



REVISED MEMBERSHIP FEE STRUCTURE

NOVEMBER 2023 REPORT



Introduction

On June 10, 2023, the New York State Bar Association's House of Delegates was presented with a report on the revised membership fee structure centering on an annual membership model, payable as a one-time fee or via monthly payments, that includes a multitude of add-ons and resources that were previously available as individual purchases. This report was delivered by the co-chairs of the Committee on Membership, Clotelle Drakeford and Michelle Wildgrube. At that time, the House of Delegates approved the concept of the model.

Based on the feedback received during that meeting, along with the Executive Committee meeting on June 9, 2023, and additional stakeholder input since then, below reflects updates made since the initial presentation.

- Dues for additional sections
- Section royalties
- Membership Discounts
- Business Requirements Document
- Marketing Plan

Dues for Additional Sections

The revised membership plan includes two complimentary section memberships. The existing median cost for section membership is \$35.00. We are proposing that additional section memberships selected by an individual should come at a cost of \$30.00 per section, updated from the original proposal of \$25.00 per additional section.

Section Royalties

As previously presented, we are presenting a royalty model with sections, using a rate determined by total paid section membership, then multiplied by total NYSBA paying members.

This model would see Sections generating revenue based on the total NYSBA paid membership number, regardless of whether the paid NYSBA member is also a member of that Section. When NYSBA membership increases, then Section revenue increases along with it.

- For example, a section with 1,000 paid members would qualify for the \$0.95 revenue share rate. Multiply that by 38,000 NYSBA paying members and it comes to \$36,100.
- A section with 2500 paid members would qualify for the \$2.10 revenue share rate. Multiply that by 38,000 NYSBA paying members and it comes to \$79,800.

Section Members	Royalty Rate	2022 Paid NYSBA Members	*Section Revenue	Section Members	Royalty Rate	2022 Paid NYSBA Members	*Section Revenue
0-200	\$0.15	38,000	\$5,700	1501-1600	\$1.55	38,000	\$58,900
201-400	\$0.30	38,000	\$11,400	1601-1700	\$1.60	38,000	\$60,800
401-500	\$0.35	38,000	\$13,300	1701-1800	\$1.65	38,000	\$62,700
501-600	\$0.45	38,000	\$17,100	1801-1900	\$1.70	38,000	\$64,600
601-700	\$0.55	38,000	\$20,900	1901-2000	\$1.75	38,000	\$66,500
701-800	\$0.70	38,000	\$26,600	2001-2250	\$1.80	38,000	\$68,400
801-900	\$0.80	38,000	\$30,400	2251-2500	\$1.95	38,000	\$74,100
901-1000	\$0.90	38,000	\$34,200	2501-2750	\$2.10	38,000	\$79,800
1001-1100	\$0.95	38,000	\$36,100	2751-3000	\$2.25	38,000	\$85,500
1101-1200	\$1.30	38,000	\$49,400	3001-3250	\$3.25	38,000	\$123,500
1201-1300	\$1.35	38,000	\$51,300	3251-3500	\$3.45	38,000	\$131,100
1301-1400	\$1.45	38,000	\$55,100	3501-3750	\$3.65	38,000	\$138,700
1401-1500	\$1.50	38,000	\$57,000	3751-4000	\$3.95	38,000	\$150,100

If this model was in place today, based on 38,000 paid members in 2022, with each of our twenty-eight sections receiving their appropriate revenue share percentage, then 26 Sections would generate equal or greater income.

In anticipation of proceeding with this membership model for the 2025 membership year, the membership numbers, and subsequent royalty used, will reflect closing section numbers from the 2024 calendar year. Payment(s) will then be distributed to sections in 2025. Payment(s) to sections in 2026 will be based on final 2025 numbers, and so on and so forth.

It is important to note that there is not a suitable way to determine the anticipated increase for certain sections once we institute this new model. While we currently recognize approximately 50% NYSBA members are a member of at least one section, once we have our entire membership population eligible for two free sections, there is a possibility of certain sections increasing their membership by 300%-500%. The

association intends to review the royalty scale at the end of 2025 and 2026, upon having a better idea of where significant growth in section membership may take place, and adjusting the scale accordingly, still ensuring a lack of negative impact on any of our twenty-eight sections.

Membership Discounts

Feedback on potential discounts for varying membership types has been shared since the rollout of this proposed new model. Upon lengthy discussions and feedback, we have addressed a few items specifically.

- 1) The New York State Bar Association has not instituted a membership dues price adjustment for a decade.
- 2) The new membership model includes such significant value with free programming, publications, forms, and section membership that there is something for everyone, and instituting blanket discounts could significantly devalue what is being offered and impact the association financially.
- 3) Extending a blanket discount solely based on job category (i.e., Government, Non-Profit) may find us in a place of inequity, as some members represented in those categories produce a salary that does not represent a financial hardship.
- 4) We are moving forward with an income-based discount, believing it will offer the solution we are looking for across all job types, mitigating the expense for those members that need it most. Members generating a gross income of \$75,000 or less will automatically qualify for a 25% discount on dues through the Dues Waiver Program for as long as they meet the criteria. Additional discounts through the program may be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- 5) Members participating in the Dues Waiver program remain completely anonymous and receive the exact same benefits as that of a full-paying member.
- 6) For retired members, we are updating to a discounted rate of \$11.95 per month, or \$129.06 if paid annually, which reflects a 60%+ discount on the standard dues rate.

Business Requirements Document

During March 2020, in an effort to evolve our organization into a virtual bar center, we conducted a large digital overhaul, launching a completely updated website along with

a new Association Management Software (AMS). This was in conjunction with transitioning our CLE programs to virtual offerings, utilizing Zoom as our primary delivery model. We are committed to making necessary adjustments to both improve the overarching user experience, as well as transition to this new membership model, and are confident that the necessary tools and business partners exist to make this a reality.

While the project scope will focus primarily on the deliverables necessary to accommodate the soon to be updated model, functional requirements were outlined, by category, to develop the most feasible and first-rate gameplan involving all partners and vendors involved.

We currently have a complicated membership dues structure that requires our systems to process and keep track of varying transactions, both during the join and/or renew stage, as well as during individual purchases such as an activity, event, publication, or online form throughout the year.

Based on user feedback, the existing transactional process for joining, renewing, registering, and purchasing resources can prove to be difficult, clunky, and slow.

From a user experience standpoint, it has been increasingly difficult for members to find what they are looking for in a timely and efficient fashion when utilizing the global search feature.

Since we are a membership organization, it is important to collect and manage a great deal of data and records on our members, which can be quite burdensome at times, as it both involves manual resources from a staff and complicated technological updates with our current AMS.

A Business Requirements Document (BRD) has been built, assessing all of current systems, and collecting substantial feedback from internal and external stakeholders, in order to implement much needed updates in conjunction with the membership changes outlined in this new model.

Marketing Launch

In September 2023, NYSBA's marketing team distributed a Request for Proposal (RFP) to marketing firms across the state. Approximately seven proposals were received from firms as of the October 25th deadline outlined in the RFP. The

review/interview/section process will conclude within the next 4-6 weeks in order to begin working on the 2024-2025 membership campaign.

While the change is significant for the association, the goal is to make this transition easily understood by our members, and potential members, as well as appear as a seamless conversion.

Objectives/Goals:

- 1) Create, develop, and execute campaign to announce the membership model change to existing members and perspective members
- 2) Explain and answer any questions from the membership
- 3) Reinforce the reasons for the change in membership
- 4) Convert members to the new model
- 5) Convert current non-members to NYSBA membership