

VERMONT BAR ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN – DECEMBER 2023

Mission: The Vermont Bar Association promotes the highest standards of skill, ethics and professionalism within an inclusive legal profession; fosters understanding of and respect for the rule of law; supports equal access to a fair and effective system of justice; and provides valuable resources to its members.

This plan will be subject to periodic reassessment by self-surveys of the Board of Managers and staff. The membership will be surveyed every three years.

(Please Note: The placement of a goal under one strategic area is not an indication that such goal is more or less important relative to other goals or strategic areas.)

Strategic Areas

I. Member Services and Growth:

Goal 1 - Provide benefits, programs, and services to enhance the competency, wellness, and professionalism of our members.

Goal 2 - Periodically conduct comprehensive membership-needs surveys.

Goal 3 – Develop strategies to increase the enrollment of new admittees and the retention of members.

Goal 4 - Maintain VBA technology consistent with current/anticipated needs and assist members in understanding technology affecting their practices.

Goal 5 - Identify strategies to engage members in Divisions and Sections.

Goal 6 - Create professional networking and business opportunities for members, including through the use of technology.

Goal 7 - Continue to review and enhance our dues structure to ensure that it maximizes the mission and goals of the VBA.

Goal 8 – Monitor membership demographic changes and offer appropriate responses, such as succession planning resources.

Goal 9 – Encourage Sections to produce educational programs on timely topics in the law.

Goal 10 - Market and publicize educational offerings to members and the broader community.

Goal 11 - Emphasize educational offerings to promote VBA membership and engagement.

Goal 12 - Engage presenters, planners, and participants from diverse backgrounds.

II. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

Goal 1 – Identify and work to reduce instances of bias, racism, and prejudice within our legal system.

Goal 2 – Promote the development of a more diversified and inclusive legal profession and judicial system by implementing programs that support underserved populations, educational opportunities, the graduation of diverse individuals from law school and their admission to the Vermont bar.

Goal 3 – Engage diverse voices in the development, delivery, and evaluation of Association policies, programming, and services to improve access to justice.

III. Legislative Initiatives and Advocacy for the Profession:

Goal 1 - Support Sections in reviewing and developing legislation in their substantive legal areas.

Goal 2 - Enhance collaboration and develop partnerships with other organizations to advance the VBA's legislative efforts.

Goal 3 – Act as a resource to the legislative and executive branches of government and the public by providing information about the impacts of proposed legislation.

Goal 4 - Interact with the judiciary about proposed procedural rule changes and court operations to promote a system of justice that operates with fairness and efficiency.

Goal 5 – Educate the public regarding respect for the rule of law, the role of lawyers, and the importance of an independent judiciary.

IV. Service to the Public:

Goal 1 – Educate and provide information to the public about the availability of legal services and promote access to justice.

Goal 2 - Create strategies to increase participation by attorneys in pro bono, low bono, and modest means programs to provide legal services to Vermonters.

Goal 3 - Promote increased funding for and access to legal services.

Goal 4 - Advocate for, promote, and sponsor legal and civics education programs throughout the state.

V. Encourage Development of a More Effective Judicial System:

Goal 1 – Continue meetings between the bench and bar.

Goal 2 – Fully support necessary and appropriate funding of the judiciary.

Goal 3 - Support the independence of the judiciary.

Goal 4 – Study and support the judiciary in meeting the future needs of court systems in Vermont, including pursuit of specialty dockets if warranted.

Goal 5 – Assist in improving the judicial appointment and retention process and the public's understanding of it.

VI. Important Relationships:

Goal 1 – Create and enhance relationships with those who share our goals, including the judiciary, Vermont Law and Graduate School, county bar associations, the Vermont Association of Trial Judges, and the Vermont Bar Foundation.

Goal 2 - Create a thoughtful approach to working with public community organizations in order to support and improve awareness, and further the mission, of the VBA.

VII. Branding/Marketing:

Goal 1 – Enhance awareness of the VBA and its benefits.

Goal 2 - Identify relevant emerging branding and marketing trends and whether to implement them.

Goal 3 - Create a process for evaluating programs, benefits, and services, including how they compare with other state bar associations.

Goal 4 - Evaluate current marketing best practices to help lead to increased member retention, engagement, and revenue.

Adopted: 12-15-2023