The Arizona Supreme Court has enacted significant changes to the attorney discipline system, effective January 1, 2011. The changes include the establishment of the Attorney Discipline Probable Cause Committee and hearing panels; and utilization of volunteer settlement officers. The Court is seeking applications from attorneys and members of the public to serve as volunteer members of the Committee, hearing panels and as settlement officers.

**Attorney Discipline Probable Cause Committee**

The Committee will review recommendations by State Bar Counsel regarding charges of misconduct by attorneys and agreements for discipline by consent. The Committee may dismiss the allegations, order diversion or informal discipline, or authorize the filing of a formal complaint against the Respondent or a petition for transfer to disability inactive status. The Committee consists of 6 volunteer attorney members and 3 volunteer public members. Initially, the members will be appointed for staggered terms of one (1), two (2) or three (3) years. The Committee will meet on a set day of each month; additional meetings may be scheduled if necessary to process the caseload. The meetings will be held in Phoenix.

**Hearing Panels**

Each hearing panel will consist of the Presiding Disciplinary Judge, a volunteer attorney member and a volunteer public member, with the Presiding Disciplinary Judge serving as chair. The Chief Justice will appoint a pool of volunteer attorney and public members to serve on the hearing panels. A hearing panel will hold a hearing on the merits of a contested formal complaint and issue a written report containing findings of fact, conclusion of law and an order regarding discipline. The hearing panel may dismiss the matter or refer the matter to diversion, or impose informal or formal discipline, including disbarment. Decisions of the hearing panel are final, subject to the rights of the Respondent and the State Bar to appeal the matter to the Supreme Court. The hearing panels will also consider applications from attorneys for reinstatement to the practice of law.

The volunteer attorney members must have been an active or judicial member of the State Bar of Arizona for at least five years preceding appointment. The volunteer members will initially be appointed for staggered terms of either one (1) or two (2) years. To the extent possible, at least one of the volunteer members of each panel will represent the same geographical area as the residence of the Respondent. Hearings will be held in Phoenix, unless the Respondent requests that it be held in the county of residence of the Respondent.
Settlement Officers

Volunteer attorney members of the hearing panels may also serve as settlement officers. Settlement officers will conduct settlement conferences on formal complaint cases, for the purpose of facilitating settlement of the case.

Training Session

A training session for the appointed members of the committee and panels (including attorneys also serving as settlement officers) will be held the afternoon of Thursday, December 9, 2010 at the State Courts Building in Phoenix.

Questions

Questions regarding these volunteer opportunities may be directed to Nancy Swetnam, Director of the Certification and Licensing Division, Arizona Supreme Court; nswetnam@courts.az.gov or 602-452-3362.

Applications

Individuals interested in serving on the Committee, a hearing panel or as a settlement officer may submit an application using the attached form.