

**United States District Court
Middle District of Florida
Bench Bar Fund**

FAQS FOR REQUESTING BENCH BAR FUNDS

The Bench Bar Fund Committee encourages requests to sponsor worthwhile events, programs, projects, and community outreach. These FAQs are intended to highlight important requirements to request and receive Bench Bar Funds. Before requesting Bench Bar Funds, the requestor should also review the Court's [Ninth Amended and Restated Guidelines and Plan for Administration of Non-Appropriated Funds](#) (Plan) and the [First Amended Parameters for Use of Bench Bar Funds](#) (Parameters) for more detailed guidance.

- **How do I submit a request for funding?**
Use this [form](#) to make a request for Bench Bar funding. Generally, the Bench Bar Fund Committee will not provide the funds needed to pay for an event in advance. Instead, you should request pre-approval of anticipated expenses and request reimbursement for approved expenditures after you have made payment.
- **What documentation should I include with my request?**
If you are requesting pre-approval of anticipated expenses, attach a proposed expense budget and any supporting documentation (e.g., vendor quotes, prices, sales tax estimates, shipping estimates, etc.). If you are requesting reimbursement, attach documentation (e.g., receipts, invoices, etc.) showing payment for each expense for which reimbursement is sought.
- **When should I submit the request for funding?**
Generally, funding requests should be made as early as possible and at least 60 days before the scheduled expenditure.
- **Is the event open to all members of the Middle District of Florida?**
Whenever feasible, attendance at Bench Bar funded events should be open to all members of the Bar of the Middle District, subject to physical capacity restrictions. Bench Bar funded events must not be limited to members of the host association. Ask to post event flyers to the Court's website to ensure sufficient notification to all members of the Bar of the Middle District.

- **Can my organization profit from the event?**
 Bench Bar funded programs must not be intended to generate a profit to the host association.
- **Is the event something traditionally paid for by membership dues?**
 Events sponsored by bar associations, which have traditionally been supported by membership dues, such as lunches or dinners honoring judges or other officials, member lunches or annual dinners generally will not qualify for Bench Bar funding.
- **Is the registration fee the same for all attendees?**
 A registration fee must be the same for all event attendees, e.g., members of the host association cannot be charged less than non-members.
- **Can I use Bench Bar funds to pay for alcohol?**
 Bench Bar Funds cannot be used for the purchase or service of alcoholic beverages.
- **When is a supplemental request required?**
 An approved request for funding is strictly limited to the amount specified. If additional funding is needed, a supplemental request must be submitted before the event or purchase. Consider requesting slightly more than your event quote in case of increased attendance.
- **Should our event flyer credit the Bench Bar Fund?**
 A bar association should acknowledge in some way that an event is being funded or partially funded by the lawyers and judges of the Middle District of Florida through the Court's Bench Bar Fund.
- **Do I include sales tax in the amount requested?**
 The Court's Consumer's Certificate of Exemption for Florida Sales and Use Tax does not apply to expenses paid with Bench Bar Funds. Applicable sales tax must be included in the total sum requested for reimbursement.