



MEMORANDUM

TO: DRI Young Lawyers Committee Members

FROM: Kenton Steele
David Vaughn
Nicholas Richardson

DATE: June 24, 2026

SUBJECT: 2026-2027 DRI Young Lawyers Leadership Applications

We are excited that you are interested in getting more involved in DRI's Young Lawyers Committee ("YLC")! Today, we open the application process for our 2026-2027 leadership programs, which include our Executive Committee, YLC Council, Steering Committee, and Substantive Law Liaisons. Applications are due **Friday, July 24, 2026**.

You are eligible to apply if: ¹ (1) you are a current member of DRI; (2) you are a member of the Young Lawyers Committee; and (3) you have been licensed to practice for ten (10) years or less.² You do not need to have prior experience with the YLC or with DRI in general. In fact, applying for the YLC Steering Committee or SLC Liaison Program is a fantastic way to start your DRI career!

As background, the YLC is one of DRI's 29 Substantive Law Committees ("SLCs"). Membership is comprised of DRI members who have been licensed to practice law for ten (10) years or less. The YLC Steering Committee is made up of an Executive Committee, YLC Council, and 20+ "subcommittees," each of which has at least one chair and one vice chair. Appointment to the YLC Steering Committee is an excellent way to establish yourself as a leader in your field, to establish relationships with lawyers and potential clients across the country, and to achieve a more fulfilling legal practice. Likewise, the SLC Liaison Program aims to increase collaboration between the SLCs and the YLCs and is a great fit for young lawyers who wish to engage with YLC programming, while growing their niche in a particular practice area.

¹ There are additional qualifications for specific positions. See below for more details.

² We also welcome applications from non-attorney vendors who have been in the industry for less than ten (10) years.

The chart below summarizes the attendance requirements of the two programs. Individuals will be responsible for their own travel and registration fees for the required events. We find that many of our members receive reimbursement from their firms for some or all the costs of attendance.

	Steering Committee	SLC Liaisons
<i>DRI Annual Meeting</i> October 21-23, 2026 Washington, D.C.	Attendance Required	Attendance Required
<i>Fly-In Meeting</i> TBA – est. Feb. or Mar. 2027 Chicago, Illinois	Attendance Required	Attendance Required
<i>Young Lawyers Seminar</i> June 16-18, 2027 Washington, DC	Attendance Required	Attendance Required.
<i>Relevant SLC Seminar</i> Dates and locations differ	N/A	Attendance Required
<i>Orientation & Quarterly Calls</i> Via Videoconference	Attendance Required	Attendance Required

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee leads the Young Lawyers Committee, including the YLC Council and Steering Committee. For 2026-2027, it will consist of the YLC Chair (David Vaughn), Vice Chair (Nicholas Richardson), and Second Vice Chair (TBD). The Executive Committee’s responsibilities are too numerous to list. However, they include liaising between the YLC and DRI leadership; delegating tasks to the YLC’s various subcommittees; attending the YL Seminar, Fly-In Meeting, Annual Meeting, and Leadership Conference (Wednesday morning of Annual Meeting); interacting with committee members to encourage membership and involvement in DRI; reporting to the DRI Board of Directors; and regularly contributing to DRI’s publications. Participation on the Executive Committee is a significant commitment, over three (3) years. If chosen for the Second Vice Chair position, you are expected to rise to the Vice Chair position and ultimately the Chair position. Your Chair term would end in October 2029.

In addition to the requirements above, candidates must have served on the YLC Steering Committee for three (3) years, including serving as a Chair of a subcommittee. Preference for this position will be given to applicants who have served as Chair of one of the following subcommittees: Annual Meeting, Fly-In Meeting, Marketing, Membership – Recruitment,³ Online Programming, Diversity & Inclusion, and Seminar Planning.

³ Note that Membership – Engagement is not included in this grouping.

Those who are interested should feel free to contact any current member of the Executive Committee (Kenton Steele, Current Committee Chair – ksteele@reminger.com, David Vaughn, Current Committee Vice Chair – dvaughn@bakersterchi.com , or, Nicholas Richardson, Current Committee Second Vice Chair – nrichardson@smsm.com) with questions.

The Executive Committee application can be found here: [Executive Committee Application 2027 – Fill out form.](#)

YLC Council

In 2022, the YLC created the “YLC Council,” comprised of veteran members of the Steering Committee, currently serving as a Chair of certain subcommittees. The Council meets quarterly with the Executive Committee to gain insight into the overall operations of the YLC, to provide feedback to the Executive Committee on YLC Initiatives, and to ensure continuity between the activities of their subcommittees. This year, the Council will include the chair of the following subcommittees: Annual Meeting, Diversity & Inclusion, Fly-In, Marketing, Membership – Recruitment, Membership - Engagement, Online Programming, Publications, and Seminar Planning. There is no separate application for the YLC Council.

YLC Steering Committee

If appointed to the Young Lawyers Steering Committee, you pledge to:

- Serve a full one-year term from October 2026 through October 2027.⁴
- Actively contribute to your appointed subcommittee.
- Attend Steering Committee calls once per quarter.
- Participate in efforts to market the YL Seminar (TBA – est. mid-June 2027).
- Promote membership in the DRI YLC to your young lawyer colleagues.

It is also expected that you will attend the following events:

- 2026 Annual Meeting: October 21-23, 2026 (Washington, D.C.)
- 2027 Young Lawyers Fly-in Meeting: est. February or March 2027 (Chicago, Illinois)
- 2027 Young Lawyers Seminar: June 16-18, 2027 (Washington, D.C.)
- 2027 Annual Meeting: October 13-15, 2027 (Las Vegas, NV)

We understand that other commitments arise (i.e., trial, parental leave, job changes, etc.), so certain absences are excused. We typically require Steering Committee members to register whether they will attend the meetings identified above, or if they will not attend a meeting for one of the excused reasons.

Steering Committee applicants can find the application here: [Steering Committee Application 2027 – Fill out form.](#)

⁴ If appointed to the Executive Committee or the Seminar Planning Committee, you are expected to serve a **three-year term** from October 2026 through October 2029.

Subcommittees

A description of each YL Subcommittee is below. While we believe these summaries are accurate, there may be additional tasks or programs identified throughout the year. We may also receive direction from DRI leadership or staff, resulting in the cancellation of certain programs or activities identified below. If a subcommittee is denoted with a “(YLC),” the chair(s) of that subcommittee will serve on the YLC Council.

Annual Meeting (YLC)

- Plans the following events held at the 2026 DRI Annual Meeting (est. mid-October 2027)
 - CLE Session on issue(s) specific to Young Lawyers
 - YLC Business Meeting
 - YLC Committee Dinner (typically Wednesday night)
 - Informal networking or social events.
- Marketing efforts for the 2027 DRI Annual Meeting, including publication and social media efforts, as requested by DRI’s Annual Meeting Committee.
- Guide Young Lawyer attendees at the Annual Meeting, sending daily email updates for scheduling and events.
- The Chair of this committee is a member of the DRI Annual Meeting Committee and will participate in that committee’s calls.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Summer 2027 – planning structured sessions
 - Fall 2027 – dinner planning and marketing effort

Center for Law and Public Policy

- Assists The Center for Law and Public Policy on various tasks The Center may assign from time to time.
- Market and solicit young lawyer participation in The Center publications and research initiatives.
- **Work Concentration**
 - Year-round – varies depending on tasks and articles.

Corporate Counsel Development

- Runs the “Fast Pitch” program during the YL Seminar.
- Recruits in-house counsel to participate in the “Fast Pitch” program and pairs YL participants to local in-house counsel.
- Act as point-of-contact for in-house counsel that participate in the “Fast Pitch” program.
- Assist in seminar marketing efforts.
- Contribute articles regarding business development to DRI publications.
- Historically, this subcommittee has included in-house and outside counsel.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Winter 2026 – recruiting in-house counsel coaches
 - Spring 2027 – marketing/registration/logistics related to “Fast Pitch” program.

Diversity & Inclusion (YLC)

The subcommittee will be led by a Chair or Co-Chair of Diversity & Inclusion who will serve on the YLC Council. The Chair will hold regular subcommittee-wide calls with the members of the Diversity & Inclusion subcommittee, and the Chair will report to the Executive Committee on the committee's activities. The position is expected to be filled by an individual who has been a member of the subcommittee.

YLCs who are interested in serving on Diversity & Inclusion will have the opportunity to become involved in the various activities of the subcommittee listed below and, following that engagement, to apply for Chair of Diversity & Inclusion the following year.

The Chair of the Diversity & Inclusion subcommittee will work with members of the subcommittee to complete the activities listed below. However, this list does not encompass all facets of the activities, programming, and projects this subcommittee may engage in:

Fly-In Meeting

- Work with Fly-In Meeting Subcommittee to plan and present an interactive education session at the 2027 Fly-In Meeting.
- Typically, the session is expected to be 30 minutes, but the length will be determined by the Executive Committee and the Fly-In Subcommittee.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate from January-March 2027.

Networking

- Coordinate networking activities for various affinity groups within the Young Lawyers Committee at various events. Examples include meetups for Parents in Practice, Lawyers of Color, LGBTQIA+ Lawyers, etc.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate for up to eight (8) weeks leading up to in-person meetings (March, June, October).

Online Programming

- Work with Online Programming Subcommittee and DRI staff to produce an online program or CLE session on a Diversity & Inclusion topic of interest to Young Lawyers.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate for up to eight (8) weeks prior to session.

Publications

- Provide and solicit content for DRI's publications on Diversity & Inclusion topics of interest to Young Lawyers.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Minimal - One (1) article per quarter.

DRI Cares (Philanthropic Activities)

- Plans and coordinates the following activities:
 - “Mini” philanthropic activity at the Fly-In Meeting (est. February or March 2027; Chicago, Illinois).
 - Group philanthropic activity at the Young Lawyers Seminar (est. mid-June 2027).
 - Philanthropic activity at the Annual Meeting in October 2027 (Location TBA).
- Liaison with the broader DRI Cares Committee.
- Note that DRI may enter into strategic partnerships that may impact the selection of the charitable organization that these efforts support.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Minimal for eight (8) weeks leading up to each in-person meeting.

DRI For Life (Wellness)

- Plans and coordinates the following activities:
 - “Wellness” activity for the Fly-In Meeting and the Young Lawyers Seminar. In the past, these activities have been cycle classes, yoga classes, hikes, and meditation sessions.
 - A “wellness challenge” for Young Lawyers in early 2027.
- Contribute wellness articles to DRI publications.
- From time-to-time, this subcommittee may be asked to work with DRI for Life Standing Committee to organize healthy lifestyle activities during DRI Annual Meeting and provide ideas for articles in DRI publications.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Minimal for eight (8) weeks leading up to each in-person meeting.

Fly-In Meeting (YLC)

- Plan the logistics and events for the YLC Fly-In Meeting (est. February or March 2027; Chicago, Illinois).
- Committee members **must** attend the Fly-In Meeting and will be responsible for coordination with DRI staff for meeting space, lunch, and planning/approving locations for dinner and social events the night before the meeting.
- Coordinate with the Executive Committee and DRI staff regarding programming and other details for the meeting.
- Communicating details of the event to Steering Committee members and encouraging and/or monitoring attendance.
- Committee is comprised of one Chair and one Vice Chair. To be eligible to serve as Vice Chair, you must have personally attended at least one Young Lawyers Fly-In Meeting.
- Two-year commitment.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate from November 2026 to February/March 2027.

Marketing (YLC)

- Plan, organize, and coordinate all marketing efforts for the DRI Young Lawyers Seminar (est. mid-June 2027) and any webinars produced by the YL Committee (2-3 per year).
- Attend marketing calls from March 2027-June 2027.
- Work with DRI's Marketing staff to execute planned marketing tactics, coordinating with other committees for marketing initiatives, executing a pre-seminar "phone tree" and reaching out to YLC members, organizing social media campaigns, and implementing other creative avenues for marketing the YL Seminar.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate from March 2026 to June 2026.

Membership – Recruitment (YLC)

- Identify, contact, and recruit young lawyers to DRI and the Young Lawyers Committee.
- Execute quarterly recruitment drives.
- Work with DRI to track recruitment.
- Author regular DRI Communities posts and articles in DRI publications.
- Send regular group and one-on-one emails to young lawyers.
- Work with Membership – Engagement to coordinate a first-time attendees' program for the YL Seminar.
- Work with DRI's Membership Committee to promote and execute monthly membership recruitment initiatives the organization develops.
- **Work Concentration:** Moderate year-round.

Membership – Engagement (YLC)

- Engage members in the Young Lawyers Committee by keeping them informed of important news, committee highlights, and opportunities to contribute.
- Send regular group and one-on-one emails to YLC members (including new members).
- Work with Membership – Recruitment to coordinate a first-time-attendees program for the YL Seminar.
- Ensures that all YLC members who want to become more involved with DRI have an avenue for doing so.
- **Work Concentration:** Moderate year-round.

Networking & Activities

- Coordinate and plan the following events:
 - Dine-arounds (reservations and sign-ups) for the YL Seminar.
 - Post-dine-around informal networking outing for the YL Seminar.
 - Small-group networking activities for the YL Seminar.
 - A structured networking activity during the Fly-In Meeting.
- **Work Concentration:** Moderate in February, May, and June 2027.

Online Communities

- Connect young lawyers by discussing different topics applicable to young lawyers, both substantively and personally, on the DRI Young Lawyers Communities page.
- Responsible for ensuring other YL subcommittees utilize the Communities page to promote their respective tasks, roles, and opportunities.
- **Work Concentration:** Minimal year-round.

Online Programming (YLC)

- Identify topics for, develop, and host online CLE and skill-based programming geared toward topics of interest for young lawyers, in conjunction with DRI staff.
- The speakers for these programs are typically young lawyers and often come from the subcommittee itself; yet, the programs are marketed to DRI's full membership, giving excellent exposure to those involved.
- **Work Concentration:** Moderate year-round.

Publications

The subcommittee will be led by a Chair who will hold regular subcommittee-wide calls with the various Publications subcommittees, below, and the Chair will report to the Executive Committee on those subcommittees' activities and publications. The Chair will prepare and maintain publications schedules for *The Brief Case* and *The Voice* to ensure the newsletters are published timely each month, and that articles are being contributed to "spotlight" features for *For The Defense*. The position is expected to be filled by a person who chaired a Publications subcommittee previously.

YLS who are interested in serving on Publications should apply to serve on one of the subcommittees below, and, following that engagement, to potentially apply for Chair the following year.

For The Defense

- Seeks out Young Lawyer authors and edits pieces for the Young Lawyers "Spotlight" sections of DRI's *For The Defense*. The features are typically scheduled for the May and September issues.
- Work with Social Media and Online Programming subcommittees to promote Young Lawyer authors.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate up to eight (8) weeks before "spotlight" features.

The Brief Case / The Voice

- Seek out Young Lawyer authors and edit pieces for several DRI periodic publications, including *The Brief Case* and *The Voice*.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate year-round.

SCOTUS Swearing-In

- Organize group of Young Lawyers to be admitted to practice at the Supreme Court of the United States.
- Work with DRI to establish an admittance date, prepare, and submit applications for the lawyers, and plan the trip to Washington, DC, for the swearing-in ceremony.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate up to eight (8) weeks before the swearing-in ceremony.

Seminar Planning (YLC)

- Responsible for planning the DRI Young Lawyers Seminar (June 16-18 in Washington, DC).
- Planning includes seeking out and confirming topics and speakers, and overseeing, coordinating, and managing the events at the seminar to be planned by the other subcommittees.
- After the seminar is planned, the subcommittee is actively involved in marketing and promoting the seminar.
- The subcommittee is led by a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Second Vice Chair.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Seminar planning is a year-round position, requiring a significant time commitment from July to November, and a moderate time commitment from December to June.
 - Three-year commitment. If chosen for the Second Vice Chair position, you are expected to rise to the Vice Chair position, and, ultimately, Chair. **Your Chair term would end in October 2029.**

SLC Liaison & Engagement

- Facilitate connections between Young Lawyers and DRI's other SLCs by coordinating and managing the Young Lawyer SLC Liaisons, holding regular sessions/calls with the Young Lawyer SLC Liaisons, and helping young lawyers transition involvement from the YLC to the other SLCs as they near their "experience out" years.
- Subcommittee members run the Liaison program. They are not liaisons themselves. Please apply using the Liaison application, below, if you desire to be Liaison.
- **Work Concentration:**
 - Moderate year-round.

Social Media

- YLC’s presence on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn.
- Reach DRI members with DRI-related information, build connections with members through interactive platforms, and promote DRI YLC events.
- Strive to present DRI YLs as thought leaders in the defense bar and continue to raise YLs presence on social media.
- ***Work Concentration:***
 - Minimal year-round.

“Meet Ups”

- Connect YLs who practice in the same geographic area to encourage informal group dinners or happy hours.
- Coordinate with planning happy hour type networking events or other types of informal group gatherings in advance of YL Seminar and Annual Meeting.
- Coordinate with state and local defense bar organizations to plan gatherings.
- Foster building lasting connections and strengthening the DRI YL community.
- ***Work Concentration:***
 - Minimal to moderate year-round.

Women in the Law

- Coordinate activities and programming for the “women”-identifying lawyers within DRI’s Young Lawyers Committee, including a meet-up at each in-person event.
- May be asked to present at the Fly-In Meeting.
- Occasionally contributes articles to DRI publications.
- ***Work Concentration:***
 - Moderate up to eight (8) weeks before each in-person meeting.

Liaison Program

This program aims to increase collaboration between DRI's Substantive Law Committees (SLCs) and its Young Lawyers Committee, through placement of a Liaison and Vice Liaison (collectively "Liaison") for each SLC. You may apply to serve on the Steering Committee or as a Liaison or both. Many of our Liaisons last year also served on the Steering Committee.

The Liaison Program application can be found here: [Liaison 2027 Application – Fill out form](#). If you are also applying for the Steering Committee, please complete a separate Steering Committee Application.

Liaison responsibilities include:

- Attending the following events:
 1. Liaison Orientation – [TBA]
 2. Young Lawyer Fly-In Meeting – est. February or March 2027 (Chicago, Illinois)
 3. Young Lawyer Seminar – June 16-18, 2027 (Washington, D.C.)
 4. SLC Seminar, if applicable.
 5. Calls with Liaisons and with SLC leadership, as appropriate.
- Providing quarterly email updates for your SLC's Young Lawyer membership, with assistance from SLC and YLC leadership
- Recruiting Young Lawyers to participate in the various publication, speaking, and leadership opportunities that arise in your SLC
- Assisting with Young Lawyer networking activities at the SLC seminar, if applicable.

Other Details:

1. Liaisons will be responsible for their own travel and registration fees for the required events.
2. Individuals may serve a maximum of one (1) year each as a Vice Liaison and Liaison.
3. Selections will be made by the Young Lawyers Executive Committee.
4. There is no requirement that Liaisons attend the DRI Annual Meeting.