

THE SPECIALIST

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Did You Know?

- The 2004 Specialization Directory can now be downloaded in PDF form? Visit our website at nclawspecialists.org for instructions.
- You can reach more prospective clients by updating your on-line profile.
- We send directories to libraries and clerks offices throughout the state. If you have other ideas, let us know at 919-828-4620 x255.

CREATING NEW SPECIALTIES

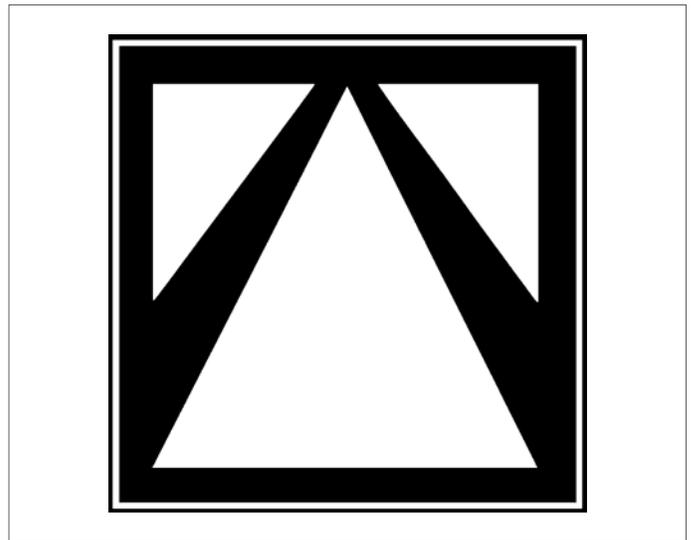
The Board of Legal Specialization recently adopted guidelines for creating new specialties. Interested lawyers or groups can work with staff members to complete the process as detailed below.

The North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization (BLS) will study a proposal to create a new specialty area upon receipt of one or more of the following:

- Written application from interested lawyer(s)
- Written application from a section of the North Carolina Bar Association (NCBA), North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers (NCATL), or other professional organization
- Its own motion

A lawyer or organization seeking recognition of a new specialty shall submit a written application to the BLS, which shall include the following:

1. Signatures of 100 lawyers recommending the creation of the proposed specialty area. (Lawyers do not have to qualify for or be interested in being certified in the practice area.)
2. A statement as to whether the NCBA, NCATL, or other reputable professional organization has a practice section or committee in the proposed specialty area and the current number of members in that section or committee.
3. A demonstration that it is an established practice area



by providing information about one or more of the following:

- Other states or accredited national organizations offer specialty
 - Listings as practice area for lawyers in representative phone books
 - Listing as practice area in *Martindale Hubble*
 - Listing as practice area in *Best Lawyers in America*
 - Referral service listings (NCBA or other services)
4. Signatures of 20 lawyers who are interested in seeking certification in the proposed specialty area.
 5. A definition of the proposed specialty area.
 6. A statement that the contemplated definition of the proposed specialty area is

not in substantial conflict, nor substantially overlaps, with the definition of a current specialty area, or, if substantial conflict or overlap exists, a statement explaining why the proposed specialty area should be recognized in spite of the conflict or overlap.

7. An explanation about how recognition of the proposed specialty area will benefit members of the public.

8. A listing of the continuing legal education courses in the proposed specialty area provided during the previous 2 years by CLE sponsors accredited by the North Carolina State Bar Board of Continuing Legal Education. (continued on page 3)

SEEKING CERTIFICATION IN '04

This year's pool of applicants represent a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and geographic locations. Nearly 60% of applicants have between five and ten years of experience, while more seasoned attorneys, at 20-plus years of experience, represent fourteen percent of the applicant pool.

The majority of lawyers are from North Carolina's larger metropolitan areas, including Raleigh, Charlotte, and Greensboro, among others, but nearly a third of applicants are from smaller towns including Clinton, Boone, Burlington, Warrenton and New Bern. One-third of this year's appli-

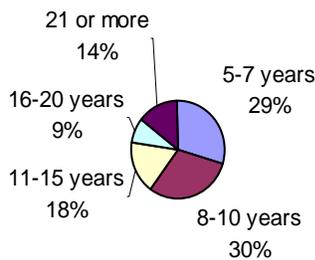
cants are in solo practice, while lawyers in smaller firms (from 2-9) make up forty-four percent of the applicant class. Interestingly, a full seventeen percent of applicants work in large firms of at least twenty attorneys. All areas of specialization are represented, with criminal law and family law receiving the highest number of applications.

“Certification helped me legitimize [my career] transition so that in my own mind – and perhaps in my colleagues' and clients' view – I was now a transactional lawyer instead of a litigation lawyer.”

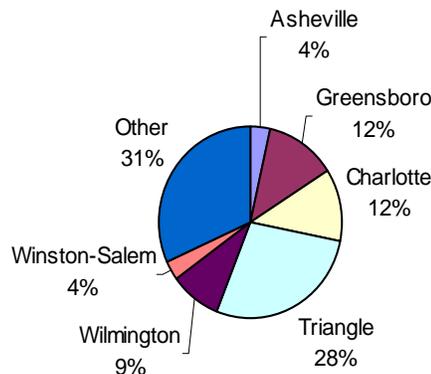
Charles Nichols, Board Certified in Real Property Law, 2003

2004 APPLICANT PROFILE

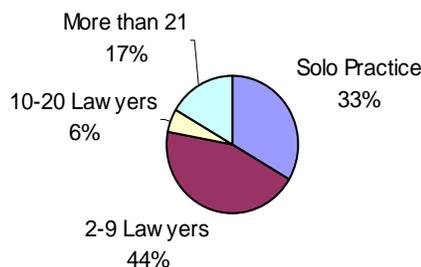
Years of Experience



Location of Practice



Size of Firm



NEW SPECIALTIES CONTINUED..

9. Signatures of at least 10 lawyers who would be willing to serve as members of the initial specialty committee that will draft standards for the proposed specialty.

Upon receipt of a written application that complies with the requirements, the BLS shall circulate copies of the application to the members of the existing specialty committees and to the members of the State Bar Council for written comment.

The BLS shall study the application and written comments and, upon a determination that the creation of a new specialty will benefit the public and the profession, shall appoint a specialty committee. The specialty committee shall draft proposed standards and a subject matter outline covering the knowledge and skills that candidates would be expected to show in the proposed specialty area for consideration by the board.



Please contact Alice Neece Mine for information about pursuing a new specialty, at 919-828-4620 or amine@ncbar.com

SPECIALISTS ON SPECIALIZATION

Has becoming a certified specialist been helpful to your practice?

Renny Deese, board certified in family law replies "Yes, it has. The practice of law is so complicated, particularly in family law these days, that I actually consider it a luxury to concentrate in an area of law that I enjoy so much. Family law is what I do. It takes me less time to complete a task because I know this area of the law. I get a lot of personal satisfaction from seeing my clients through a difficult time. In family law, there are not many winners and it's nice when clients are grateful for your assistance in taking them through the process. There are many highs and lows with a family dissolution, you learn to be sensitive to the client's emotional needs. Empathy is important."

Ann Robertson, board certified in immigration law

responds "I know it has. It does matter to other attorneys. Immigration is a really complicated area of the law and it changes nearly every day. Many attorneys have clients with immigration issues that they refer out. Not many lawyers dabble in immigration law, as bad advice can lead to such serious consequences. Mainly they're looking for a qualified attorney to handle the referral. My certification helps them feel good about referring to my firm."

Sean Devereaux, board certified in criminal law replies "Yes, mainly through other lawyers referring clients to me. I also became active in the Criminal Defense Section of the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers and joined the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) and really began to focus my practice on criminal law. I am now the VP for Membership of the Academy and am reaching out to other

criminal lawyers to expand the roster of members. Since becoming certified, I've also taught CLE courses at the Academy of Trial Lawyers and at Wake Forest School of Law. When I became certified, I started to view myself as a criminal defense lawyer. It's really been an important part of shaping my practice, my goals and my view of myself as a lawyer."

Bill Janvier, board certified in bankruptcy law states "I've had several people, business clients in particular, mention my certification. Some clients have found me by doing an internet search for bankruptcy specialists. My certification is also printed on my letterhead and I think that gives people to whom I write (on behalf of a client) comfort. They know that I have a pretty good working knowledge of bankruptcy issues."



"Board certification allows me to project my practice beyond the walls of the office. It opens doors that would not otherwise be opened."

Jimmy Narron, Board Certified in Estate Planning and Probate Law, 1987

The North Carolina State Bar

PO Box 25908
208 Fayetteville Street Mall
Raleigh, NC 27611

Phone: 919-828-4620
Fax: 919-821-9168
Email: dmullen@ncbar.com

We're on the Web
nclawspecialists.org

Specialization

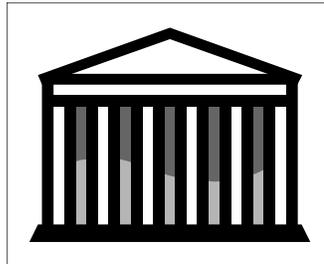


The North
Carolina State Bar

PARALEGAL CERTIFICATION

Paralegals will soon have the option to become certified in their professional field. In a program similar to legal specialization, paralegals will not be required to become certified, but rather may choose to apply, meet the required standards, and pass a certification examination to become certified by the State Bar.

The proposal was initially advanced by a group of paralegals called The Alliance for Paralegal Professional Standards (APPS). APPS was formed in February 2001 to implement professional standards for the paralegal profession in North Carolina. The State Bar became involved in 2003 and, pending the approval of the Supreme Court, will create a Board of Paralegal Certification to oversee



the program.

Certification should help the paralegal community, which has been frustrated with the

perceived ambiguity between the widespread recognition of the profession by the legal community and the public, and the fact that anyone may call himself or herself a paralegal without any formal education or training. Certification should also provide some structure and guidance to paralegals confronting professional development and unauthorized practice of law issues.

Those involved with the drafting of the certification plan believe that it strikes an appropriate balance for para-

legals, the bar and the interests of the public. The program is voluntary, does not seek to differentiate services that can be performed by certified or non-certified individuals, and it provides educational incentives to paralegals, including on-going continuing education requirements. The program will be a self-funding program administered under the auspices of the North Carolina State Bar by a board appointed and supervised by the State Bar Council. Finally, the program will provide benefits to the general public by enhancing the knowledge and skills of the paralegals who support lawyers, and who, in turn, provide legal services to the citizens of this state.

For more information about this program, please contact Alice Neece Mine at 919-828-4620 or amine@ncbar.com.