A visual story of the most significant facts and trends from the 2021 State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey.
The State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey covers membership data every year, but covers other topics on a rotating basis. The 2021 edition contains information on membership, administration and finance. Topics covered include technology and data security, bar facilities, human resources, finances, communications and meetings. Also included in the 2021 edition is information on the effects of the pandemic on bar operations.

The following report provides a visual overview of the most significant facts and trends from the 2021 State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey: Membership, Administration and Finance for large local bars (1,700+ members).

For additional information or to order the full report, visit the ABA Division for Bar Services website at www.ambar.org/barservices.
Thirty-three large local bar associations (1,700+ members) responded to the 2021 State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey: Membership, Administration and Finance. Below is an overview of their organization, staff size, substantive law entities and standing committees.

**Organization of bar - large local bars (1,700+)**

- Executive state agency: 0%
- IRS designated 501(c)(6): 97%
- Government agency: 3%
- Public corporation: 0%
- IRS designated 501(c)(3): 0%
- Judicial agency: 0%

Average full-time equivalent staff size: 16
Average number of substantive law entities: 19
Average number of standing committees: 18
Average number of members on governing body: 23
The average top dues level of large local bars (1,700+) is $245, unchanged from 2020. Thirty-three percent of respondents indicated they have an inactive membership category, with an average inactive dues level of $138. Note that the pool of responding bars varies each year, accounting for some of the variances in top dues levels year to year.
The percentage of large local bars (1,700+) offering income-based dues levels has increased from 10% in 2016 to 15% in 2021. The percentage offering discounts for financial hardship has increased from 51% in 2019 to 67% in 2021.

*Data on altered dues levels was not requested in 2016-2017.*
Below is an overview of the percentage of large local bars (1,700+) that offer either reduced or free dues for specific membership categories. Over half provide free or reduced dues for new admittees (81% for first year; 72% for second year; 55% for third year).

Free or reduced dues - large local bars (1,700+)

- Associates (nonlawyer law-related professionals): 36% free, 0% reduced
- Corporate lawyers: 3%
- Disabled lawyers: 6% free, 12% reduced
- Government lawyers: 67%
- Honorary or emeritus: 30% free, 21% reduced
- Judiciary: 33% free, 42% reduced
- Law office administrators: 33%
- Law school professors: 55%
- Law students: 52% free, 36% reduced
- Legal services lawyers: 42%
- Military personnel: 7% free, 12% reduced
- New admittees (first year of admission): 48% free, 33% reduced
- Newly admitted (second year of admission): 8% free, 64% reduced
- Newly admitted (third year of admission): 55%
- Out-of-state members (out-of-area for locals): 45%
- Paralegals: 45%
- Paralegal students: 12% free, 21% reduced
- Retired lawyers: 12% free, 52% reduced
- Senior lawyers: 15% free, 21% reduced
MARKET SHARE AND RETENTION RATES

The percent of eligible lawyers (market share) belonging to their large local bar (1,700+) has ranged from a high of 56% in 2015 to a low of 48% in 2020 and 2021. Retention rates have remained stable from 2014-2021, ranging from 89%-91%.
MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

The declining membership trend shows signs of stabilizing with 56% of large local bars reporting a decline in both 2020 and 2021. The percentage reporting their membership had stayed the same has decreased from a high of 50% in 2016 to 19% in 2021. Twenty-seven percent indicated their membership increased in 2021, up from 20% reporting an increase in 2020. About half indicated their membership renewals were coming in at about the same rate as last year.

Membership growth (2015-2021) - large local bars (1,700+)

- Grew 7%+
- Grew 1-6%
- Stayed about the same (0-1% change)
- Declined 1-6%
- Declined 7%+
Membership renewal numbers relative to last year - large local bars (1,700+)

- 52% Renewals are coming in at about the same rate
- 18% Renewals are coming in more slowly
- 30% Renewals are coming in more quickly

Renewals are coming in at about the same rate
Twenty-one percent of large local bar (1,700+) members are age 65 or over, consistent with 2019-2020 figures.
Six percent of large local bars (1,700+) increased their dues within the last year. Thirty percent have not had an increase in more than five years. The average dues increase for those increasing within the last year was 3%.
The percentage of large local bars (1,700+) offering automatic debit has increased from 13% in 2016 to 30% in 2021 and the percentage offering opt-out debit payment options increased from 8% to 18%. The percentage offering a periodic payment option has dropped from 44% in 2016 to 39% in 2020.
Forty-seven percent of large local bars (1,700+) have online communities for members to communicate electronically, up from 38% in 2018. Fifty percent include membership in sections or substantive law entities in their dues package, up from 40% in 2018.

**BENEFITS INCLUDED IN DUES PACKAGE**

Benefits/services included in basic dues package (2018-2020) - large local bars (1,700+)

- **Regular membership luncheons**: 20% (2018), 26% (2019), 26% (2020), 22% (2021)
- **Bar journal or newsletter subscription**: 95% (2018), 90% (2019), 90% (2020), 94% (2021)
- **Social and/or networking events**: 85% (2018), 90% (2019), 86% (2020), 72% (2021)
- **Bar directory**: 63% (2018), 62% (2019), 62% (2020), 63% (2021)
- **Electronic practice tools**: 10% (2018), 8% (2019), 8% (2020), 17% (2021)
- **Online communities**: 38% (2018), 44% (2019), 45% (2020), 47% (2021)
- **Discussion group/listserv**: 44% (2018), 45% (2019), 45% (2020), 51% (2021)
- **Section/substantive law entities included in dues**: 45% (2018), 44% (2019), 44% (2020), 52% (2021)
Sixty percent of large local bars (1,700+) provide free CLE to members, up from 54% in 2020. The percentage offering CLE bundles has increased from 20% in 2018 to 30% in 2021.

The average number of free CLE hours provided per year is 35.4.
Data security measures have increased across the board since 2018 for large local bars (1,700+), most likely as a result of the increase in remote work due to the pandemic.

*Data on use of VPN was not collected in 2018.
Safeguards to enhance password security (2018-2021) - large local bars (1,700+)

- Require passwords be reset at regular intervals (i.e., every month, every 90 days, etc.): 2018 - 53%, 2021 - 55%
- Require strong passwords (have at least one requirement, i.e., one capital letter, one number, etc.): 2018 - 65%, 2021 - 70%
- Require staff use different passwords for each system or device: 2018 - 23%, 2021 - 9%
Eighteen percent of large local bars (1,700+) own the space they occupy, consistent with 2018 data. Thirty percent indicated they had moved their bar space within the last five years, with 20% of those purchasing a new building.
About half of large local bars (1,700+) have keycard access for the bar space and security personnel.

*Data on evacuation drills, controlled access to building, and bullet-proof glass for reception area/front office was not collected in 2018.*
Twenty-seven percent of large local bars (1,700+) have a written employment contract for their executive director/CEO, consistent with 2014 data. Seventy-three percent conduct annual performance reviews for the executive director/CEO, up from 62% in 2018. Seventy-three percent conduct evaluations for other staff, consistent with 2014 and 2018 data.

HR evaluations and policies (2014-2018) - large local bars (1,700+)

- The bar has a written employment contract for its executive director/CEO.
- The bar's governing documents require that the executive director/CEO be a lawyer.
- Annual performance evaluations are conducted for the executive director/CEO.
- Annual performance evaluations are conducted for staff other than the executive director/CEO.

2014: 25% 62% 73%
2018: 20% 63% 73%
2021: 27% 73% 73%
The percentage of large local bars (1,700+) allowing remote work has increased substantially since 2018, most likely as a result of the pandemic.

Remote work policy by large local bars (1,700+):
- **The bar has a formal remote work policy:**
  - 2018: 13%
  - 2021: 39%
- **The bar allows the executive director to work remotely:**
  - 2018: 30%
  - 2021: 79%
- **The bar allows staff other than the executive director to work remotely:**
  - 2018: 0%
  - 2021: 33%
The functions to which large local bars (1,700+) are devoting the most staff support are sections and committees, member services and finance and administration.

Average number of FTE staff - large local bars (1,700+)

- Communications/public relations: 2.11
- Information technology: 1.34
- Member services: 2.35
- Finance and administration: 2.14
- Meeting planning: 1.50
- Sections and committees: 2.48
- Diversity and inclusion: 0.77
- Personnel/human resources: 0.76
- Facility management: 0.84
The average number of large local bars (1,700+) providing staff training has increased in all areas since 2018.

*Data on office safety and security and first aid and CPR training was not collected in 2018.*
Twenty-three percent of large local bars (1,700+) reported an increase in their budget since their last fiscal year and 63% reported a decrease. Thirty-seven percent indicated their reported revenues were significantly different than in years past due to the pandemic and 52% indicated their reported expenses were significantly different.

![Budget variances (2014-2021) - large local bars (1,700+)](image)

The percentage of revenue obtained from sources other than dues has remained about the same since 2014, at about 44%.
Sixty-four percent of large local bars (1,700+) regularly produce a magazine or journal and 82% produce a bar newsletter, down from 70% in 2018. Nineteen percent indicated the frequency of their regularly produced publications had decreased over the last three years.
Data on Snapchat and TikTok presence was not collected in 2018.
Thirty-nine percent of large local bars (1,700+) have made adjustments to their member benefits (other than CLE) as a result of the pandemic. The most frequently cited adjustments to operations were cutting or eliminating travel budget (75%), reorganization of staff (53%), and overall budget cuts (47%). Thirty percent are considering condensing or altering their office space.
Considering condensing or altering office space - large local bars (1,700+)

- Yes: 30%
- No: 46%
- Unsure: 24%