

## **Getting Admitted to the New York State Bar**

### Where to Find the Application For New York State Bar Admission:

Instructions are available at: <http://www.nybarexam.org/Admission/Instructions-9.21.2011.pdf>. Given the date in this link, it's possible more up-to-date instructions will come out before the bar results do.

The application is available at: <http://www.nybarexam.org/Docs/AdmissionsPackage.pdf>.

### Deadline:

It is a condition of employment (paid or unpaid) that you submit your bar admission application to the applicable division within two weeks of being notified that you passed the bar. Based on recent history, the bar results will come out in early November. If you are not able to complete your paperwork on time you must submit a written explanation to the Managing Attorney (G. Foster Mills) with a copy to the Director of Legal Recruitment (Stuart Smith). You must provide an update on your status every four weeks thereafter until you are admitted.

### Why the Rush?

It is illegal to practice law without a license. You will be practicing law under a program authorized by state statute and implemented by two "student practice orders" issued by the First and Second Departments of the Appellate Division. In return for this privilege, we have promised the Appellate Divisions that you will all get admitted as quickly as possible. The office is required to report twice a year to the Appellate Divisions about the status of our programs, including the status of your bar applications. We want to state in our December 15<sup>th</sup> report that all of your applications have been submitted. We want to state in our July 1<sup>st</sup> report that all of you have been admitted.

Also, your first anniversary salary increase depends on your getting admitted and submitting to personnel an original certificate of good standing from the Appellate Division.

Note that the process takes longer than you think. Really. Much longer. If you've changed your name, if you want to be sworn-in in the City even though you took the exam in the Third Department, if you can't find one of your past employers, if one of your affidavits is rejected, if you can't find your arrest records in three different States, if you have to pay off \$1,000 worth of parking tickets, the process will take longer than you would think.

### Things you can do before you get your results back

Name changes and Appellate Division changes. Just because you took the exam in Albany doesn't mean you have to go back for the character and fitness interview and the swearing-in. Even if you currently live out-of-state, you should be able to get admitted in the First or Second Department based on your work address.

### Completed Applications:

A completed application packet includes your written questionnaire as well as character affidavits and affidavits completed by past legal related employers. You must submit the character and employment affidavits with your written questionnaire to the Character and Fitness committee. Waiting for the completed affidavits usually holds people back from being able to submit their paperwork. Therefore, you should request that prior employers and character references complete the affidavits prior to the release of the bar results. If you are having a problem getting an affidavit (e.g, a former legal employer no longer exists) keep a record of your efforts to obtain the affidavit, in case you have to apply without it. Note also that in the Second Department (see below), character references can get stale if you get them too early.

You should also review your character affidavits and employment affidavits as soon as you get them (and not to wait until the day before they submit the application to review them). There's always a chance that the person filling out the affidavit might have made a mistake and you want to give them plenty of time to redo the affidavit if necessary.

### Special Rules for Different Appellate Divisions:

The Second Department has special rules which you must follow. First, there is an orientation course that you have to sign up for and take. The dates for these courses fill up early so you should sign up for the orientation program as soon as you get your bar results back. **You do not need to submit your papers first.** For more information see:

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/courts/ad2/orientation.shtml>.

Also, only in the Second Department, you must pay your bar registration fee to the Office of Court Administration prior to submitting your application. You must also attach a certificate stating that you have paid the fee to your admission papers. See:

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/courts/ad2/pdf/How%20to%20Apply%20for%20Admission%20on%20Examination.pdf>.

The Second Department also has special rules about the timeliness of your affidavits. Affidavits from your current employer (us) and affidavits of moral character must be dated no more than 60 days before you submit your admission papers. For more information see:

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/courts/ad2/pdf/Supplemental%20Instructions.pdf>.

If you're in the Second Department, please make sure you read all of their local rules governing admission to the Bar. It will save you much grief.

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/courts/ad2/pdf/Supplemental%20Instructions.pdf>

### Law Department Employment Affidavits:

Any affidavits that you need to be completed by the Law Department should be sent to your division's representative in Personnel. They are:

Valencia Haughton: Tort, Affirmative Litigation, Legal Counsel, Contracts & Real Estate, Commercial and Real Estate Litigation

Laura Krsinic: Gen. Lit; Labor; Special Fed., Workers' Compensation, Economic Development, Tax & Bankruptcy  
Joe Pietrafeso: Appeals  
Lisa Spezio: Pensions, Administrative Law, Municipal Finance, Environmental Law, Family Court

When you submit your affidavit requests to Personnel, let the rep know who your current supervisor is. If you previously worked here in any capacity (paid or unpaid), please tell your rep who your supervisor was and the approximate dates of your prior employment. For those who were in the summer program, your supervisor would be your division/unit summer coordinator. If you don't remember who that person is or that person has left the Law Department, you can use your division, unit or borough chief. Also, let Personnel know which Appellate Division you are seeking admission in.

When completed, Personnel will send the forms to the most recent address they have for you. If you've moved since you started, make sure they have your current address.

#### Expediting Letters:

For those of you employed by the Law Department or volunteering for more than six months, you should attach to our completed bar application a letter from the Managing Attorney requesting expedited consideration of the application. This letter should go on the top of the application. If it's buried in the middle, the court won't find it. You should ask for this letter only when all your other paperwork is ready. Please contact Blanca Ponce to request this letter and let her know which Appellate Division you are applying to. (For those of you volunteering for less than six months, we would like to be able to get you expedited admission as well, but the Appellate Divisions have rejected these requests when it was clear that the applicant was going to leave the office prior to or shortly after admission. Sorry.)

#### Problems?

If you are having problems getting admitted, please let Stuart Smith and your supervisor know. If you have told us that you have submitted your papers and they are returned because of some flaw, you must tell us. If you have told us you are going to be sworn-in on a certain date, and that does not happen for whatever reason, you must tell us.

#### Bar Registration Reimbursement

Unfortunately, the Law Department does not reimburse for bar or admission-related expenses. While we do not reimburse the initial \$375 bar registration fee, we do reimburse subsequent registration renewal fees every two years. To be reimbursed, you must re-register on time and you must submit proof of payment to payroll.