



NORTH CAROLINA
BAR ASSOCIATION
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Out-of-state Law Student Manual

Guidance and Resources for
Transitioning into the Practice of
Law in North Carolina

NCBA Young Lawyers Division | Last Updated February 2021

First-person Perspective on Transitioning into the Practice of Law in North Carolina

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I am a Florida native who attended law school in Tennessee, yet I wanted employers to believe I was serious about pursuing long term employment in North Carolina—a state in which I had no family or prior connections. The process of locating a job in a state that you lack connections, especially those relationships that one can easily foster during their law school career, can be extremely difficult. How did I do it? First, I utilized my law school's career services. By expressing my desire to find employment in North Carolina, career services were able to connect me with alumni who were employed in North Carolina. Next, I networked. I reached out to several University of Tennessee alumni who were more than happy to speak with me about their experiences in North Carolina and advise me of different employment opportunities. At the same time, I also kept an eye out for out-of-state opportunities that were occasionally posted on Symplicity or other job boards. This process resulted in two separate invitations to interview, and I was able to secure my first job. To say the process was without complication would be an understatement. It took time and dedication but was well worth the reward.



Job Searching and Networking

INTRODUCTION

Job searching may be more stressful when one attends an out-of-state law school with the intent to practice in North Carolina. The issue of proximity to potential employers proves to be taxing. However, there are ways to be intentional about your job search and reduce such stress.

CAREER SERVICES OFFICES

Career services is a convenient, valuable resource that is included in the price of tuition. Familiarize yourself with your Career Services office and all that they have to offer. Many Career Services offices have reciprocity agreements with other Career Services offices around

the country. If you are not sure whether your Career Services office has a reciprocity agreement with a North Carolina law school, just ask. Many Career Services offices also have access to online job databases and updated alumni information. Ask for a list of alumni in North Carolina. Connecting with alumni in North Carolina can improve your chances of landing a job.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND JOB BOARDS

Social networking is the new norm. Gone are the days of attending Rotary Club and rubbing elbows with the local barons of the industry. In its place, we have targeted job advertisements on LinkedIn and Facebook. Social media can be a great way to find a job and to be introduced to potential employers through people you

already know. As a word to the wise, be sure that you have a professional-looking photo on your profile and that you have taken down (or at least made private) those spring break photos. Additionally, be sure to spruce up your LinkedIn profile so that potential employers get a holistic view of who you are. Add volunteer experiences, other languages you may know, your community involvement, any projects you may have worked on, and, of course, your job history. Also remember to look at more generic job boards like Indeed or state-specific job boards, like the [North Carolina state government job site](#). There is also a quick way to receive emails from any of these job boards when jobs are posted that meet your criteria, by location, experience, or otherwise. Expand your keyword search: attorney, associate, counsel, compliance, staff attorney, JD Preferred. Do not limit yourself to notifications about only “associate attorney” positions. Also, do not be afraid to inquire about jobs outside of your experience level - you never know. Take advantage of social networking.

NETWORKING

Networking does not have to be as daunting as it may seem. While Millennials are the kings and queens of social media, hiring managers tend to belong to Generation Y or the Baby Boomer generation. You need to brush up on your etiquette and make connections the old-fashioned way: face-to-face. As with social media, utilize your unseen network. Do not be afraid to ask people to connect you to others they may know. Reach out to alumni from your school, either law school or undergraduate, to see if anyone may have connections in North Carolina. If you visit North Carolina during the year, you should attempt to network with local attorneys during your visits. Additionally, the North Carolina Bar Association (“NCBA”) hosts many pro bono opportunities open to law students, such as serving as a witness at a Wills for Heroes event, that allow you to interact with practicing attorneys. There are also professional associ-

ations in North Carolina, specific to different practice areas, that host social events and CLEs throughout the year. To get a good idea of what organizations would be worthwhile to join, look at attorney profiles on social media, or their firm website, to see what groups they participate in. The moral of the story is to use your greatest resource: your network of family, friends, and alumni.

SCHEDULE COFFEE, LUNCH, OR VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Contact North Carolina attorneys to request meetings, whether that be in person or virtually. Such communications should be professional, but also personal, to avoid the appearance that you sent the same message to many attorneys. Be specific in your communications—tell the attorney who you are and why you are contacting them. It is always a bonus if you can find something the two of you have in common to guide the conversation. Also, remember that there may be a time difference depending on the state you are in. Be flexible in scheduling meetings, even if it is inconvenient for you.

NCBA INVOLVEMENT

Have you visited the [NCBA website](#)? If you have not, you are missing out on this underutilized job searching resource. NCBA membership is free for law students. Among other resources posted on the NCBA website is a [career center](#) where employers post job openings. As a member, you receive information on law school-related events, bar association events, and other great opportunities such as assisting with pro bono legal events. Try to find events to attend when you are visiting North Carolina. Additionally, the NCBA is organized into over 30 “sections” based on practice areas. For example, there are sections for Appellate Practice, Business Law, Family Law, Health Law, Litigation, and Sports and Entertainment Law. If you’re interested in a particular area of law, reach out to the leaders of that section and ask for an informational interview.

Bar Application Information and Deadlines

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR FEBRUARY AND JULY 2021 TEST TAKERS

The Young Lawyers Division Bar Exam Committee (“YLD BEC”) exists to assist prospective North Carolina lawyers in applying and sitting for the North Carolina Bar Examination. This section shares important details from the YLD BEC regarding the upcoming February and July 2021 North Carolina Bar Exams, which, like most things 2020, will most likely be anything but ordinary. In addition to the below information, all applicants are cautioned to thoroughly read all information posted on the website of the North Carolina Board of

Law Examiners (NCBLE) (www.ncble.org), as well as the Rules Governing Admission to the Practice of Law in the State of North Carolina and the Character and Fitness Guidelines, both of which can be located on the NCBLE website [here](#).

INFORMATION REGARDING THE FEBRUARY 2021 BAR EXAM

DATES, LOCATION AND PASSING SCORE

The February 2021 North Carolina Bar Exam will be administered as a remote exam on February 23 and 24,

2021. The NCBE has lowered the minimum passing score for the February 2021 exam from 270 to 268.

TEST-DAY CONDITIONS

General test-day conditions are located on the NCBE website [here](#). The NCBE has not yet published the testing procedures for a remote administration of the exam. This information is forthcoming.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE JULY 2021 BAR EXAM

DATES, LOCATION AND PASSING SCORE

The July 2021 North Carolina Bar Exam is currently scheduled to take place in-person on July 27 and 28, 2021, at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds and the Jane S. McKimmon Center at North Carolina State University. For the July 2021 exam, the minimum passing score returns to 270.

FILING DEADLINES AND FEES

Applications for the July 2021 North Carolina Bar Exam have recently opened. General applications for the exam opened on November 4, 2020 and will close on March 2, 2021. All applications submitted between November 4, 2020 and January 5, 2021 will be considered “timely,” while applications submitted from January 6, 2021, to March 2, 2021, will be considered “late” and subject to increased filing fees. Supplemental applications for the July 2021 exam will open December 23, 2020 and close May 4, 2021. No late supplemental applications will be accepted.

Since North Carolina’s adoption of the Universal Bar Exam (UBE) in 2019, UBE transfer applications are also accepted by the NCBE year-round. (Note that the minimum acceptable score for UBE transfer applicants who sit for the UBE in July 2020, September 2020, or February 2021 has also been reduced from 270 to 268.) Applications are also accepted year-round for applicants seeking admission by comity. For all applicants, please make sure to review the NCBE’s specific rules regarding when an application is considered “filed” to avoid missing the filing deadline. In addition to the relevant filing fee, applications can be subject to additional fees for a variety of reasons. A complete list of deadlines, fees, forms, and instructions for each application type is located at the NCBE website [here](#).

APPLICATION INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

All applicants should be aware that the general application to sit for the North Carolina Bar Exam is comprehensive and may require information or documentation that most applicants do not have readily available. The NCBE maintains an interactive form for previewing application contents and requirements, which can be

accessed for general applicants year-round [here](#). All applicants are advised to review the application in its entirety well in advance of the filing deadline to avoid incurring late fees or missing the application deadline. In particular, general applicants should consider gathering the following items and information as soon as possible:

- Certified birth certificate
- Documentation of name change (if applicable)
- Residency timeline (including temporary and permanent addresses since the applicant’s 18th birthday)
- Employment timeline (including all paid and unpaid employment held since the applicant’s 18th birthday)
- Certified driving record
- Traffic violations (for the past five years; including date, location, and details regarding the offense & disposition)
- Police reports (for all criminal actions, including DWI/DUI and any traffic violation resulting in jail time)
- Court records (for any litigation to which the applicant has been a party—criminal and civil)
- Educational transcripts
- Law school admission application (for applicants that attended law school outside the State of North Carolina)
- Disciplinary statements & Certificates of Good Standing (if applicable)
- Student loan information (including all student loans and whether payments are current, deferred, or delinquent, as well as documentation)
- Credit card information (including all credit card account numbers, balances, and statuses)
- Other debt information (for debts over \$1,000, bankruptcy, default/discharge, judgments, etc.)
- Four persons willing to submit a Certificate of Moral Character on behalf of the applicant (no relatives, current law students, current bar exam applicants, or current or former supervisors and cannot be listed elsewhere on application)
- Eight general character references (no relatives, current law students, current bar exam applicants, or current or former supervisors and cannot be listed elsewhere on the application)

A number of other forms, including signature pages, a handwriting sample, a signed release, and fingerprints are also required components of the application. Applications should note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NCBE is permitting applicants to submit documents using a signed declaration in lieu of a notarized signature until March 1, 2021. Additional details are located [here](#).

MPRE REQUIREMENTS

All general applicants to the North Carolina Bar must take and pass the MPRE with a minimum score of 80. General Applicants must pass the MPRE within 24

months next preceding the beginning day of the written bar examination the applicant passes, or within 12 months thereafter. Information on how to register for the test and transfer scores can be found [here](#).

NORTH CAROLINA STATE SPECIFIC COMPONENT OF THE UNIFORM BAR EXAM

North Carolina requires applicants to pass a state-specific component prior to being admitted to the bar.

Applicants must watch a series of six videos and pass a quiz on each subject area. Applicants may complete this task any time after their exam application is submitted. Upon filing an application, applicants may request access to the North Carolina State-Specific Component by e-mailing a request to Ms. Allison Bradley at the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners at abradley@ncble.org. More information about this component can be found [here](#).

North Carolina Practice Tips

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH CLIENTS

1. Check your voicemail. Respond to your emails. If your clients can talk to you, they're much less likely to file a grievance against you with the Bar.
2. Always have a written fee agreement with your client that says what you're representing them for and how much they're paying you to do it. Lawyers Mutual has an excellent guide (their [Attorney-Client Agreements Toolkit](#)) for these agreements and many others.
3. Be careful of giving your clients your cellphone number. You can't take that back.
4. A bad case with a good client is better than a good case with a bad client.
5. Don't tell your client you will have something done by a specific date. You never know what may come up.
6. Never argue with your client.
7. Try your good cases and settle your bad cases. Too many attorneys do the opposite.

TIPS FOR INTERACTING WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BAR (AND THE BENCH)

1. Opposing counsel isn't the enemy.
2. Don't be afraid to ask for help. The clerks, the bailiffs, older attorneys, and your boss are almost always willing and able to answer your questions. And it probably isn't their first time answering someone's questions either.
3. If you go to court, make sure you have something to wear to court in your office. Male attorneys often keep a jacket and tie in their office.
4. Don't complain about a judge in public. Ever. Don't complain about opposing counsel either.
5. Don't object just because it's objectionable; object because it hurts your case.
6. If you take it to court, have a copy for yourself, the judge, and opposing counsel.
7. Know who the judge is and ask what they're like.

LEARNING THE LAW; LEARNING YOUR FIRM

1. If you don't know what it means, don't say it or write it. Find out.
2. Don't panic when you make mistakes; panic if you think you never make mistakes.
3. Eventually the law of averages catches up with you. You'll screw up. Tell your boss, ask for help, and fix it.
4. Learn how your firm bills ASAP – it will get you paid and them paid.
5. When you lose, write out a list of what you could have done better to both improve and also move on from losses.
6. If your boss gives you a job, ask when it needs to be done by.
7. Read all of the contract, the statute, or the case you're arguing about, the boring bits may help you. Make sure you bring a copy to court.

TIPS FOR ORGANIZATION AND EFFICIENCY

1. Make a document recording all your active clients, what you're doing for them, and any deadlines. Put the deadlines on your calendar – and put a reminder a week before the deadline.
2. Keep track of your time even if you don't think you have to. It helps to know how much time your billing takes you or how much time you actually spent on that flat-fee will.
3. Keep a pen and paper handy. You'll eventually need to write down something your client, your boss, or the judge says.
4. You can't take care of your clients if you don't take care of yourself.

NORTH CAROLINA RESOURCES

1. If you're facing a difficult ethical decision and you're not sure what to do, contact the Bar Ethics Hotline. (919) 828-4620 or by emailing ethicsadvice@ncbar.gov. It's confidential. They'll give you good advice that could help you avoid problems down the road (if you

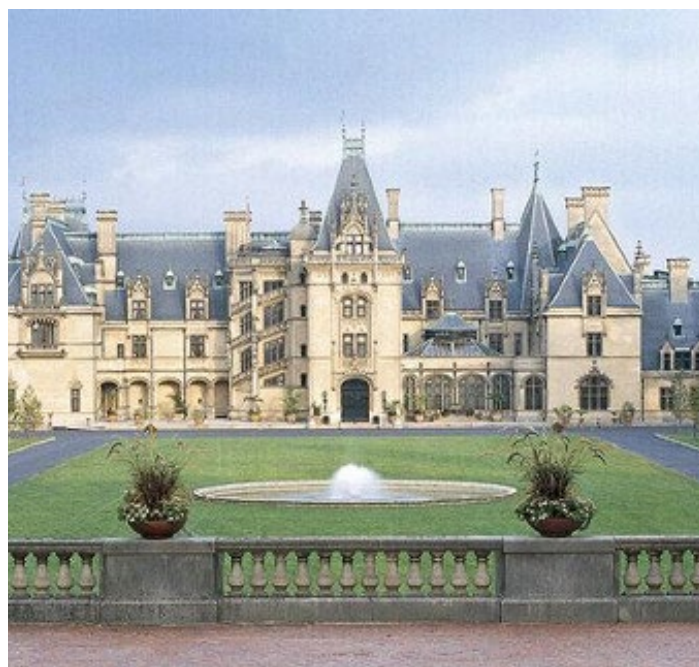
- follow it). Also, you can visit the [NC State Bar website](#) for ethics and other important practice information.
2. You can find your CLE requirements and completed courses on the [NC CLE website](#).
 3. North Carolina has a “bifurcated bar,” which means that while membership in the North Carolina State Bar is mandatory, membership in the [North Carolina Bar Association](#) is voluntary. Join the NCBA for free CLEs, discount on local attractions, membership in practice sections, and much more.
 4. Always read the local rules. You can find your county’s local rules on [nccourts.gov](#). Federal local rules are available on the [Eastern District’s website](#), the [Middle District’s website](#), and the [Western District’s website](#).
 5. The [pattern jury instructions](#) are incredibly helpful. Read them and the cases they cite. If you’re drafting a complaint, follow the jury instructions, and you’re 90% of the way there.
 6. The [Superior Court Judges’ Benchbook](#) contains lots of guides about specific motions or rules and the cases to back them up. There’s a decent chance your judge might be reading this too.
 7. If you need to research North Carolina specific law, here are several excellent treatises: Shuford’s North Carolina Civil Practice & Procedure, Thorp’s Forms, Lee on Family Law, and, of course, Strong’s North Carolina Index (an encyclopedic treatment of North Carolina law).
 8. [IDS manuals](#) and the materials on the [IDS website](#): IDS handles representation of indigent criminal defendants. They know criminal defense and these resources help spell out best practices.
 9. UNC’s School of Government has great blogs on: [civil law](#), [criminal law](#), [municipal law](#), and [public finance](#).
 10. Several law firms track legal developments in specific practices areas and post important updates on their blogs. If you practice in these areas, these blogs are well worth the follow: [Ellis & Winters’ What’s Fair](#) (unfair and deceptive trade practices); [Fox Rothschild’s NC Appellate Practice Blog](#); [Fox Rothschild’s It’s Just Business](#) (NC business courts); [North Carolina Business Litigation Report](#); and [Construction Law Carolinas](#).

Things to See and Do in North Carolina

There are many fun things to do in North Carolina besides working as a lawyer. There are plenty of treasures in the state that cater to any area of interest: History, Nature, Culture, Food, and Entertainment.

HISTORY

Wilbur and Orville Wright achieved the first successful airplane flight on December 17, 1903, near Kitty Hawk, NC, hence North Carolina’s tagline “First in Flight.” The Wright Brothers’ National Memorial in nearby Kill Devil Hills, commemorates their monumental achievement. Get a feel of what life was like for the Wright Brothers at the turn of the 20th Century. For more information, please visit this [website](#).



This massive estate, started by George Washington Vanderbilt II in 1889, is located in Asheville, NC. The Biltmore Estate is the largest privately-owned house in the United States. It also serves as a museum for tourists to visit the historic gilded age mansion and estate grounds. Dine and tour the winery while enjoying the astonishing 8,000-acre landscaping. For more information, please visit the [Biltmore website](#).

NATURE

Chimney Rock State Park in Chimney Rock, NC is notable for its massive granite monolith. The park features a 404 ft. waterfall "Hickory Nut Falls," hiking trails, beautiful views of the countryside, and the Devil's Head balancing rock. Chimney Rock is a great destination for nature enthusiasts and is accessible for all skill levels. Visit the neighboring village for more mountain activities for western North Carolina explorers. For more information, please visit this [website](#).



The Outer Banks of North Carolina is a string of barrier islands along the state's Atlantic Ocean coast. This beachfront destination, nicknamed the "Graveyard of the Atlantic," boasts 200 miles of rich seashore and history. Swim in one of the many beaches or hang glide over the sand dunes in Jockey's Ridge State Park. Please visit the [Outer Banks website](#) for more information.



CULTURE, ARTS AND SCIENCES

North Carolina is home to over 100 museums. There is a diverse grouping of museums in Raleigh such as the NC Museums of Art, Natural Sciences, and History. Learn the history of the civil rights movement in this

state at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in Greensboro, NC, or visit the world's largest natural habitat zoo in Asheboro, NC. Visit this [website](#) for more information.



Celebrate different cultures from all over the world at one of North Carolina's festivals. Seasonal or holiday festivals are held across the state featuring art shows, crafts, music, and food. Experience an appreciation of cultures and arts all year long. Please visit this [website](#) for more information.



FOOD

North Carolina is the birthplace of several well-known food inventions. Visit the original site of Pepsi-Cola in New Bern or the invention of Texas Pete in Winston-Salem. Krispy Kreme's invention in Winston-Salem, NC even inspired the "Krispy Kreme Challenge." Take part in a 5-mile run while eating 12 Krispy Donuts to raise money for the local children's hospital.



However, North Carolina's cuisine is mainly known for its flavorful barbecue. Pork barbecue has been a proud tradition featured in community gatherings across the state. The two main types of cooking styles are "Eastern Style" and "Lexington Style." Taste a variety of Carolina-styled barbecues at the annual NC State Fair in Raleigh, NC or at any local food festival. Please visit this [website](#) for more information.



ENTERTAINMENT

Attend a concert or catch a sporting event at any entertainment venue throughout the state. The PNC Arena and Greensboro Coliseum are just two of the many venues that welcome musical artists or theatrical performances to North Carolina. North Carolina is also best known for some of the most successful college basketball teams in the nation. Cheer on one of the three major league sports teams or support the numerous minor league baseball teams such as the Durham Bulls in Durham. Whether it is a performance show or sports game, there is plenty of entertainment to see! Please visit this [website](#) for more information.

We wish you the best of
luck in law school and in
your future practice of
the law!

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Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this manual. We hope that it has been an enlightening experience. If you would like more information about becoming a North Carolina lawyer, please be sure to check out the following resources:

- [L3: Long Leaf Law, the NCBA Blog](#)
- [NCBA LinkedIn](#)
- [NCBA Facebook](#)
- [NCBA Twitter](#)