

**The Association of the Bar
of the United States Court of Appeals
for the Eighth Circuit**



STRATEGIC PLAN

FINAL

APPROVED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS, DECEMBER 14, 2010

A strategic planning committee consisting of board members and officers of the Association for the Bar of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, also known as the Eighth Circuit Bar Association (“the Association”), met by telephone conference to develop long-term goals and recommended strategies. The committee met on at least five occasions in 2009; a “working plan” was prepared and circulated to the Board of Directors in 2010; the Board discussed the worked plan and proposed changes throughout several regularly scheduled meetings in 2010.

This plan is a working document intended to guide the Board of Directors for the Association as it makes decisions in the coming years. A strategic plan is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process and the plan should facilitate future decision-making, not restrict it. Pursuant to Article X of the Association’s by-laws, the Board must approve the plan and recommendations before it is deemed an action of the Association.

Purposes of the Eighth Circuit Bar Association

The committee notes the purposes, as reflected in Article II of the Association’s by-laws:

Section 2.1. Purposes. The purposes of the corporation shall be to:

- (a) Improve and facilitate the administration of justice in the federal courts within the geographic area of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit;
- (b) Raise the standards of proficiency and integrity in federal practice;
- (c) Work with the trial and appellate courts within the geographic area of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit to develop and implement effective, efficient, and uniform rules of practice and procedure; and
- (d) Assist, as requested by the judiciary of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, in holding the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference, in proposing qualified persons for membership on the statutory Attorney Advisory Committee, and aiding in other ways as may be requested.

Objectives

The following objectives are adopted and will further the Association's purposes:

- Increase membership in the Association;
- Enhance the benefits provided to existing members;
- Promote and sponsor educational programs that enhance federal appellate practice, including but not limited to the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference;
- Expand outreach by the Association throughout the geographic area of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit; and,
- Assist the trial and appellate courts in developing and implementing effective, efficient, and uniform rules of practice and procedure, as well as promote excellence and integrity among those who practice in the federal appellate bar and those who serve on its courts.

Strategies: Increase Membership

- A. Reach out to new members at each event sponsored by the Association;
- B. Assist the membership committee in communicating with members to encourage renewal and identify and follow up with those members who do not renew, in particular, the Association's efforts to maintain existing members and expand membership should be led by the Director who represents members within a judicial district and should include written as well as other personal communication;
- C. Identify and improve recruitment of members that reflect the diverse gender, racial and ethnic makeup of the Eighth Circuit Bar;
- D. Identify and improve recruitment of target members, for example, the criminal appellate bar, former judicial clerks who have served members of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and lawyers recently admitted to the Eighth Circuit Bar; and,

E. Implement focus groups, as needed, to recommend programming that will reflect the bar's recognition of the importance of diversity and will interest target members, for example, ensure program panels include diverse speakers, ensure program content addresses the needs of criminal appellate attorneys, consider hosting a judicial clerk reunion in conjunction with another educational event, and address the need for beginner through advanced appellate programming.

Strategies: Enhance Membership Benefits

A. Improve the Association website to facilitate communications among members, Directors, Officers, and Mentors by among other things allowing members to edit individual contact information and opt to publish contact information within the membership group.

B. Provide for regular circulation of the Eighth Circuit Bar Association newsletter to all members, in part, by enhancing website technology to facilitate distribution and by recruiting an editorial team to undertake production responsibilities for a minimum of two years and with a view toward succession within the editorial team;

C. Evaluate adding a subscription to *The Journal of Appellate Practice and Process* for all members;

D. Continue to sponsor educational programs and receptions during court week, as discussed below;

E. Promote and enhance the role of the Association Mentors; and,

F. Evaluate the benefits of other methods of communication with members including but not limited to list-serves, blogs, and social networks on the Internet.

Strategy: Educational Programs

A. Promote the Association's role at and participation in the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference by among other things hosting a reception at each Judicial Conference, as requested by the Court;

B. Participate in planning educational programming for future Judicial Conferences, and explore other strategies for easing the burden on the court and improving lawyer attendance in consultation with the Chief Judge;

C. Enhance full-day educational programming directed at both beginner and advanced appellate practice by sponsoring a regularly scheduled Appellate Practice Institute, the location of which should rotate within the geographic area of the Eighth Circuit;

D. Continue to sponsor half-day educational programming during court week, more specifically, seminars should be held once per year in either St. Paul or St. Louis and in other locations depending on the court's schedule;

E. Sponsor educational programs that encourage lawyers of diverse gender, racial and ethnic backgrounds to practice appellate law;

F. Increase attendance at all educational programs by setting tentative schedule by the beginning of each calendar year and communicating the schedule to members via the Association website, email, and the Association newsletter; and,

G. Evaluate program content to ensure that it benefits existing members as well as attracts new members, as discussed above.

Strategy: Geographic Outreach

A. Build cohesion within each federal judicial district of the Eighth Circuit by among other things promoting communication by the Director representing each district and by

including district members and Association Mentors in planning educational seminars, receptions, and other Association activities;

B. Promote Association activities throughout the geographic area of the Eighth Circuit, for example, by sponsoring half-day seminars outside St. Paul and St. Louis during court week;

C. Encourage educational and ceremonial events that bring together geographically diverse Association members, including members of the judiciary, for example, by rotating the location of the Appellate Practice Institute, by assisting the Court in the investiture for each new chief judge, and in selecting locations for the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference, as initiated and approved by the Court; and,

D. Reflect the geographic reach and diversity of the Eighth Circuit in the content of the Association Newsletter.

Strategy: Rules of Practice and Procedure and Service to the Courts

A. Facilitate member participation on local federal district and Eighth Circuit rules committees, as well as the Federal Practice Advisory Committee, including recommending qualified persons to serve, as requested;

B. Focus educational programming and newsletter content on topics that will raise the standard of excellence and integrity within the Eighth Circuit as well as communicate and inform members about new rules of practice and procedure; and,

C. In consultation with the Chief Judge, establish a process for selecting and recognizing those who provide exceptional service to the bench and bar by materially improving Eighth Circuit practice and procedure.