

**NEW CHAPTER or NEW PRESIDENT or BOTH:**  
**What You Really Need To Know**  
**Quick Information Guide 2017-2018**

The following was prepared by your Circuit Vice-Presidents to highlight information helpful for your upcoming year. This is meant as a summary guide, so please check the website [www.fedbar.org](http://www.fedbar.org) or call your Circuit Vice-Presidents for further information.

**I. Helpful Contacts**

**Circuit Vice-Presidents:**

**1st Circuit Vice-Presidents:**

Matthew C. Moschella	<a href="mailto:mcmoschella@sherin.com">mcmoschella@sherin.com</a>	(617)646-2245
Oreste Ramos	<a href="mailto:oramos@pmalaw.com">oramos@pmalaw.com</a>	(787)274-1212

**2nd Circuit Vice-Presidents:**

Ernest T. Bartol	<a href="mailto:etbartol@mbolegal.com">etbartol@mbolegal.com</a>	(516)294-5100
Hon. Lisa Margaret Smith	<a href="mailto:Lisa_M_Smith@nysd.uscourts.gov">Lisa_M_Smith@nysd.uscourts.gov</a>	(914)390-4130

**3rd Circuit Vice-Presidents:**

Hon. Karoline Mehalchick	<a href="mailto:karoline_mehalchick@pamd.uscourts.gov">karoline_mehalchick@pamd.uscourts.gov</a>	(570)207-5740
Frank J. McGovern	<a href="mailto:Frank.McGovern@TitleResources.com">Frank.McGovern@TitleResources.com</a>	(610)742-4220

**4th Circuit Vice-Presidents:**

Andrew K. Clark	<a href="mailto:Andrew.clark@leclairryan.com">Andrew.clark@leclairryan.com</a>	(804)545-1514
Hannah Rogers Metcalfe	<a href="mailto:hmetcalfe@malawfirm.com">hmetcalfe@malawfirm.com</a>	(864)214-2319

**5th Circuit Vice-Presidents:**

Barry Ashe	<a href="mailto:BAsh@stonepigman.com">BAsh@stonepigman.com</a>	(504)593-0843
Marc Taubenfeld	<a href="mailto:mtaubenfeld@mcslaw.com">mtaubenfeld@mcslaw.com</a>	(214)954-6809

**6th Circuit Vice-Presidents:**

Tonya Kennedy Cammon	<a href="mailto:tcammon@gkhpc.com">tcammon@gkhpc.com</a>	(423)756-8400
Thomas G. McNeill	<a href="mailto:TMcNeill@dickinson-wright.com">TMcNeill@dickinson-wright.com</a>	(313)223-3632

**7th Circuit Vice-Presidents:**

Sheri H. Mecklenburg	<a href="mailto:sheri.mecklenburg@usdoj.gov">sheri.mecklenburg@usdoj.gov</a>	(312)469-6030
Kevin Desharnais	<a href="mailto:kevin.desharnais@troutmansanders.com">kevin.desharnais@troutmansanders.com</a>	(312)759-1934

8th Circuit Vice-Presidents:

Daniel C. Hedlund	<a href="mailto:dhedlund@gustafsongluek.com">dhedlund@gustafsongluek.com</a>	(612)333-8844
Adine Momoh	<a href="mailto:adine.momoh@stinson.com">adine.momoh@stinson.com</a>	(612)335-1880

9th Circuit Vice-Presidents:

Hon. Alison S. Bachus	<a href="mailto:bachusa@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov">bachusa@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov</a>	(602)506-1891
Joseph S. Leventhal	<a href="mailto:joseph.leventhal@dinsmore.com">joseph.leventhal@dinsmore.com</a>	(619)356-3518

10th Circuit Vice-Presidents:

Daniel W. Lewis	<a href="mailto:dlewis@allenlawmn.com">dlewis@allenlawmn.com</a>	(505)341-0110
Chris M. Stephens	<a href="mailto:chris.stephens@usdoj.gov">chris.stephens@usdoj.gov</a>	(405)553-8783

11th Circuit Vice-Presidents:

Brett A. Barfield	<a href="mailto:brett.barfield@hklaw.com">brett.barfield@hklaw.com</a>	(305)789-7661
Michael Vitale	<a href="mailto:mvitale@bakerlaw.com">mvitale@bakerlaw.com</a>	(407)649-4000

DC Circuit Vice-Presidents:

Steven R. Miller	<a href="mailto:smiller173@aol.com">smiller173@aol.com</a>	(703)408-5237
Elizabeth Pugh	<a href="mailto:epug@loc.gov">epug@loc.gov</a>	(301)530-3771

We are here to help. We have been involved at the Chapter and the National level, and can offer suggestions and ideas anytime.

FBA Chapter Relations Specialist:

Debbie Smith	<a href="mailto:dsmith@fedbar.org">dsmith@fedbar.org</a>	(571)481-9113
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Debbie is a great resource, and she is very responsive. Ask for her help, you will get it.

## **II. Success: Setting Up Your Chapter for the Coming Year**

At the end of this guide, you will find the National FBA information sheet on “**Chapters and Finances.**” This document is *essential* to understanding the chapter’s tax exempt status, obtaining an EIN number (with a link to the form), establishing a bank account and filing a tax return.

The FBA National also has prepared: (1) Chapter Achievement Plan, suggesting goals for the first 30 and 90 days of your incoming presidency; and (2) Chapter Position Descriptions, suggesting positions for individual board members. Please let us know if you would like a copy.

**Programming:** If you are looking for ideas for programming, your Circuit VPs can point you in the direction of successful programs that have been presented by other chapters. Also, the FBA Website has posted the Community Outreach Committee Report, which is a great resource for ideas for community outreach programming. A quick perusal will inspire ideas for programming.

### **III. Calendar These Important Upcoming Events**

#### ***March 24, 2018 – Mid-Year Meeting in Arlington, VA***

This is a chance to meet with FBA members from all around the country, to share ideas and hear what the FBA is doing. This meeting always includes an interesting program and an excellent lunch speaker. The National FBA will reimburse 100% airfare for one person or 50% airfare for two people, but you can contact Debbie Smith to make a case for 100% airfare reimbursement for two people.

#### ***April 27-28, 2018 – Chapter Leadership Training in Arlington, VA***

This is an invaluable training for incoming presidents from all over the country, to hear and share ideas and strategies. This is a “don’t miss” event for incoming presidents. Each year, attendees come away energized and loaded with new ideas. National FBA will reimburse one person’s airfare and hotel for two nights up to \$150 per night.

#### ***September 13-15, 2018 – Annual Meeting and Convention***

In 2018, the FBA is holding its Annual Meeting in New York, New York. It will be an exciting program in an exciting city. Send your president and a chapter delegate. National FBA will reimburse 100% airfare for one person or 50% airfare for two people, but you can contact Debbie Smith to make a case for 100% airfare reimbursement for two people.

#### ***April 26, 2018 – Capitol Hill Day***

FBA members visit representatives on Capitol Hill to advance the FBA’s bipartisan legislative agenda. See Section V for a fuller explanation. Given that it is the day before leadership training, airfare of the member attending leadership training is already covered. The Chapter, in its discretion, can reimburse a representative for the additional night hotel stay.

### ***April 2018 – National Community Outreach Project***

April is FBA Community Outreach month. Every April, the FBA holds the National Community Outreach Project, a month during which chapters across the nation hold community outreach events. Plan an event for that month and be connected to FBA Chapters around the nation to amplify our community outreach impact.

***Quarterly membership conference calls:*** The Chapter President also will be notified by e-mail to participate in quarterly membership conference calls with chapter presidents and the national membership committee. These calls provide a host of ideas for increasing membership.

In addition, check the FBA website for dates for other events, meetings and programs that you might be interested in either participating or letting your members know about.

### **IV. Did You Know? A Few Helpful Facts You Should Know**

- Each chapter is entitled to have the National FBA fund half of the annual dues for a government lawyer who serves on the chapter board. It is a great way to get a government lawyer to join your board.
- Judges can be deemed Honorary Members, exempt from paying dues. A judge just needs to complete a form which you can obtain from Debbie.
- Each quarter, National FBA will send a chapter a quarterly rebate check, representing 20% of dues collected from new and renewing chapter members.

### **V. Government Relations Committee**

The Government Relations Committee (GRC) can greatly increase the value of your chapter to your judiciary. The GRC maintains an active and respected bi-partisan presence in the nation's capital, where it advances the FBA's commitment to the interests of the federal judicial system, such as full funding for the judiciary.

You can take three steps to utilize the GRC to benefit your chapter during your leadership: (1) appoint a GRC liaison, often the incoming president, to serve as the point of contact for the GRC, who will, among other things, participate in periodic conference call briefings by the GRC; (2) review the monthly GRC Update (received by e-mail) and send your Chief Judge (and other judges as you deem appropriate) an update on the legislative matters

that the FBA is involved in that affect the judiciary — we usually are the judiciary’s only voice in Washington, D.C.; and (3) participate in Capitol Hill Day, where FBA members visit representatives on Capitol Hill to advance the FBA’s agenda (the date this year is noted above in Section III).

## **VI. Suggested Resources for Financing Chapter Events**

*Chapter Activity Fund Grants:* A chapter may apply for a grant from the Chapter Activity Fund to finance an event. There are no limits on the amount of money requested, but consideration will be given to available funds, the costs of the program and efforts to use alternative funding. There are no restrictions on the number of applications a chapter may submit. However, consideration of a request will be viewed in light of the prior grants given to a chapter. Priority will be given to smaller and newer chapters, and to events, programs and/or activities which have not previously been funded by CAF grants. The rules and application are on the FBA website.

*Foundation of the Federal Bar Association Chapter Community Outreach Grants:* The Foundation of the Federal Bar, which is a charitable arm of the FBA, will fund community service or outreach projects that involve FBA Chapter participation. New chapters within the first 24 months of creation will be given priority for a grant, which can be applied for anytime within the 24 months. Check the website for the rules and the application.

*Ilene and Michael Shaw Public Service Award:* A \$5,000 annual grant to provide seed money to plan and implement a public service program, as well as to continue an existing program. This award is given at the Annual Convention, with an application deadline of June 1.

*The Ilene and Michael Shaw Younger Lawyer Public Service Grant:* A \$5,000 grant awarded annually for public service projects and pro bono law related services administered by a chapter Younger Lawyer Committee. This award is given at the Annual Convention, with an application deadline of June 1.

*The Diversity Grant:* A new grant of the Foundation, which supports educational, community service, or outreach projects or programs with a

diversity focus. Up to \$10,000 is available annually. The application, available on the website, is due on June 15.

*Collaborations with Sections, Other Chapters, Other Bar Associations and Other Organizations:* Pool your money, talent, resources and membership with another chapter in close proximity, or another bar association or organization in your city, to make an event doubly successful. Chapters and Sections also have co-sponsored events. Check the website for sections with which you can collaborate, such as the Federal Litigation Section, Health Law Section, Immigration Section or Securities Section. Contact your CVPs or Debbie if you need help reaching out.

*Private Firms as Host:* Most chapters ask private firms to host events, which substantially cuts costs and allows the chapter to build its treasury from the proceeds of the event.

### **Chapters and Finances: An Overview\***

The FBA requires that its local chapters be financially and legally separate entities from the FBA. For the purposes of this overview, the following circumstances are assumed to describe accurately the operations of a typical chapter. A chapter is organized for the primary purpose of furthering the professional development of its members in the legal profession. A chapter's primary source of revenue is from rebated membership dues and other income from activities substantially related to the chapter's exempt purposes. Many chapters publish a newsletter, which is circulated to members and is not otherwise sold or circulated to non-members. A chapter often sponsors professional development programs such as seminars, luncheon discussions, and panels. Members and non-members are invited to attend such functions and the price charged is intended to defray expenses. Such programs serve the function of professional development, legal education, and promoting the bar.

### **Chapter Tax Exempt Status:**

Each FBA chapter is responsible for obtaining its own tax-exempt number and Employer Identification Number. A relatively easy process, here's how to go about obtaining these numbers:

Federal Bar Association local chapters are eligible for tax exemption from federal income tax as “business leagues” within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code. However, recognition of your chapter is not automatic. Each chapter must apply to the IRS for recognition of its tax-exempt status.

The exemption application is filed on Internal Revenue Form 1024, “Application for Recognition of Exemption.” Instructions for filing this form and the necessary supporting documents are included in IRS package 1024.

In order to file form 1024, the chapter must have an Employer Identification Number. If the chapter does not have an EIN, you must also file form 58-4, “Application for Employer Identification Number” along with your application for exemption. Here is the link to [apply for an EIN](#). Even if your chapter does not have any employees, your chapter must have an EIN because this is the number that the IRS uses in maintaining the chapter’s tax records.

**Please send a copy to the association’s office of your chapter’s application for exemption and once received a copy of the chapter’s Tax Exemption Letter from the IRS for inclusion in the chapter’s permanent file.**

### **Filing a Tax Return**

If your chapter has taken in more than \$25,000 in receipts during its fiscal year, then the chapter must file a tax return with the IRS, regardless of whether or not the chapter achieved tax exempt status. If your chapter has received tax exempt status, you must file an annual information tax return, Form 990, “Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax.”

This form is due before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the fifth month following the close of your chapter’s fiscal year. If the chapter’s income is less than \$100,000 then the chapter may file Form 990EZ. If the income is less than \$25,000 no filing is required.

*You may obtain the necessary IRS forms by contacting the IRS directly at 1-800-TAX-FORM or by visiting the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). The IRS will*

*also make available upon request Publication 557, "Tax Exempt Status for Your Organization."*

### **Establishing a Checking Account**

The chapter should have a checking and/or savings account. The treasurer will typically handle the set-up of such account. The chapter should discuss and determine the bank to be used, which officers are authorized to make withdrawals or sign checks, and how many signatures are required. Many banks will ask for a social security number when opening an account. Do not give them your number. If the chapter is a 501(c)(6) organization and a letter to this effect is on file, use the chapter's tax-exempt number to open the account. If the chapter has not been recognized as a 501(c)(6) organization, follow the instructions above for obtaining your chapter's IRS tax exempt number and use this number for all chapter accounts.

### **Chapter Rebates**

Chapters receive a rebate from the association that is 20 percent of the dues collected for chapter members during the previous quarter. Rebates are paid on all classes of membership. The Chapter Treasurer will receive a rebate check 4-6 weeks following the close of that quarter.

### **Additional Considerations**

When officer elections are held, it is important that the incoming and outgoing treasurer meet and discuss the chapter's financial situation. The incoming treasurer should be given access to the bank accounts and other records, and the outgoing treasurer should hand over all past records to the new treasurer. It is also important that the association offices be notified of the change in officers so as not to interrupt the flow of chapter rebates.

In some states, a chapter must obtain a right to do business in the state. To find out if this is necessary, contact your Secretary of State or Attorney General.

Your chapter may determine that it is beneficial to file for incorporation within your state. Any move in that direction should be reviewed by the association's national offices to ensure that there is no legal conflict.

Many chapters will find it beneficial to establish a petty cash fund that is used to make change and collect receipts at local programs. Since the cost of most educational meetings is a deductible business expense, the chapter should provide attendees with suitable receipts or documentation.

**\*No part of this Guide should be considered as financial advice.**