alternate tolls the 4-year limit as a delegate except if an alternate attends 2 or more House meetings substituting for the delegate; such attendance then constitutes a year of service
- Those completing 4 years as a delegate are not eligible to be an alternate the next year

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 4(C)*

## **Selection procedure**

- Selected at the same time as regular delegates
- Procedure varies as determined by local bar

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3*

## **Duties**

- The House manages the business and affairs of the Association, determines Association policies, and develops positions on reports on issues affecting the law and profession
- Delegates review and present views on issues under consideration

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 1*

# *Section Representatives to the House of Delegates*

## **Number of seats**

**Delegates:** Varies depending on NYSBA membership population of section. Membership calculated as of December 31 of year preceding selection.

- 1 delegate for sections with 1,500 or fewer members
- 2 delegates for sections with 1,501-2,000 members
- 3 delegates for sections with 2,001-3,500 members
- 4 delegates for sections with 3,501 or more members
- 4 delegates for the Young Lawyers Section

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3(E)*

## **Alternates: 1 alternate per section**

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3(L)*

## **Eligibility**

- Active or non-resident Association membership
- Delegate may, but need not, be a section officer
- Other criteria as set by particular section

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3*

## **Terms**

- 1-year term, with maximum 4 consecutive terms in any combination of delegate capacities for regular delegate; further term limits within the 4-year cap may be set by particular section
- Service as an alternate tolls the 4-year limit as a delegate except if an alternate attends 2 or more House meetings substituting for the delegate; such attendance then constitutes a year of service
- Those completing 4 years as a delegate are not eligible to be an alternate the next year.

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 4(C)*

## **Selection procedure**

- Varies – some elected by Section; others appointed by Section Chair; others designated based on position held, e.g., immediate past Chair
- Selected at same time regular delegates chosen

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 3*

## **Duties**

- The House manages the business and affairs of the Association, determines Association policies, and develops positions on reports on issues affecting the law and profession
- Delegates review and present Section views on issues under consideration.

*Source: Bylaws, Article V, Section 1*

# *Nominating Committee Members*

## **Number of seats**

- District members: 2 members for the first 3,000 NYSBA members in the district, excepting the First District which is allocated 3; plus another member for each district with each additional 3,000 members or major fraction thereof
- 3 past presidents of the Association serve as members-at-large; a fourth past president serves as an alternate member-at-large
- Additional district members: 1 alternate for a district's initial 2 members and another for each additional 3 members or major fraction thereof
- Alternate member-at-large: 1

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 1(C)*

## **Eligibility**

### **District members**

- One of the district members must be a member of the House at the time of selection; the other must be a member of the House within 2 years from that point or currently is, or within 2 years of the time of selection was, a section or committee chair

### **Alternate district members**

- Member of the House within 2 years of selection or Section officer or Committee Chair at the time of selection or within 2 years from that point

### **Member-at-large**

- The immediate past president once removed and his/her two predecessors serve ex officio on the Nominating Committee

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 1(C)*

## **Terms**

- 1-year term
- Maximum of 6 consecutive terms as a regular or alternate member or combination of these capacities

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 1(D)*

## Selection procedure

### District members

- The Vice President and 3 Elected Delegates from the particular district selects nominees for 2 district members of the Nominating Committee and 1 alternate. In this process, the Bylaws call for the Vice President and Elected Delegates to actively solicit and consult with the members of the House from that district by a meeting no later than 30 days before the House meeting at which the Nominating Committee is to be named (April)
- The Vice President then files a written report with the President regarding the manner of soliciting and consulting views, at least 10 days in advance of the House meeting at which the Nominating Committee is to be named
- Election takes place at the April House of Delegates meeting

### Duties

- Service on the Nominating Committee in developing a slate of nominees, including President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Presidents, Elected Delegates to the House, Executive Committee Members-at-Large, and Nominating Committee Members-at-Large

*Source: Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 1*

Starting from when I first joined NYSBA while I was in law school, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact the Association can have on a young attorney's career, such as providing opportunities to meet mentors, develop skills, and obtain in-house internships. As Chair of the Corporate Counsel Section, I seek to encourage law students and young attorneys to join NYSBA during the early stages of their careers and seek volunteer positions. The benefits of being an active NYSBA member are invaluable."

**Yamicha Stevens**



# Association Committees

## Number of seats

- Varies depending on size of Committee and number of vacancies

*Source: Bylaws, Article VI*

## Eligibility

- Active or non-resident Association membership

## Terms

- 1-year term, with general procedure of rotating off after 3 consecutive terms

*Source: Bylaws, Article VI*

## Selection procedure

- Request appointment (through submission of Committee appointment request form published annually in State Bar News; or by submission of a letter to the Association Executive Director; or make interest known to the Committee Chair)
- Appointments of all chairs and members made by the President in May for service effective June 1

*Source: Bylaws, Article VI, Section 1 (B) and Section 2(A)*

## Duties

- Participation in work of Committee.
- Depending on mission, Committees analyze legislation; prepare reports on improvements needed in the law, regulations or court procedures; conduct pro grams and publish educational materials for the profession and public





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