



ADVANCING OUR PROFESSION THROUGH CONNECTION

District of Columbia Bar Annual Report
2025–2026



Letter to Our Members

As we reflect on the D.C. Bar's accomplishments during fiscal year 2025–2026, two themes stand out: the importance of strong institutional stewardship at home and the power of connection and shared purpose across borders.

Following the Board of Governors' approval of our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, we moved quickly from vision to execution to advance the Bar's mission with clarity and purpose. That plan is now actively guiding enterprisewide priorities that reflect our collective commitment to ensuring the Bar remains strong, resilient, and member-focused. Over the past year we strengthened our organizational foundation while expanding services, programs, and partnerships to support our members, advance the profession, and serve the broader community.

This annual report highlights how the D.C. Bar effectively served its members by delivering valuable programming, practical training, and meaningful opportunities for connection. Through our nationally accredited CLE courses, Communities programs, and cutting-edge conferences, combined with our robust well-being, ethics, and practice management support, the Bar ensured that our members received timely, practice-focused education to help advance professional excellence.

Amid unprecedented challenges, we stayed steadfast in supporting our members in protecting the rule of law, defending the independence of our judiciary, and expanding access to justice. This year the Bar played a leading role in supporting the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission, including securing the appointment of a second D.C. Bar representative. At the same time, we actively engaged in efforts to defend the commission's essential function of screening, selecting, and recommending candidates for appointment to the District of Columbia Courts. Our work extends beyond the Bar. From the Youth Law Fair to Constitution in the Classroom, we are demystifying the law and legal system and inspiring future legal minds.

The D.C. Bar has been an indispensable anchor for our federal government colleagues navigating career transitions. In 2025 we held our first Federal Attorney Career Summit, providing participants with tools, insights, and connections to thrive in the next chapter of their legal journeys.

Inside the Bar, sound governance remains a top priority. Working closely with the Nominations Committee, we recruited and assembled a strong slate of Board of Governors candidates in 2026, ensuring leadership continuity and positioning the Bar to better navigate both changes and challenges.

We also achieved an important regulatory milestone. The D.C. Bar successfully proposed and secured adoption of an amendment to the D.C. Court of Appeals Rules Governing the Bar, adding clarifying language that codified the *Keller* standard for determining which activities can be funded by mandatory license fees. This achievement provided regulatory clarity while preserving the Bar's ability to fulfill its statutory responsibilities.

We are adapting as the legal profession is evolving. Our artificial intelligence initiatives reflect our belief that technology, when deployed thoughtfully, can bolster — not compromise — our professional values. Putting guardrails in place around ethics, privacy, and transparency, we established a comprehensive AI Acceptable Use Policy and deployed tools designed to enhance operational efficiency, staff capacity, and member services.

With nearly 124,000 members in the United States and around the world, forging strong relationships with local voluntary and affinity bar associations is essential to the D.C. Bar's ability to serve a profession as large, diverse, and dynamic as ours. In March 2026 the D.C. Bar hosted its first Voluntary Bar Leadership Institute, bringing together voluntary bar leaders and members in Washington, D.C., for an all-day program on leading with vision and purpose, collaborative decision-making, effective board governance, and strategies for sustainability, among other topics. This initiative provided another pathway for mentorship and leadership development within our profession, and we look forward to replicating its success for many years to come.





From shaping future legal minds at the Youth Law Fair (at left) to hosting member networking events (above), the D.C. Bar is committed to building connections within the organization and the larger community.

While much of our work this year focused on strengthening our foundation at home, we also increased the Bar's presence and influence abroad by building relationships and finding common ground with bar leaders throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and beyond.

Across these engagements — including openings of the legal year, conferences, and leadership roundtables — we participated in meaningful conversations and found broad alignment with international bar leaders on the importance of upholding our professional oaths, protecting the independence of our judicial systems, expanding access to justice, integrating technology responsibly, and preparing the next generation of lawyers for a profession in transition.

These engagements were practical and instructive, giving us valuable insights into how other jurisdictions are addressing challenges facing our profession and the rule of law. As the largest unified bar in the United States, we leveraged our position to engage thoughtfully on the global stage.

Fiscal year 2025–2026 for the D.C. Bar was defined by meaningful progress: strengthened governance, modernized operations, enhanced programming so members could practice with excellence, and expanded domestic and international connections. Grounded in shared values and collaborative leadership, the D.C. Bar is strongly positioned for the future.


Sadina Montani
President


Robert J. Spagnoletti
CEO

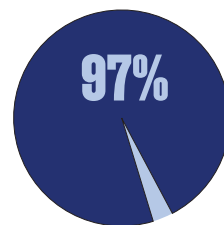
STELLAR SERVICE FOR A GROWING BAR

123,919

total members
(as of April 2026)

4,600+

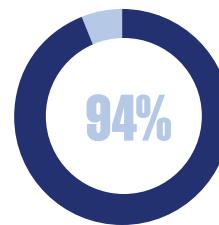
new admittees



renewal rate maintained

14,124

support tickets handled
during calendar year 2025



member satisfaction rating

20+

firms added to the firm billing program

Advancing Our Profession Through Connection

At its core, the work of the D.C. Bar in fiscal year 2025–2026 focused on meeting our members where they are and anticipating where the legal profession is headed so we can continue to equip lawyers to practice with excellence.

Professional Growth

In response to emerging technology, shifts in the practice of law and work culture, governmental change, and more, the D.C. Bar CLE Program and Communities presented substantive and timely programming to keep our members competitive in a rapidly evolving legal landscape.

The CLE Program offered more than 150 classes in 22 practice areas and hosted two major events to boost members' leadership skills — the John Payton Leadership Academy and the Voluntary Bar Leadership Institute. The Communities, comprising nearly 16,000 members, presented over 130 in-person and remote programs that drew more than 4,000 attendees and produced 40-plus podcast episodes. Close to 800 people registered for the annual Tax Conference, the Communities' biggest event with 28 breakout sessions and 8 general sessions.

In the past year, Communities efforts also focused on supporting federal attorneys in a time of change and preparing future and early career lawyers through programs such as the Judicial Clerkship Bootcamp and the Karen Hastie Williams Leadership Fellowship.



Lawyer Well-Being & Practice Management

Supporting lawyer well-being and helping members build healthier and more sustainable careers remain two of the D.C. Bar’s core priorities.

Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP)

LAP staff delivered high levels of service through individual client sessions, consultations, and support groups addressing wellness, neurodivergence, career transition, and bar exam preparation. LAP’s work in the past year included the formation of a support group for federal lawyers, a six-session series on navigating ADHD in the workplace, and the 2026 Well-Being Summit (cosponsored by Communities), which drew 170 attendees.

Practice Management Advisory Service (PMAS)

PMAS advisors continued to support lawyers adapting to shifting professional landscapes, particularly those exploring a transition from government service to private practice. As of March 30, 2026, PMAS handled 1,065 inquiries for practice management assistance, conducted 46 practice assessments, and held 25 education/outreach sessions focused on firm startup, growth, hiring, marketing, and client trust account management. It also began planning for the 2026 Practice 360°, reimagining it as a fully virtual conference to increase accessibility.

The D.C. Bar supports members' professional development through (at left, top to bottom) the Voluntary Bar Leadership Institute, Tax Conference, and John Payton Leadership Academy, as well as the Practice Management Advisory Service's Practice 360° (this page).



LAP

74

new cases opened

476

client sessions

177

consultations

88

education/outreach/
group sessions

As of March 30, 2026

Ethics & Professional Regulation

Legal Ethics Program

Legal ethics counsel continued to provide critical and timely guidance to lawyers about their ethical duties under the D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct, fielding more than 2,100 inquiries to the Legal Ethics Helpline.

The Rules of Professional Conduct Review Committee published for public comment two reports about proposed revisions to Rule 1.15 Comments [1] and [2] and Rule 1.16. The Legal Ethics Committee published four new ethics opinions, including revised Opinion 389: Flat Fees, Subscription Fees and Disbarment. This opinion clarifies Rule 1.15’s application to prepaid flat fees — the subject of much confusion after a series of cases from the D.C. Court of Appeals defined “unearned” fees, “earned” fees, and client “informed consent” in ways that are not obvious on the face of the rule.

Legal ethics counsel also participated in more than 25 ethics panels, presentations, podcasts, and local and national programs, several of which educated members on recent amendments to the D.C. Rules.

Attorney/Client Arbitration Board (ACAB)

ACAB managed a marked increase in demand for its services, surpassing the prior fiscal year’s total caseload of 28 new cases, well before year end. ACAB continued timely scheduling and resolution of arbitration matters, supported by robust arbitrator engagement and ongoing arbitrator training to maintain program quality.

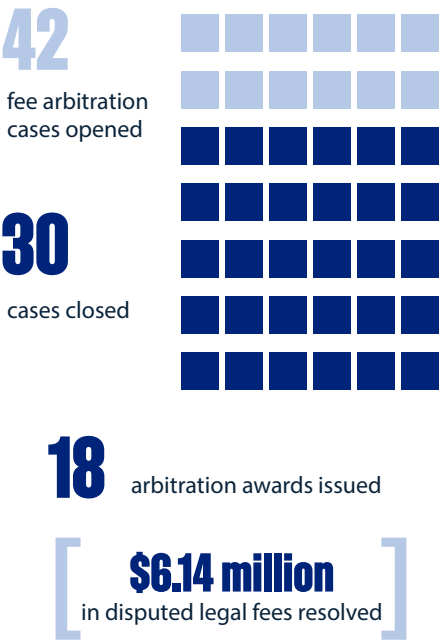
Clients’ Security Fund (CSF)

CSF made several operational improvements to better serve the public, including developing a new online application through its case management system to reduce barriers to access and improve efficiency. CSF trustees also drafted proposed amendments to Rule XII, for future review by the Board of Governors, to provide greater flexibility in the investment of CSF funds, positioning the Bar to respond prudently to changing fiscal conditions while maintaining strong financial protection.

Innovations in Legal Practice Committee (ILPC)

The ILPC published a draft report and proposed amendments to Rules of Professional Conduct 5.3, 5.4, and 5.7. If adopted by the D.C. Court of Appeals, the amendments would permit D.C. attorneys to share fees with nonlawyer owners in a firm where its principal purpose is the provision of legal services to clients. These changes would allow lawyers to respond to client demand for a range of legal and law-related professional services and would not change the parameters of the limited exception to fee sharing, allowing nonlawyers to hold a financial interest in a D.C. law firm.

ACAB



As of March 30, 2026

CSF



At right, events and programs such as the Voluntary Bar Fair, D.C. Cup Moot Court Competition, Constitution in the Classroom, visit from the Paris Bar, and CLE Abroad enriched the D.C. Bar’s connections within the greater legal community.



Member Engagement & Connections

The D.C. Bar, including the Communities Office, hosted numerous events throughout the year to help members feel more connected to the Bar and to their colleagues, strengthening the legal community as a whole. Among this year's highlights was U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor's visit to the D.C. Bar for a fireside chat with President Sadina Montani about the justice's new children's book.

The Bar's work spans both domestic and international dimensions, reflecting its role as a connector, educator, and convener. At home, it strengthens the local legal community through networking programs that help members build meaningful professional relationships, moot court competitions that sharpen law students' advocacy skills, and Constitution in the Classroom sessions that bring civic literacy to D.C. youth. Beyond U.S. borders, the Bar hosts international continuing legal education programs that enrich members' knowledge of legal systems around the world.



Modernized Operations

The Information Technology Division delivered meaningful advances across the D.C. Bar and D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, supporting strategic priorities through modernized infrastructure, smarter systems, and a deliberate integration of artificial intelligence into core workflows, including:

- Rollout of an in-house AI-powered contract management system to reduce legal and administrative overhead
- Deployment of an AI agent to help the Executive Office organize and retrieve files more efficiently
- Development of an AI voice agent to support the Pro Bono Center's Legal Information Help Line
- Use of AI to analyze and categorize website content to prepare for migration to a new website
- Introduction of Communities' planning chatbot, MARNA, to support volunteers

In the past year the IT Division invested in improvements to the Pro Bono Center's service delivery, such as by fully integrating new management systems for the Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network's call center and for the coordination of volunteers during legal clinics. An outreach campaign to MyDCLawyer subscribers helped drive profile completions, improving the service's effectiveness for users seeking legal assistance. In addition, IT developed the Multi-Tenant Lawyer Referral System and offered it to peer bar associations.

The D.C. Bar and staff received several honors this year, including (clockwise from top) a 2025 Top Workplace designation by the Washington Post and multiple recognitions from the Association for Bar Professionals (NABE) — a Luminary Award for Washington Lawyer writer John Murph, the Bolton Award for Outstanding Bar Leadership for CEO Robert Spagnoletti, and a LexisNexis Community and Educational Outreach Award for the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, D.C. Courts, and YOUTOPIAN for the Virtual D.C. Courts Interactive Website.

Strategic Communications

The Marketing and Communications Department advanced member engagement and promoted the Bar's programs, services, and benefits across channels. A Marketing and Communications plan aligned with the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan was developed, strengthening the foundation for meeting member needs and enhancing cross-department collaboration. Brand development continued alongside new initiatives to modernize marketing technology and enhance communications platforms — positioning the Bar for more targeted, efficient, and data-driven member outreach.



Commitment to Justice

The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center is a trusted provider of pro bono legal assistance for thousands of individuals, small businesses, and nonprofits in the District and surrounding areas. In the past fiscal year, the Pro Bono Center mobilized volunteers through targeted, high-impact initiatives and trained 1,593 volunteers, attorneys, nonprofits, and small businesses to significantly expand access to justice.

The Advocacy & Justice Clinic, now in its 33rd year, connected volunteer attorneys with clients in more than 190 full-representation litigation matters. The Nonprofit & Small Business Legal Assistance Programs strengthened communities by providing critical legal support, consultations, and ongoing representation of 582 nonprofits and small businesses.

The Pro Bono Center's Saturday Advice & Referral Clinics now take place at the D.C. Bar — a move that reflected a deliberate and deepening commitment to the community. This year, the clinic partnered with the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia and the Neighborhood Legal Services Program to offer criminal record sealing assistance to remove barriers that prevent District residents from participating in civic and economic life. The Family Law Assistance Network, a joint initiative with the DC Affordable Law Firm and Legal Aid DC, surpassed 6,000 total clients served since its launch.

The Pro Bono Center's work is supported entirely by the generous contributions of individuals, law firms, foundations, and businesses committed to ensuring access to justice for all D.C. residents. In the past year, the Pro Bono Center raised more than \$6 million, an increase of \$677,940 over the previous year. This support makes it possible for the Pro Bono Center to deliver life-changing legal help to improve the health, safety, and financial stability of our neighbors with limited means. 



D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center staff and volunteers run clinics, resource centers, assistance networks, and trainings to expand access to justice.



Pro Bono Center

CLINICS

Advocacy & Justice Clinic
190 cases placed for full representation

Advice & Referral Clinic
483 people served

Bankruptcy Clinic
29 cases placed for representation

Immigration Legal Advice & Referral Clinic
235 people served

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

227 small businesses served

355 nonprofits assisted

Future Planning & Probate Program
248 clients served

RESOURCE CENTERS AND TRAININGS

Consumer Law Resource Center
174 people served

Landlord Tenant Resource Center
899 people served

874 training program registrants

248 nonprofits trained

NETWORKS

Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network
1,536 intakes **85** cases

Family Law Assistance Network
434 clients served

Probate Legal Assistance Network
139 people assisted

Figures as of April 2026

The District of Columbia Bar

Statements of Activities and Financial Position

Years Ended June 2025 and 2024

REVENUE	2025	2024
Membership License Fees	\$35,875,975	\$34,466,996
Communities Dues	1,454,773	1,511,865
In-Kind Contributions	2,267,185	2,190,449
Admission and Registration	503,616	545,443
Investment Income	2,705,298	2,353,541
Other Fees and Services	4,895,825	4,428,478
Total Revenue	\$47,702,672	\$45,496,772

EXPENSE

Program Services

Board on Professional Responsibility	\$11,653,101	\$11,339,245
Regulation Counsel	4,562,481	4,373,901
Continuing Legal Education	2,295,126	2,157,820
Communications	2,871,634	2,629,593
Communities	1,765,228	1,635,003
Annual Meeting and Judicial Reception	799,050	450,271
Clients' Security Fund Activities	90,376	59,286
Total Program Services	\$24,036,996	\$22,645,119

Supporting Services

Administration and Finance	\$18,522,534	\$17,959,785
Executive Office	2,318,337	2,177,398
Total Supporting Services	20,840,871	20,137,183
Total Expense	\$44,877,867	\$42,782,302

Change in Net Assets Before Other Activity	2,824,805	2,714,470
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Net Gain (Loss) on Fair Value of Interest Rate Swap Agreements	(976,277)	1,469,174
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CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$1,848,528	\$4,183,644
Net Assets – Beginning of Year	37,479,140	33,295,496
Net Assets – End of Year	\$39,327,668	\$37,479,140

ASSETS	2025	2024
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$6,093,539	\$8,821,556
Restricted Cash – Clients' Security Fund	1,203,354	1,206,868
Investments	38,196,771	32,177,590
Other Assets	3,903,428	3,977,707
Interest Rate Swap	3,214,376	4,190,653
Property and Equipment	68,580,590	69,670,078
Total Assets	\$121,192,058	\$120,044,452

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$6,133,661	\$5,844,220
Amount Due to Affiliate	1,207,478	2,029,510
Deferred Revenue	27,091,651	26,326,082
Loans Payable	47,431,600	48,365,500
Total Liabilities	\$81,864,390	\$82,565,312

Net Assets

Undesignated	\$4,685,441	\$3,984,525
Board Designated		
Mandatory License Fee Purpose	29,604,384	28,732,800
Communities	2,217,619	2,071,095
Clients' Security Trust Fund	1,250,000	1,252,778
Continuing Legal Education	1,570,224	1,437,942
Total Net Assets	\$39,327,668	\$37,479,140

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$121,192,058	\$120,044,452
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Audit

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District of Columbia Bar Foundation

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Excellence in Practice.
Excellence in Service.