



## Administrative Office of the Courts

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### **New Mexico postpones bar exam in July because of ongoing public health emergency**

SANTA FE – The state Supreme Court today postponed the bar examination in July for law school graduates and attorneys seeking to practice in New Mexico, rescheduling it for September because of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Court [ordered](#) the establishment of a working group by the executive director of the Board of Bar Examiners to develop recommendations for how to conduct the exam in small groups to comply with social distancing requirements if those remain in place in September.

The working group also is to make a recommendation to the Court for a program that would allow bar exam applicants to temporarily practice law in New Mexico under the supervision of a licensed attorney, if the public health emergency required the cancellation of the bar exam in September.

“The Court understands that for recent law school graduates this short delay is disappointing. However, rescheduling the bar examination is a prudent precautionary measure to ensure the exam can be conducted safely with proper social distancing for all of those who participate,” said Chief Justice Judith K. Nakamura.

The Court anticipates the bar exam may be held Sept. 9 and 10, but the dates will be finalized later.

The bar exam typically is conducted twice a year – February and July -- with the testing spread over two days. The exam measures an applicant’s competency in the law, ranging from civil procedure and criminal law to contracts and constitutional law. Those seeking to practice in New Mexico also must take a one-day class covering topics specific to the state, including Indian law, community property, professionalism and ethics.

The Court directed the Board of Bar Examiners to provide for a live, online method for applicants to participate in the one-day seminar on New Mexico law. The two-day testing that produces a Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) score will continue to be in person. Nearly 400 examinees were expected for this year's July exam, which traditionally has been held at the Albuquerque Convention Center.

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