

ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

LAW-RELATED EDUCATION
FOR THE PUBLIC

ISBA Speaker's Bureau:

A Guide for Lawyers Invited to Speak

Preparing To Speak To Community Organizations On Your
Profession, Area of Legal Practice, and Career Choice

ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
Standing Committee on Law-Related Education for the Public

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The Illinois State Bar Association promotes professional development of attorneys and supports law-related education to schools, teachers and students through programs such as Law Day, High School Mock Trial and Lawyers in Classrooms. The ISBA has developed and provided activities, lesson plans and resources for educators to use in furtherance of its goal to bring law-based civics instruction and guidance to students of all grade levels, diversities and experience. The Association now seeks to expand toward an education based direction for the general adult public by initiating it's "Speaker's Bureau" program for adult civic groups and community leaders to interact with members of the legal profession in a non-judicial atmosphere. By presenting educational speakers, the ISBA aims to foster public confidence in lawyers, government and, especially, the judicial system in Illinois.

The Illinois State Bar Association has advanced with remarkable success its Lawyers in Classrooms program. Developed under the ISBA's Standing Committee on Law-Related Education for the Public, the Lawyers in Classrooms program places volunteer attorneys with students in elementary, middle school and high school classrooms to teach civics, government and law-related subjects.

Law-related education has been shown to expand the interest in civics and social studies and any school curriculum in which it is introduced, help prevent delinquency and develop good citizenship skills in young adults. This successful program has introduced students to professionals in the legal field, local lawyers and judges, who discuss a broad range of law-related topics in the classroom setting.

But school classrooms are not the only place where knowledgeable attorneys are needed to explain and discuss legal subjects outside of the walls of the courthouse. There are many other groups who would enjoy engaging and speaking with you as a legal professional in a social environment. Civic organizations, social clubs, church groups, senior citizens' centers, political action groups, or fraternal societies often are looking for speakers to enhance the interest of members. If you have experience or expertise in a particular area of law, you may be the perfect speaker to educate and charm such group members at a discussion about senior citizens' rights, consumer protection, dispute resolution, legal careers or other aspects of the legal practice.

The ISBA is expanding its dedication to civility and advancement of the proud tradition of the legal profession by the development of the ISBA's Speaker's Bureau. The Standing Committee on Law-Related Education for the Public supports the Speaker's Bureau program by providing a resource where such community groups and organizations may contact and access a local attorney volunteer willing to speak on a law related subject at their social or business meetings. The benefits of the program promote civic discussions of legal topics and governmental roles, educates community volunteers and leaders, and enhances the stature of the legal profession.

This guidebook hopes to interest YOU into becoming a volunteer speaker on pertinent legal subjects at your community level through the ISBA Speaker's Bureau.

Law-Related Education

Law-related education is experience-oriented learning about the American justice system, government and general fields of law. LRE programs offer hands-on opportunities as a means for lawyers to become involved in their community through relevant presentations of the legal profession to adult civic organizations. Law-related education also helps community leaders and its members better understand the branches of our government and their personal role in the public affairs.

Rather than having one's first experience with the law be in a confrontation with a police officer or appearance in court, LRE teaches the principles of good citizenship and introduces a person to those who are responsible for making the laws, enforcing them, and seeing that they are carried out fairly--the legislators, law enforcement officials and the legal profession, including the judiciary. Thus, the law-related education presentation by the legal professional is an experience which is non-confrontational and often a lasting positive impression.

What will the presentation be about?

If it's your first time speaking to a group of community leaders or volunteers to discuss any aspect of being a lawyer, you should be prepared to respond to questions *on the topic* about which you will be speaking. Your presentation should last between 30-45 minutes. The organization you will be visiting is often inviting you to their regularly scheduled meeting in which they may have other organizational business to discuss. You are a guest speaker to share some aspect of the legal profession of interest to the group as part of its agenda.

The first rule of speaking to community groups is, as the Boy Scouts of America motto says, "Be Prepared". Your presentation should be developed on a particular aspect or field of law in which you have experience or expertise. The group host or leader has chosen to invite YOU to their meeting because of your intended subject matter and familiarity with the community. The time limit is remarkable short, so a well developed outline on a narrow legal topic is best suited.

Adult civic and volunteer groups want to be educated and entertained, and the temptation to speak off subject can be distracting. You should be aware that your audience may ask questions that are not part of your intended presentation.

If you don't want to answer, you can politely say, "Let's get back on topic," or "What do you think?" Usually, the best response to a difficult question would be an honest one.

Don't be afraid to acknowledge a good question and say you there are many variables to consider, and that you cannot answer without more details or research, or that you just don't know. After

all, our society would not be able to function in an adversarial system of justice if all answers were as simple as black and white.

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some frequently asked questions that lawyers have been asked who have spoken in school classrooms and which you may also hear asked by adults:

- Why did you decide to be a lawyer? Is your profession what you expected it to be?
- How long does law school take? How much did law school cost? Tell us about your law bar exam experience.
- Why do you practice in the area of law that you do? What about that area peaks your interest?
- How often do you go to court? To trial? How many trials have been successful? Why go to trial if the person is guilty?
- Could you ever defend someone who was obviously guilty of a horrible crime like rape or murder? Have you ever? How did that feel?
- Is it hard to keep things confidential and not talk about them? What rules of confidentiality and ethics must a lawyer follow?
- How has your legal career affected your personal life? Your family? What has been your most frightening experience as a lawyer? Your happiest?
- How much do you earn? (it's a good idea to be as honest as you feel comfortable being...but include information on business expenses, insurance, continuing legal education, law school debt, etc.)

If you're talking about any legal issue in the news or of local interest, expect that personal questions may be asked directly of you that might relate:

- If you're talking about driving laws, you may be asked if you ever got a DUI or a speeding ticket.
- If you're talking about criminal issues, you may be asked if you or a relative have ever been arrested.
- If you are talking about family law, you may be asked if you or a relative have ever got divorced or had custody/support issues.
- If you are asked about political issues on a national, state or local level, it is appropriate to politely decline to answer your personal views while explaining the processes of government structures to civilly address community actions.

Preparation before the event presentation is key.

Before visiting the adult group's meeting, you should:

Confer with the group's contact person and leader(s) prior to the scheduled visit to determine whether each of you know what has been told to the group about your presentation topic and what is to be expected. Ask about the amount of time you will be allowed to speak with the group.

Inquire about the logistics of the facility you will be attending. Find out where you should park, what kind of security, if any, you will face when you arrive, where to check-in or meet the host leader, and any special concerns or issues to review ahead of your presentation.

Ask specific questions about the meeting room logistics and facilities where your presentation will take place. Determine whether you need any technological assistance, such as audio-visual equipment or a computer projector for your presentation, a screen or blank wall, or electrical source. Lack of a simple extension cord or electrical outlet will bring disaster to an otherwise well-prepared speaker. Discuss these needs with the group's contact person beforehand in order that proper arrangements are made. Ask about the meeting facilities rules and how members of the organization should be addressed and identified.

Acquire information beforehand about the group's mission or purpose. If your expected topic of discussion may not be appropriate for an audience, you may politely decline and suggest that the host leader request another presenter or topic. But be sure to do so, well in advance of the presentation date, preferably before any public announcement is made to avoid embarrassment of the group, its leaders and yourself.

Ask about the expected size of the audience, its demographics, and any special needs. Inquire about the likelihood of prior personal experience or interaction with the legal system, and possible situations that be embarrassing to the audience members or to you.

Discuss the overall general presentation you plan to speak about with the group's leader to make sure it fits into the announced topic. Also, ask whether the group members already have some experience or understanding of the expected topic to be covered in your presentation. You may need to be sensitive about certain law topics involving your audience.

Photocopy any handouts you may want to distribute or have the group follow to better understand your topic presentation. Be sure to bring enough copies, as well as extras. Do not charge the host group a fee for copying your handout materials. If you need any cost reimbursement, contact the Illinois State Bar Association and we'll be happy to work with you.

And above all, arrive early in plenty of time to allow for parking, security, finding the meeting room and setting up your logistics and supplies. Both your host group audience and you will have a more rewarding experience if you prepare well in advance of the event.

What topics may be discussed?

The invitation for the speaking event doesn't need to be based on a specific motivation or reason. It could be something as simple as a current events topic that an organization would like a professional in the field of law to discuss. Has there been a major incident in your community, nation or world that recently made the news? A lawyer may be invited to clarify what laws may relate or may have been broken, and what may be done to see that a similar incident is not repeated in their community. Keep in mind, that Illinois law may be vastly different than other jurisdictions

or even U.S. federal law. Discuss with the group what would be relevant in Illinois or any other jurisdiction in which you have the ability and experience to comment.

For example, if you are familiar with traffic laws and courts, DUI and other laws that relate to licenses and driving, you may offer to speak to a senior citizen group about older driver's education. If you practice with family law and domestic violence issues, you may be asked to speak to at a women's domestic violence shelter. Or perhaps you routinely draft wills, trusts and practice in estate planning, you may be invited to speak with a church or charitable organization, or senior group.

Other topics of interest to civic groups or relevant current events may be:

- Discuss citizen rights in peaceful civil disobedience, freedom marches and good citizenship as a means of free expression within the community.
- Talk about election law, the historical elections in the U.S., and highlight Supreme Court cases which have significantly affected the outcome of elections and the electoral processes.
- Discuss the powers of the President, Congress and the Supreme Court, and the significance of the constitutional checks and balances.
- Consider the oldest written constitution still in effect, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights, and its founding of America and relevance today.
- Talk about becoming a lawyer and the significant historical roles lawyers like Abraham Lincoln or Thurgood Marshall played in shaping America.
- Discuss issues involving citizenship, naturalization and immigration, and the rights afforded to citizens and non-citizens in the U.S.
- Talk about changing developments in today's legal practice, including technology, e-filing or alternative dispute resolution practices.

The Illinois State Bar Association has vast resources and materials that are available for use. Visit the "Public" tab of the Illinois State Bar Association's website at isba.org or call the ISBA offices for assistance.

DO NOT:

- Give advice on individual legal problems! EVER!!
- Lecture down to the audience.
- Speak in "legalese".
- Read a prepared speech.

- Tell a lot of “war stories”.
- “Soapbox” your personal political viewpoints.

During the Event Visit

Review your presentation outline and course plan well before your scheduled event. Be as prepared to teach the lesson as you would be to present a case in court. *Have fun!*

Present the legal subject matter *you* have prepared. Your host group of adult civic volunteers or members joined their specific organizations for a personal purpose. Even adult audiences are masters at getting speakers off the intended law-related subject, and onto areas of discussion not related to the expected and planned presentation. Acknowledge their off-subject inquiry, and bring the intended topic back to the forefront.

Design your presentation to encourage active participation and spare time for questions to be discussed. Try to involve the entire audience by calling on as many members as possible. Do not let one or two members monopolize the entire discussion time.

Consider using audio/visual assistance to enhance your presentation. A picture is still worth a thousand words, and a power-point presentation allows your discussion to be better remembered. Proofread the slides and practice with the computer equipment beforehand. Be sure that, when you set up the back screen your presentation will be projected on, the slides will be viewed by all the audience members with limited interference. You may invite your audience during the presentation to move their seats in order to better view, if necessary.

Translate "legalese" into plain understandable English. You will want to have a sea of enlightened faces looking back at you, rather than blank stares as if you are speaking in an ancient foreign language.

Watch the time! Your host group has invited you for a purpose. You need to respect their scheduled meeting agenda for them to accomplish their meeting's goals. To complete your presentation, you will need to follow the time estimate given in the agenda plan for each group's meeting. If your presentation is active but short on time, the group may well invite you back for another event.

Follow whatever plans you and the host leader have pre-determined would work for the group, yet look to the host leader for adjustments if necessary. Use the time before the start of the group's meeting to confer with the host regarding any known modifications.

Do not be stagnant. Be mobile. Circulate around the meeting room rather than standing in the front of the podium or head table for the entire period. Make eye contact and interact with members of the audience. You will acquire valuable feedback just by considering your audience's eyes.

While you should follow the intended presentation you had planned, be flexible to current news and interests in community affairs. The clear majority of the members of civic organizations volunteer their time, abilities and money because they believe in their mission and goals. Enjoy your time with them as they will appreciate the sharing of your time and interest in them.

After the Event Evaluation

Acquiring information about each event enables the Speaker's Bureau to identify and clarify issues and goals to improve the planning process for accomplishing future objectives. Establishing an effective review and collecting post-event comments is essential for coordinating a system of communication and future law-related education programming.

Assessing the success of each speaking event is central to the continued improvement of the ISBA Speaker's Bureau program. Reviews will reinforce what objectives are trying to be achieved. Therefore, we ask each speaker and each visited group to fill out a simple evaluation form after each speaking engagement. See Appendix: *Event Evaluation and Presenter's Post-Event Evaluation*

The ISBA expects to use the review information assembled to improve the overall course strategy, and to compile data in summary form to gauge the effectiveness of lawyer/public contact toward improving the image of attorneys and the legal profession.

Similarly, the individual speaker will gain important feedback from the audience to enhance the speaker's performance, communication skills, and professional competency. Your ability to plan and implement your law-related presentation to a non-lawyer group of adults may be effortless to some, but may be quite difficult for other speakers, at least for the first few events. Understanding the feedback and comments received following an event will accomplish more toward planning and coordinating future events.

How do You get started?

Interested in becoming a member of the ISBA's Speaker's Bureau? Great. Please fill out an application online at www.isba.org or the attached form in the

Appendix: *Presenter Application*. After review, you will be added to the list of volunteer presenters. Being an ISBA Speaker's Bureau presenter is more than simply agreeing to speak at an adult group. It is your personal commitment to further the image of the legal profession in your community, provide valuable information and personal contact from an experienced practitioner to your citizens and neighbors, and develop yourself into a more effective, competent and ethical attorney.

Illinois State Bar Association: Speaker's Bureau Standing Committee on Law-Related Education for the Public

Illinois State Bar Association

Standing Committee on Law-Related Education for the Public

Speaker's Bureau Guidebook

APPENDIX

I. PRESENTER APPLICATION

II. EVENT EVALUATION

III. PRESENTER'S POST-EVENT EVALUATION

ISBA Speaker's Bureau

Presenter Application

Thank you for your interest in joining the ISBA Speaker's Bureau. This informal program will provide ways for community groups and organizations to search an ISBA volunteer database to find lawyers in their local areas who are willing to speak on subjects related to the legal profession, specific areas of law and citizenship. The list of volunteer attorneys available to give event presentations will be on our law-related education website, www.isba.org/Sections/lawrelateded.asp as an on-going public resource for community group leaders.

Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____ (full name)

ARDC # _____ (all presenters must be licensed attorneys in good standing)

Contact Information:

Address: _____

City, Town or Village: _____

County: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Office Phone: () _____

Mobile Phone: () _____

E-mail: _____

I am willing to speak:

_____ In my neighborhood _____ In my city _____ In my county

_____ In neighboring counties _____ Statewide _____ In the _____ Judicial Circuit

I am willing to speak on the following topics: (Please select all applicable topics and interests)

___ Adversarial Systems: Criminal and Civil – differences and similarities in the adversary trial process

___ Alternative Dispute Resolutions: What can be done besides filing a lawsuit and going to court?

___ Arbitration and Mediation – reconciliation by intervention

___ Careers in the law – consider many professions and careers where you can use a law degree

___ Constitutional Issues under the Bill of Rights

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___ Contracts: What are they and when are they enforceable?

___ Criminal Law: So what if I’m arrested? What are my rights? What is the worst that can happen?

___ Current Events – discussion of local, national and international law-related issues in the news

___ Driving Under the Influence – Your life, liberty and license are at risk.

___ Drugs, Guns, Gangs and Safety issues in the community

___ Election Law and the political processes

___ Elder Law – Who do you ask for help?

___ Employment Issues for employers and employees

___ Environmental Issues – How to “green” your community.

___ Family Law – marriage, civil unions, dissolution and children

___ First Amendment as it relates to public demonstrations

___ Fourth Amendment: to what extent are we protected in our homes, cars and in public

___ Judges and the Judicial Branch – its Separate Role in Our Government

___ Juvenile Justice: What rights do juveniles enjoy as citizens?

___ Landlord / Tenant – rights and responsibilities

___ Law School Experience and the Illinois Bar Exam

___ Local Government and Municipal Law

___ Planning a courtroom visit / able to assist with plans and attendance

___ Small Business and Consumer Issues

___ Traffic Court: What to expect when you get a ticket

___ Worker's Compensation: What are your rights when you are injured on the job?

___ Other Topics _____

Please return this completed form to: Kim Furr, Administrative Assistant, Lawyer Referral Service, at the Illinois State Bar Association, 424 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701 or fax it to (217) 525-9063.

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ISBA Speaker's Bureau

Event Evaluation

To improve future events and presentations, the ISBA Speaker's Bureau kindly request your input evaluation of the session you just attended. Thank You.

Presenter(s): _____

Presentation Topic(s): _____

Audience / Group Name: _____

Date of Event: _____

Please evaluate each statement according to the following scale:

1: Strongly Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neutral 4: Agree 5: Strongly Agree

The Presenter ...

- ___ Was knowledgeable about the subject.
- ___ Was well prepared and on time.
- ___ Was engaging and interesting.
- ___ Encouraged participation / discussion within group.

The Event ...

- ___ Had a clearly defined purpose.
- ___ Provided useful / helpful ideas or materials.
- ___ Increased my understanding of topic(s) discussed.
- ___ Format was appropriate to the subject.
- ___ Visual aids / materials enhanced the session.
- ___ Topic was interesting and should be presented on again.

Time allowed for presentation of session topic was:

- Too short Just right Too long

The facilities for the presentation were:

- Poor Satisfactory Neutral Good Excellent

Would you attend another session or topic presented by this Speaker?

- Yes No

Please indicate your rating for the session overall:

- Poor Satisfactory Neutral Good Excellent

Additional Comments:

What went well? What can be improved? Suggestions for future topics?

Illinois State Bar Association: Speaker's Bureau / Event Evaluation

ISBA Speaker's Bureau

Presenter's Post-Event Evaluation

To improve future events and presentations, the ISBA Speaker's Bureau kindly request your input evaluation of the event session you had just presented. Thank You.

ISBA Presenter: _____

Presentation Topic(s): _____

Date of Event: _____

Audience / Group Name: _____

Group Leader / Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Event Location: _____

Number of Persons Attending:

- Less than 10 11-20 21-30 More than 30

Please evaluate each statement according to the following scale:

- 1: Strongly Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neutral 4: Agree 5: Strongly Agree

The Host Group ...

- _____ Contact person was helpful in pre-event preparation.
_____ Was knowledgeable about the presentation subject.
_____ Agenda was well organized and on time.
_____ Was engaging and participated in interesting discussions.
_____ Provided useful / helpful ideas or materials.

The Event ...

- _____ Had a clearly defined purpose.
_____ Increased my understanding of Group's mission or goals.
_____ Format topic was appropriate for this Group.
_____ Visual aids / materials provided by Group enhanced the event.
_____ Topic was interesting and should be presented on again.

Time allowed for presentation of session topic was:

- Too short Just right Too long

The facilities for the presentation were:

- Poor Satisfactory Neutral Good Excellent

Additional comments on the facilities:

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Would you present another session or topic if asked by this Group?

- Yes No

Would you present another event at this facility?

- Yes No

Should this event be repeated in the future?

- Yes No

Would you present a similar or another event if asked by another Group?

- Yes No

Please indicate your overall rating of this event:

- Poor Satisfactory Neutral Good Excellent

Do you feel the ISBA Speaker's Bureau staff supported your presentation of the event?

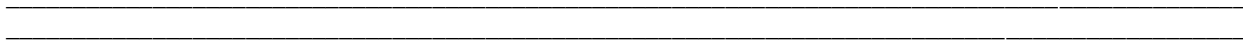
- Yes No

Why or why not?

How can the ISBA Speaker's Bureau improve the program format?

Additional Comments:

What went well? What didn't? What can be improved? Suggestions for future events or groups?



Illinois State Bar Association: Speaker's Bureau / Presenter's Post-Event Evaluation (page 2 of 2)