

Florida Bar COVID-19 Task Force

Bar Responses

A. Accomplished

1. The CLER and BSCR deadlines for February – November 2020 were extended to December 31, 2020.
2. Payment extensions: Members who needed to extend the time for paying annual fees due to undue hardship were given the option to pay the mandatory portion of their fees by installments, which automatically split the mandatory portion of the fees into three payments. Active members who selected this option would pay \$88.33, \$88.33 and \$88.34 respectively. The election and the first installment must have been made by August 15. After the election was made, The Florida Bar sent invoices for the other two installments in October 2020 and again in January 2021. Paying by installments extends the deadline until February 1, 2021.
3. LegalFuel and various Bar sections have provided complimentary CLE programs related to practice during and post-COVID, teleworking/remote working, mental health and wellness associated with the crisis. The total number of these programs put on by sections and LegalFuel is unknown inasmuch as not all were recorded and made available after the live event. There have been more than a dozen LegalFuel-produced webinars or LegalFuel webinars coordinated with approved member benefits providers which give COVID education and resources.
4. Member Benefits: Several member benefits providers offered additional discounts, additional services, or complimentary services during the height of the pandemic and several of those programs are still running and some of the additional promotions ran through the end of 2020: The waived fees or provided complimentary subscriptions for a defined period of time. At one time, the Bar had approximately 15 (one fourth of the member benefits providers) offering additional discounts or some other type of incentives to Florida Bar members. Some of the discounts or incentives are still active.
5. Member benefits providers with discounts and promotions can be found here: <https://www.floridabar.org/member/benefits/freetrials/>. New financial services benefits have been coordinated with [Bankers Healthcare Group](#) who offers a suite of financial solutions designed for the unique needs of licensed professionals.
6. The Florida Free Legal Answers online pro bono platform: The number of volunteers has varied since mid-March 2020 when the COVID crisis first emerged and questions from the public have significantly increased over the past several months. From February 2020 through December 2020, the number of participating attorneys increased from 857 to 924. The number of questions asked from February 2020 through December 2020 is 4,675 of which 4,460 questions have been answered for an answer rate of 95%.
7. First cycle (March) Board certification examinations were postponed to September 2020 and an online/virtual option has been added for those who had requested to take the exam via laptop.
8. Recertification application deadlines were extended from May to November 2020.

9. LegalFuel will continue to produce articles, podcasts, and webinars related to law firm and law office operations during and post-COVID.
10. Certification grade review events were transitioned from in-person to virtual.
11. Email reminders were sent to members who hadn't yet paid fees about payment options (see A.2. above).
12. Development of methods for our members to communicate with us about the challenges they are facing due to COVID-19. The virtual town halls and the redesigned Bar COVID webpage were the first of these methods.
13. Links on our new Bar COVID-19 webpage to websites of the Florida Supreme Court, its workgroup, and each of the 20 judicial circuits, as well as to helpful COVID-related websites of constituent groups of The Florida Bar and other professional groups such as the ABA, ABOTA and others.
14. Communication to our members that the Bar's Florida Lawyers Helpline offers assistance with childcare, elder care and financial issues. The Board of Governors approved extending the services of the Florida Lawyers Helpline to Florida Registered Paralegals (FRPs) beginning in January 2021.
15. Resources have been added to the COVID-19 page for members to locate Home Services in their geographic area.
16. The COVID-19 page now has a section with Medical Information that includes the latest studies from the CDC and other reputable scientific sources on the coronavirus.