

HENNEPIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
Three-Year Strategic Plan
2011 - 2014

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**Mission Statement**

*The Hennepin County Bar Association exists to serve the needs of its membership by advancing professionalism, ethical conduct, diversity, competence, practice development, and collegiality in the legal profession. The Association shall strive to ensure the fairness and accessibility of the legal system, promote public understanding and confidence in our system of justice, and work with the courts to improve the administration of justice.*

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Strategic Plan Overview

The Hennepin County Bar Association (HCBA) exists to serve its diverse membership by providing a wide range of opportunities to enrich members' professional and personal lives. Those opportunities include:

- membership in a professional community
- leadership development
- educational programming
- social events and networking
- service to the profession and society

These programs are designed to be consistent with the HCBA's core values—professionalism, ethical conduct, and diversity—and with a commitment to justice for the larger society of which its members are a part.

To accomplish these purposes, the HCBA uses well-designed facilities and evolving technologies, coordinated by skilled and experienced staff members who implement HCBA activities at the direction of the elected leadership.

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The following materials amplify the above overview statement of the strategic plan. The broad strategies described provide the framework out of which annual plans will be adopted by the HCBA's Board of Directors. Those annual plans should detail the implementation of the strategic plan, and will be designed with measurable goals to hold leadership, committees, and staff responsible and accountable.

**Core Values**

In all of its programming and activities, the HCBA will be guided by its commitment to core values of professionalism, ethical conduct, and diversity.

Professionalism and Ethical Conduct concerns should permeate all programming and the HCBA's own policies and procedures, but are particularly expressed through discrete

specific programming such as CLE, including the signature Law & Literature programs. Professionalism and ethical conduct merit recognition and honoring of individuals and programs that reflect such values; and the regular proclamation of a pledge of professionalism promotes high standards among members. In addition, the HCBA is committed to formal processes of self-regulation, specifically by administering the 4<sup>th</sup> District Ethics Committee.

The commitment to diversity is also a core value that must inform all functions of the HCBA. Toward this end, the HCBA

- Proactively engages the specialty bar associations for attorneys of color, women attorneys, and GLBT attorneys, with a long term goal, *inter alia*, of increasing participation of under-represented communities in HCBA leadership.
- Continues to provide continuing education programming that raises the awareness of the bar to issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and class.
- Extends its commitment to the non-legal community through involvement in “pipeline” initiatives that can impact choices by vulnerable youth and open doors to later professional development and career choices.

One Profession, Many Practices. The HCBA recognizes that although it is an association of lawyers, its members practice in a wide variety of settings, ranging from sole practitioners to large firms, from downtown to suburban offices, from litigators to transactional lawyers, from representing individuals to international conglomerates, and from in-house and private practice to public service. The HCBA strives to meet both the common and different needs of its members throughout its programs and activities.

#### **A. A Professional Community**

The HCBA works to engage the diverse range of experience of the bar and bench during the entirety of its members’ careers. To successfully accomplish its mission, the HCBA’s brand of quality programming and service must be identified and valued.

- The HCBA seeks to engage the full legal community through a range of interactions: in-person, print, and electronic. The HCBA is committed to continuing to provide members with a high quality printed publication, as well as effectively using emerging electronic technologies, including social media.
- HCBA serves its membership in connection with the Minnesota State Bar Association (MSBA). By committing that all HCBA members also will be MSBA members, the HCBA emphasizes cooperation over competition and providing complementary rather than redundant services. The HCBA works to implement partnered efforts as effectively as possible while focusing on the uniqueness of its own membership.

## **B. Leadership Development**

The HCBA is committed to preparing members for leadership roles in the profession and society at large. In addition, the HCBA itself requires ongoing effective leadership. The HCBA seeks to offer a range of opportunities, both formal and informal, for leadership growth, including

- Progressive development through service in the HCBA's own executive committee, the HCBA Board and its committees, sections, task forces, and liaison positions;
- Opportunities to write for and to speak to peers through publications and CLE presentations; and
- Formal leadership training, such as through Leaders Impacting the Nonprofit Community (LINC) program.

The HCBA encourages members to develop leadership skills within a widening circle of influence among peers, the justice systems, and other institutions of society.

## **C. Educational Programming**

The HCBA's CLE programming is the most visible activity of the association, and has repeatedly been viewed, along with the membership publication, as a key membership benefit. At the same time CLE programming provides resources for professional enhancement in substance and skills, it also produces significant non-dues revenue that funds the wide range of other services the HCBA provides. In designing and implementing programming, HCBA leaders and staff must be sensitive to the healthy tension between member service and revenue growth. An annual marketing plan—to be reviewed by leadership—should attempt to meld these goals effectively and economically. In addition, CLE programming should:

- Seek to strike suitable balances between noon-time (one-hour) and multi-hour programming, substantive law and skills and personal development topics, and lecture and interactive styles;
- Remain flexible enough to adapt to evolving member needs, best practices, and technological capabilities; and
- Continue to increase annual revenue through timely and relevant programming, increased attendance at programs, and webcasting opportunities.

## **D. Social Events and Networking**

Social relationships are valuable intrinsically and as building blocks for greater endeavors within the community. Without personal relationships, individuals are seldom

motivated to invest further time with projects and groups. The HCBA offers a broad scope of programs to serve a variety of goals:

- Welcoming law students and new admittees to the profession and offering mentoring and discussion groups to integrate newer lawyers into the legal community;
- Developing friendships amongst lawyers through non-legal interactions, such as the softball league and annual golf tournament;
- Building professional connections among its members through social events, such as the Judges Social, Annual Meeting, and Bar Benefit; and
- Encouraging collegiality by supporting activities planned by practice sections.

Such events help brand the HCBA to its members and the public and generate goodwill and commitment to the HCBA without regard to the level of personal involvement of any individual member.

In addition to signature events, the HCBA should maximize the number of opportunities for social interaction as well as to encourage and support service activities and projects by members.

#### **E. Service to the profession and the society**

The legal profession is unique in that each individual member has a responsibility to society as an officer of the court in a profession whose membership is limited. The HCBA can spur individual members in this regard to effectuate a fair, effective, and accessible system of justice. Individuals may certainly have an individual impact through pro bono service, but the united efforts of the 8500+ members provide significantly more impact.

The HCBA has a strong commitment to the design and function of the justice system. To that end, the HCBA works with the bench to design and implement aspects of the formal court system. The Bench & Bar Committee offers many opportunities to impact those design activities and to enhance the relationships between the bench and bar. The HCBA also supports adequate funding for the justice system, publicizing the issues, cooperating with coalitions, and working directly with the legislature through the Government Relations Committee, Executive Committee, and Board of Directors. It has also supported local initiatives, including court security, the law library, and other unique district court efforts. HCBA resolutions have taken a stand in support of the principles of equal justice and access as the basis for the infrastructure of justice for society at large.

The HCBA also has a highly visible commitment to individuals by helping to ensure access for all to the justice system. The HCBA will continue to support direct legal services by:

- Contributing significant annual funding to Volunteer Lawyers Network;
- Providing a range of services through its Lawyer Referral and Information Service (including pro-bono and low-bono projects and the Commitment Defense Project service contract);
- Creating opportunities for legal service providers to share concerns through the Delivery of Legal Services Committee;
- Designating staff and other resources to the governance, administration, and development of the Hennepin County Bar Foundation; and
- Providing legal information to the public, through written and educational materials, free legal consultation, and public education programs on the law and legal concepts, and to foster and reinforce a positive public image of lawyers.

### **Facilities, finances, and staffing**

To accomplish the HCBA's purposes, the association provides high quality resources (including facilities and technology) as well as staff who can effectively implement leadership-directed initiatives. The HCBA relies on the following principles:

- The HCBA is committed to the hiring of skilled and effective staff, to be paid fairly, consistent with their responsibilities, skills, and accomplishments.
- The Executive Director has responsibility for hiring, equipping, and directing staff; for investing in needed physical and technological resources; and recommending appropriate budget or special funding requests to the HCBA's leadership.
- The Finance & Planning Committee is charged with the responsibility of proposing a sound and responsible annual budget that takes into consideration dues levels, non-dues potential, investments, and reserves, as well as funding the priorities and programs of the association. That budgeting procedure includes input by many constituencies and ultimate authorization by the Board of Directors.
- The staff management team seeks to maximize financial resources, investing and using those resources consistent with policies adopted by the HCBA leadership.