



## Kentucky Bar Association Strategic Planning Executive Summary

"A goal without a plan is just a wish."  
— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

### A. OVERVIEW OF THE KBA PLANNING PROCESS

With the successful implementation of the Kentucky Bar Association's 2008 strategic plan, the leadership of the KBA initiated a new planning process in 2015. Leaders praised the previous plan as a useful roadmap for the KBA and an important way to connect with and focus on the needs of members, other partners in the justice system and the community-at-large. Leaders expressed the hope that this next plan would reprise that opportunity to connect with members and other stakeholders, and provide opportunities to think expansively and creatively about the KBA's challenges. The planning framework that emerged suggests that participants seized the opportunity to do just that.

### B. CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

The Kentucky Bar Association Planning Report consists of three parts:

1. An executive summary – a narrative description of the planning process and key discussions, and recommended next steps (this document);
2. The KBA matrix (working document for board and staff use); and
3. The appendices – background documents, transcription of discussion sheets from in-person meetings, and additional resources relating to the plan.

This pdf document includes bookmarks to aid navigation.

## C. INFORMATION GATHERING AND PREPARATION

### 1. Initial Conference Call with KBA Officers and Executive Staff

The KBA kicked off the planning process in March 2015 with a conference call that included the KBA officers, the executive director, the assistant executive director and the ABA facilitator. During that conversation, leaders discussed the critical issues facing the organization and their expectations and hopes for this next process and plan. Among the issues discussed were: diversity and inclusion; assisting members with practice management; the overburdened defender's office; availability of counsel for those who are at or below poverty level; the underserved rural areas; the KBA's responsiveness in the digital world; community service and poverty issues; and staff succession.

In cooperation with the leaders and executive staff, the facilitator developed a timeline for the process that would result in the development of a vision and three-year priorities to guide the organization. That timeline is included in Appendix 1.

### 2. KBA Membership Survey

In the early summer, the ABA facilitator collaborated with the KBA leadership to develop a membership survey that would be used to better understand members' current perceptions and concerns. That survey was distributed in July and was active until August 7, 2015. The survey results are included in Appendix 3.

### 3. Meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee, September 14, 2015

A Strategic Planning Committee was appointed in July to lead the planning effort. The members of the committee included: Douglas Myers, Chair; Dean Susan Duncan; Charles "Buzz" English, Jr; Richard Hay; Margaret Keane; Randall May; Daniel Murphy, Jr; Thomas Rouse; Ben Stewart and Jackie Sue Wright.

During the initial meeting, the group discussed the role of the committee: to analyze the KBA Membership Survey results; conduct stakeholder outreach; identify significant questions and opportunities for the KBA; suggest areas of focus for the next plan; and participate in planning discussions with the Board of Governors in November and January.

The committee engaged in a preliminary discussion of the membership survey results at this meeting, identifying several important themes. A few threads that emerged in the discussions were:

- The significant value of KLUs to members and the opportunity to further build on that value,
- The need to continue to build awareness of KBA programs and initiatives,
- The continued need to build diversity and inclusion (race/ethnicity continuing to be a concern, but also practice area, gender, etc.), and
- Member concerns around economics of practice, wellness, the reputation of the profession and keeping up with technology.

Finally, the committee identified constituencies from which it wanted to gather feedback, and identified specific individuals to be contacted. The full recap of the meeting is included in Appendix 2.

#### 4. Stakeholder Outreach by Strategic Planning Committee

During October and early November 2015, committee members individually contacted close to fifty stakeholders. The facilitator compiled the reports, and captured some preliminary themes for discussion in an overview. The stakeholder outreach list, overview of themes and full text of stakeholder feedback reports are included in Appendix 4.

### D. CREATING THE PLAN FRAMEWORK

#### 1. Second Meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee & Follow-up Board of Governors Discussion, November 19-20, 2015

The Strategic Planning Committee met on November 19 to discuss the stakeholder feedback and to build on the findings from the membership survey to identify areas of focus for the next strategic plan. The facilitator with assistance from several committee members discussed the stakeholder feedback and presented the proposed areas of focus at the Board of Governors meeting the following day. The Board of Governors discussed and augmented the planning committee's proposal. The final areas of focus agreed upon by the Board of Governors were as follows:

1. Assisting Lawyers in Their Practices
  - Make the KLUs more valuable (targeted; opportunity to cross-market KBA resources)
  - Practice management resources
  - Support/mentoring for new lawyers
  - Build participation in sections/divisions
  - Build engagement of government attorneys
2. Strengthening the Profession
  - Speedy, transparent discipline process
  - Mental/physical well-being of members (impaired lawyer interventions)
  - Diversity of membership in KBA activities
  - Reputation of the profession – lawyers' impact on society, value of lawyers
3. Facilitating Access to Justice and Justice System Improvements
  - Participate in innovative effort to address gaps
  - Continue to advocate for funding
  - Facilitate selection of quality judges
4. Strengthening the Infrastructure
  - Communications
  - Technology
  - Impact of demographic changes on the KBA
  - Diversity in leadership/next generation of leaders
  - Succession planning



**2. Joint Board of Governors and Strategic Planning Committee Discussion, January 15, 2016**

Finally, the Board of Governors and members of the Strategic Planning Committee met on January 15 to refine the goal and strategy language, to develop definitions of success and to begin to prioritize the strategies under each goal.

The Board of Governors agreed on final goal and strategy language as follows:

**Goal 1: The KBA assists lawyers to achieve professional excellence and satisfaction.**

- Strategy 1: Provide the highest quality continuing legal education
- Strategy 2: Bolster the KBA's practice management resources
- Strategy 3: Provide practical skills training and support/mentoring for new lawyers
- Strategy 4: Build participation in sections and divisions
- Strategy 5: Increase collaboration between the KBA and local bars to facilitate networking and extend services

**Goal 2: The KBA strengthens the profession by maintaining and encouraging the highest levels of ethical conduct.**

- Strategy 1: Facilitate a swift and fair discipline process that educates and fosters the trust of KBA members and the public
- Strategy 2: Increase diversity and inclusion in KBA activities and leadership
- Strategy 3: Support the mental and physical well-being of members
- Strategy 4: Raise expectations about the role of lawyers in society

**Goal 3: The KBA ensures that Kentucky citizens have equal access to legal services and to a justice system that affords prompt and fair resolution.**

- Strategy 1: Continue to advocate for adequate resources for the entire justice system
- Strategy 2: Strengthen collaboration with the judiciary to address challenges relating to the justice system and courts
- Strategy 3: Create and lead innovative efforts to address gaps in legal services

**Goal 4: The KBA achieves its goals through organizational excellence.**

- Strategy 1: Increase members' awareness of KBA program/initiatives through effective communications efforts
- Strategy 2: Continue to build the KBA's technology infrastructure in order to be accessible to members throughout the state
- Strategy 3: Explore the impact of the profession's demographic changes on the KBA
- Strategy 4: Engage in succession planning for long-tenured staff

After a discussion of each of the individual strategies under each goal, the group ranked each strategy. The rankings are included in the matrix and in the transcription at the end of this report. The facilitator met with the KBA officers and executive staff in February 2016 to begin to work through the priorities and draft a timeline. Some additional adjustments were made to the framework at that time. The draft will be circulated among the full Board of Governors for review, discussion and adoption in March 2016.

## E. FOLLOW-UP

"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work."  
-Peter Drucker

It is a challenge to sustain the energy and enthusiasm of a planning initiative. Momentum can be preserved by being methodical about the review and implementation process.

As the KBA Board of Governors creates and evaluates its timeline, consider the resources the organization will need to implement the priority items. Remember that planning is not just about deciding what activities to add, but how new ideas will be integrated. How do the new ideas fit? How can these new ideas be integrated into or extended from an existing initiative? Are there partnership opportunities? What other activities can you scale back or eliminate entirely in order to make room? Be sure to evaluate your portfolio of programs holistically.

Once the board has agreed on the proposed timeline, confirm who will be responsible for implementation. Use existing committee structures when appropriate or short-term task forces with a well-defined scope and purpose. As the board delegates, make sure its expectations – including budget parameters – are clear. Then, give the individual or entity the authority to see the project through in his/its own unique way.

The organization's matrix can be used as a working document and can be revised as action items are added, reprioritized or dropped, and as next steps, responsibility and time frame are more firmly established.

As you work through the details of each strategy, more detailed action planning may be necessary. Action planning involves identifying the steps necessary to successfully address the issue. In some cases, the steps necessary and the timeline will be complex; in others, it is a task list. An action plan need not be lengthy, but must vet the fundamental questions:

- What do you want to accomplish through this initiative?
- Who is the target constituency?
- What are the steps you need to take to accomplish the item in question?
- Are there partnering opportunities?
- Who will be responsible? If staff is involved, how much staff time will it require?
- What is the time frame?

- How much will it cost?
- Would it be appropriate to use technology/the website to facilitate this endeavor?
- How will you promote it?

Action plans are recommended since they require volunteer groups such as committees or task forces to break complex projects into discrete tasks. Such tasks are more easily delegated among more volunteers. Engage more members in the work of the organization and prevent burnout among the current cadre of leaders. As we discussed, time pressures are always a challenge, and this approach can make volunteering more manageable and appealing. As you look for volunteers to assist you, look beyond the usual suspects. Seek out new volunteers and be sure to communicate up front the commitment the initiative or activity requires.

As volunteers and staff dig into the work, you may realize that a particular item is going to cost more or take more time to address than you anticipated. Push yourselves, but be flexible. Integrate the new information and adjust your plan. Set timeframes, but be realistic about what volunteers and staff can reasonably achieve.

While discussion of the plan should take place at every board meeting, the planning group also should set aside time annually to reflect on the bar's progress vis-à-vis the outcomes and benchmarks it has established. Ask, how did we do? Are the initiatives we're undertaking helping the organization progress toward its goals?

## F. GOING FORWARD

"Don't be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

The KBA made significant progress in its planning initiatives over the last year, but the planning process must be ongoing. Keep planning on the board's agenda, and set reporting deadlines.

Consider making board members "goal champions," responsible for particular goal areas. Groups of board members can then ensure the supporting action items are moving forward. Be mindful that tackling just a few items and successfully completing them will give you a sense of accomplishment. Chart your progress. Be flexible when new challenges or opportunities arise, but avoid letting every new project idea divert you from your vision. Ask, "How significantly does this new activity advance us toward the outcomes we want to achieve?"



Finally, take every opportunity to communicate with members and community partners about the plans you have developed, and build their support. Celebrate your successes with your members whenever possible.

Congratulations to the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board of Governors for your dedication and thoughtfulness throughout this process. It has been my pleasure to assist you.

Respectfully submitted,

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