

Benchmarks: Raising the Bar on Adult Civic Education

"Benchmarks: Raising the Bar on Civics Education" offers attorneys and judges activities they can use when they are invited to speak to adult civic and community groups. Increasing public awareness of how the government and courts work is a critical mission for The Florida Bar Constitutional Judiciary Committee. An informed public is the best defense of the rule of law and a fair and impartial judiciary. Benchmarks activities are available online, grouped in three categories:



- Constitution and the Bill of Rights
- Courts and the Judicial Branch
- And Special Topics

Attorneys who become trained in Benchmarks — by watching the webinar or attending a seminar - are eligible to earn CLE credits. Sign up with the Speakers Bureau to learn about presentation opportunities. To order free Constitution pamphlets for your presentation in Florida, call (850) 561-5834.

Benchmarks Activities www.floridabar.org/benchmarks

Constitution and the Bill of Rights

Activities in this category examine methods of amending Florida's Constitution and the limited role the courts have in that process; the method by which a judge would weigh a law whose constitutionality is being challenged; the rights included in the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution; and an exploration of the courts and the Constitution through a case study.

- What's Not in the Bill of Rights?
- Is it Unconstitutional? The Case of the Scarlet Tag
- Amending Florida's Constitution: The Role of the Courts
- Case Study: Is It Reasonable?
- Florida v. Jardines

Courts and the Judicial Branch

Benchmark activities in this category include explorations of the way labels are used to explain judicial decisions; how judges approach making their rulings and the factors they must consider; how judges are elected in Florida and how Florida's merit selection/retention process works; and the role of juries.

- How to Judge Judicial Candidates
- Judge for Yourself
- Sorting Out the Courts
- Six Ordinary People: The Role of Juries
- What the Law Means

Special Topics

Benchmark activities in this category include testing participants' basic knowledge about the structure and function of the government as well as an examination of voting practices historically and currently in the United States.

- Could You Pass the Test?
- Every 20 Years: The Florida Constitution Revision Commission
- Who Has the Right?

Benchmarks Toolkit

We're glad you want to make Benchmarks presentations! This Benchmarks Toolkit will help you get started! Tools included are:

- Why Benchmarks Matters
- Suggestions for groups to contact
- Benchmarks contact form for civics groups
- A Listing of Benchmarks activities
- Tips for making a good Benchmarks presentation
- An evaluation form to give to groups
- Information on how to apply for CLE credit



Request a Speaker or Become a Speaker

To request a speaker for your group, please fill out the online request form. Attorneys can become Benchmarks speakers by watching the online webinar (29 minutes) or by attending a Benchmarks training. When training is completed, sign up with The Florida Bar Speakers Bureau. Presenters can earn one ethics credit hour for each presentation for up to three presentations in a three-year reporting period. Form to apply for credit.

Other Education Resources

Activity for Constitution Day - September 17 and Law Day – May 1!

Special materials are developed annually for Constitution Day, September 17 and Law Day, May 1. Check The Florida Bar website for new Benchmarks presentations regularly. The presentations include handouts, speaker notes, and PowerPoint presentations – everything you will need for an effective and engaging session.



Informed Voters-Fair Judges Project

The Informed Voters-Fair Judges Project of the National Association of Women Judges focuses on increasing the knowledge of citizens regarding the importance of a fair and impartial judiciary. Florida Supreme Court Justice Barbara Pariente spearheaded efforts in Florida to increase public understanding of the role of judges in our constitutional democracy and the selection processes for judges at all levels. Learn more about the Informed Voters Project and download materials for presentations.



Constitution Pamphlet

Benchmarks speakers may request up to 50 copies of the Constitution Pamphlet, which also contains the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence. Send requests to pubinfo@floridabar.org or call (850) 561-5834.