

President's Perspective

NJSBA President Prol discusses member survey results; path forward

“Survey Says!”

This spring, the New Jersey State Bar Association asked its members to respond to a survey about what we're doing right and what areas we need to improve.

Over 2,000 of you responded to our survey and took part in focus groups, allowing for a statistically significant sampling with a 95 percent level of confidence. Such a robust response generated data that we can analyze and use to improve what it means to be a member of the state's largest organization of judges, lawyers and other legal professionals.

First and foremost, you told us that overwhelmingly you are satisfied with your membership, and for that we are so very proud and grateful. We are committed to being your voice and helping you be the best attorneys and advocates you can be.

“NJSBA membership has opened my life (not just my career) to the benefit of wise counselors who are part of the NJSBA organization...The group has helped me to have the right skills to look for good work and to market my niche,” one member said.

Added another: “The NJSBA looks after the interests of lawyers in New Jersey.”

You told us what you value most about belonging: opportunities to network and connect, both in person and through CommunityNET; discounts on continuing legal education (CLE) courses; and access to meaningful practice benefits, like free legal research.

“The NJSBA has provided more information and connection with other NJ attorneys, like-minded and otherwise. I appreciate the access to CLE and daily updates on issues that may deal with my area of practice,” said a member.

You told us that membership in the bar association is most valuable when you get involved with our sections, committees and division.

“The members I've interacted with have been professional, well-informed advisors and adversaries who have a great sense of humor,” a member stated.

To encourage even more of those connections, we are working internally and invigorating our leadership to ensure our sections, committees and division have the necessary support to thrive.

You also told us that we need to do a better job at a few things.

- “I think there can be more opportunities for using and developing this network and its resources.”
- It “operates as a closed club.”
- “They’ve got to reach out to the small firms and realize the stress of running a law firm and what’s involved.”

Here’s what we’re doing to address those concerns.

We are analyzing the ways we reach out to you to make certain the information you receive is tailored to you. Starting this fall, on the first Tuesday of each month at noon, we’ll host a call-in program for members to ask questions and learn more about what the NJSBA is doing.

We know that solo and small-firm attorneys – almost three-fourths of state bar members - face different issues than their colleagues in larger firms, so we are making a concerted effort to bring these members information that will be relevant to their practices and will help build their Main Street businesses.

For lawyers new to the profession, we are committed to helping you plant roots in the legal community that will serve you throughout your career. We are continuing to put resources in place to ensure you have the opportunity to network and make connections that will advance your career, find answers to your practice questions, and get your CLE credits in an affordable manner and when it’s convenient for you. And we’re planning a job fair in November that will bring opportunities to you.

For attorneys in South Jersey, we are working to find more opportunities to connect with you closer to home, and we have some ambitious plans to unite the state’s legal community with an eye toward overcoming geographic constraints in programming and other opportunities.

You may have already seen emails, videos and social media updates coming to you that are more targeted to your region or practice area, and we are committed to continuing to deliver up-to-date, real-time information that will help you thrive and grow as lawyers and business leaders.

A top priority of the NJSBA is to improve the lives of our members, and to help them become their very best. We are indebted to our members, whose volunteer efforts make this organization what it is, and we continually strive to recognize that service and make it easier for you to be involved.

Thank you for your dedication to the NJSBA. We would be nothing without the commitment and involvement of lawyers like you.

*To read the details of the survey’s findings, [click here](#).
(NOTE: This will be a live link.)*

NJSBA member survey highlights

Overview:

74 percent of members want information from the NJSBA via email.

CLE, FastCase and CommunityNET are the most commonly used member benefits.

68 percent of NJSBA members also belong to a specialized section, committee or division.

Key issues the NJSBA should focus on in the year ahead:

Statewide issues

Reducing professional malpractice statute of limitations to two years

Judicial independence

Top three issues for solo or small-firm attorneys:

Statewide issues

Reducing professional malpractice statute of limitations to two years

Non-lawyers performing legal work

Top three issues for lawyers with five or fewer years in practice:

Statewide issues

Non-lawyers performing legal work

Not enough jobs for new attorneys