

What the OSB Offers

The Oregon State Bar has launched or maintained several efforts and programs to address the problem of job shortages for new graduates.

According to Eric McClendon, manager of the OSB's Referral and Information Services, the bar has sponsored a CLE to try to help young lawyers get into mentoring relationships with older attorneys. The OSB, partly through articles in the *Bulletin*, also has tried to show new lawyers that there is a great need for attorneys in many parts of the state, especially in locations where senior lawyers are looking to retire and want someone to take over the practices they have built over years.

In addition, the Professional Liability Fund sponsors a practical skills seminar each November called "Learning the Ropes," for new admittees and lawyers entering private practice in Oregon. This program includes information about developing a successful practice and avoiding legal malpractice, a professionalism and ethics workshop, practical tips from judges and lawyers, and presentations on setting up effective office systems.

In 2011, the OSB established a mandatory New Lawyer Mentoring Program. The OSB and the Oregon Supreme Court launched the initiative to serve all incoming bar members. The program formalizes a process that for many decades took place organically, through connections forged at law firms and other close-knit bar communities. The program offers new bar members one-on-one guidance, with the intention of giving all new bar members meaningful access to experienced lawyers and a well-developed mentoring program in their first year.

The OSB Board of Governors created the Lawyer to Lawyer program in 1985 to address concerns that the rapid growth and diversification of OSB membership had led to a breakdown of informal lawyer mentoring networks. The goal of the program is to provide access to experienced lawyers who are willing to share experience and offer advice to other bar members.

"If a lawyer wants to speak to someone in a certain practice area, the Lawyer to Lawyer hotline offers attorneys free advice on the full gamut of legal issues," says McClendon. Volunteer resource lawyers with experience to share are listed according to areas of expertise and geographic location. Any attorney can call to request the names and numbers of three resource lawyers registered in a particular area.

Other resources include the option of signing up for the OSB's Lawyer Referral Service, which fields 70,000 calls, 8,000 emails and 3,000 letters annually, making 50,000 referrals each year. The Modest Means program provides 190 attorneys willing to see clients based on a sliding fee scale for such matters as family law, criminal defense and landlord-tenant issues.