

Law Day

FAQs for First-Time Chairs

Congratulations! You've been given the opportunity to be county Law Day chairperson. If you are feeling a little overwhelmed with the responsibility or do not know where to begin, here is some basic information to help you get started.

Q: When is Law Day?

A: Law Day is always officially May 1; however, the day we observe Law Day in Oklahoma varies, although it is usually celebrated on or around May 1.

Q: What is Ask A Lawyer?

A: It is a statewide telephone and email hotline, where members of the public can get legal questions answered. Every county bar association is asked to recruit lawyers to volunteer to give free legal advice to people who call in. ***As county Law Day chairperson, you tell us what phone number your county wants to use.*** Lawyers are asked not to identify themselves – this is a community service project and not an opportunity to recruit new clients.

Q: When can our county give legal advice?

A: Tulsa and Oklahoma counties staff phones from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Other counties are asked to staff phones at least one hour. ***Please be sure to let the OBA Communications Department know when your phones will be staffed so that information will be included in the news release for your county.*** The news release will tell people they can talk to a local attorney between the hours you give us, or they can call and speak to an attorney in Oklahoma City or Tulsa.

Q: My county is small. We give free legal advice all the time, or we didn't get very many calls last year. Why should we participate in Ask A Lawyer?

A: The OBA would love to say all 77 Oklahoma counties are providing this community service – this sends out a positive message about lawyers. A few counties recruit one attorney who gives out their home phone as the Law Day number and takes any calls at home. Other small counties use a law firm phone number and provide volunteers with dinner during the call-in to make it fun. Work out with your volunteers what would be the best for your county and let us know how we can help.

Q: I'm new to Law Day and don't have a clue where to start.

A: Start with research. What events have been done in the past? Which have been successful and which ones have flopped? Find out why. Talk to last year's Law Day chairperson about their experience. Learn from their successes or mistakes. Read the OBA handouts on Law Day events and promotion ideas included in this packet. Don't wait too long to begin planning – start now.

Q: What will the OBA do to promote Law Day/Ask A Lawyer in my county?

A: The Law Day Committee works closely with the OBA's Communications Department that provides staff support to:

- Communicate Law Day contest information to as many Oklahoma school teachers as possible
- Submit news releases announcing your appointment as County Law Day chairperson, your county's phone number for Ask A Lawyer and any other events your county has planned
- Contact nonprofit organizations across the state to promote free legal advice
- Purchase ads in the *The Oklahoman* and *Tulsa World* to run the day of the Ask A Lawyer hotline event
- Promote via social media
- Run a story on the OBA's website

Q: What Law Day activities does the OBA sponsor?

A: Statewide contests – coloring contest for students in Pre-K and kindergarten and art and writing contest for students in 1st – 12th grade. We also produce content that will be educational and will have a longer lifespan on the OBA's YouTube channel and social media pages.

Q: What suggestions do you have for a first-time Law Day Chairperson?

A: Here are a few thoughts:

- It is more important to do one event well rather than host many mediocre events.
- Ask the county bar president to appoint a committee for you or recruit your own volunteers to help you.
- Involve your district's representative on the OBA Board of Governors.
- Involve as many courthouse personnel as possible (*i.e.*, court clerk's office, judge's clerks, county treasurer and assessor, sheriff).
- Don't be afraid to ask the local judiciary for suggestions or help. They often have ideas or information that would help their courts and be good public information.
- Brainstorm with volunteers to create a plan.

- Build on established activities but try to add something new and different or change an established event if interest seems to be dropping off.
- Promotion is critical to successful events.
- Make your Ask A Lawyer hotline event a social occasion with food and beverages. Make it enjoyable, as well as a public service.
- Contact your local newspaper and talk up Law Day – its importance, its history, the local schools and bar associations’ activities. Write a column or an editorial – if you need help, call! Submit it to your local paper. Call your local radio stations and see if they’ll have you as a guest on a morning show.
- If you have questions or need suggestions, call the OBA Law Day Committee chairperson or the OBA Communications Department.

Q: What does the OBA Law Day Committee expect of me?

A: Not too much – really:

- Submit your county’s Ask A Lawyer phone number to take advantage of the news releases and advertising that is done for you.
- Written summary of planned Law Day events to be featured on the OBA website.
- Remember to take photos of your events and send them to the OBA.

Contact for more information:

OBA Communications Department
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