

Frequently Asked Questions about Trial Bar Membership

What are the benefits of Trial Bar membership?

Admission to the Northern District of Illinois District Court's Trial Bar is a distinction of prestige and experience. The Trial Bar was created to raise the level of quality and professionalism at proceedings in the Northern District of Illinois. To appear as lead counsel at testimonial proceedings in the Northern District of Illinois, an attorney must be a member of the Court's Trial Bar.

Trial Bar members are invited to participate in training programs and networking events, including events led by the Court's judges. Trial Bar members also have access to the Trial Bar attorney work room/lounge in 2302A of the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse.

How do I become a member of the Trial Bar?

Trial Bar applicants must be sponsored by one current member of the Trial Bar who has known the applicant for at least one year. To qualify for the Trial Bar, attorneys must be a member in good standing of this Court's General Bar and provide evidence that they have the requisite trial experience. An applicant must provide documentation that they have earned four "qualifying units of credit" through participation in or the observation of trials. An applicant can also receive simulation credits for successful completion of a qualifying trial advocacy class.

[Trial Bar application instructions.](#)

[Trial Bar application.](#)

What responsibilities come with Trial Bar membership?

Among the responsibilities of Trial Bar attorneys is the duty to be available for assignment by the Court to represent and assist in the representation of those who cannot afford counsel. Once a Trial Bar member has been assigned and fulfilled the duty to provide pro bono representation, they will not be called upon again until each member of the Trial Bar has similarly their obligation.

Other responsibilities include the duty to maintain current contact information with the Clerk and the duty to be available to supervise attorneys in the process of obtaining observation units necessary to qualify for membership to the Trial Bar. Trial Bar members are also required [to renew their Trial Bar membership](#) every three years.

How do I renew my Trial Bar membership?

Trial Bar members are required [to renew their Trial Bar membership](#) every three years. The Clerk's Office may send email reminders about renewal. Attorneys can [renew their Trial Bar](#)

[membership](#) on the Court's website by searching their name, verifying contact information, and following the prompts to payment. If you need assistance completing your Trial Bar renewal, please contact attorney_questions_ilnd@ilnd.uscourts.gov or call 312 697 7422.

How do I withdraw my Trial Bar membership?

Attorneys who wish to withdraw their Trial Bar membership, may email attorney_questions_ilnd@ilnd.uscourts.gov

The email should include the attorney's name, bar number, intention to voluntarily withdraw from the Trial Bar, and confirm that the attorney has no pending cases in the Northern District of Illinois.

Withdrawing attorneys who have pending cases in the district, must first file an amended appearance in each open case to notify the Court of their new status with the Trial Bar. Once an amended appearance has been filed in all cases in which the attorney has an active appearance and copies are sent to attorney_questions_ilnd@ilnd.uscourts.gov, then the voluntary withdrawal from the Trial Bar will be processed.

If an attorney voluntarily withdraws and later wishes to rejoin the Trial Bar, the attorney must petition the Court's Executive and pay applicable admission fees.