

# Beneficial Leadership Opportunities in the ISBA, Local Bar Associations, and Other Organizations

BY THOMAS M. CONNELLY

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Are you looking for a chance to become more involved and add more leadership positions to your bio? Well, you are not alone. As we enter the new year, many attorneys are thinking of ways to become more involved in an effort to make themselves more marketable, to boost their current practice, or simply take part in organizations they care about.

Luckily, this time of year is a great opportunity for young lawyers to get involved in the ISBA, local bar associations, and other organizations.

## ISBA

The ISBA has countless opportunities for young attorneys looking to become more involved and gain leadership positions to boost their careers. The ISBA is governed and administered by an elected president, a 27-member Board of Governors, and a 203-member Assembly. Each year the ISBA holds an election in which members vote for their representatives in the Assembly and Board of Governors, as well as the third vice president.<sup>1</sup> In October, the ISBA announced its notice of election and provided candidate packets explaining the process on its website for the 2023 elections.<sup>2</sup> Young attorneys aspiring to reach the highest levels of ISBA leadership should strongly consider laying the groundwork now by running to fill a spot in the ISBA Assembly early in their careers. Nominating petitions for candidates close on January 31, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.

In addition to the elected positions of the ISBA, there are substantive law section councils<sup>3</sup> and committees<sup>4</sup> that perform much of the ISBA's work. These councils and committees range from the Young Lawyers Division section council—which serves as a resource for young lawyers—to the Standing

Committee on Legislation—which has the responsibility for committee execution of the ISBA's legislative program. If an elected position is not for you, becoming more involved by joining a council or committee (or a few) is a great way to gain some leadership experience in the ISBA. Members of the various ISBA committees and section councils are appointed each spring by the ISBA president-elect. The ISBA encourages attorneys to nominate themselves for council or committee service. Like the elected positions, the nomination process for committees and councils is open October through January.<sup>5</sup>

## Local Bar Associations and Other Opportunities

According to the ISBA website, there are at least 84 affiliated local bar associations throughout Illinois.<sup>6</sup> Just like the ISBA, many local bar associations have elected positions and committees that serve as a good opportunity for young lawyers to gain leadership experience. In addition to those positions and committees, local bar associations also publish newsletters and host networking and CLE events that provide even more opportunities for young lawyers looking to become more involved. Local bar associations also play pivotal roles in connecting attorneys to pro bono and volunteer opportunities that can be beneficial for young attorneys.

Outside of the ISBA and other bar associations, there are many organizations, charities, and groups that young lawyers can become involved with to gain leadership experience and grow their network. For example, many law schools have alumni associations and committees that have elected and/or appointed leadership

positions. Young attorneys should look to non-profits, community or civic organizations, or schools for opportunities to serve on boards or hold other types of leadership positions. Becoming more involved and gaining leadership experience will help maximize your current practice, make you more marketable, and provide you with an opportunity to give back to issues that are important to lawyers and the growth of the legal profession.

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1. <https://www.isba.org/leadership/becomealeader>.

2. <https://www.isba.org/election>.

3. <https://www.isba.org/sections>.

4. <https://www.isba.org/committees>.

5. <https://www.isba.org/membersgroups/nominations/form>.

6. <https://www.isba.org/leadership/affiliatedbars>.