

Dear Member,

Here are the rules for preparing biographical materials for the CDRP website. Please note that the rules of Professional Responsibility that are binding on lawyers require all members to conform with certain requirements that might not otherwise apply to your profession.

1) Length. Most members have biographies of around 300 words. Your bio may be up to 500 words.

2) Current data. Your bio must be accurate and current. It must not be misleading in any way. If you are re-using an old write-up, please review it to determine if updates are required.

3) Consistent with ethics/advertising rules of your profession. Please review any ethics, privacy or advertising rules applicable to your profession and ensure that your bio conforms to them. Attorneys, please review Rules 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4.

4) Objective facts are permissible. Subjective claims are generally not.

a) Do not use language that compares yourself to others. Objective statements of training and experience are allowed.

Eg. Prohibited: "Mr. X is one of the most experienced collaborative law coaches in the D.C. area."

Eg. Acceptable: "Mr. X has served as a collaborative law coach in over fifty cases."

Eg. Prohibited: "Ms. X is one of the most successful and skilled family law lawyers in the D.C. area."

Eg. Acceptable: "Ms X has been named a as one of the top 600 D.C. lawyers in Washingtonian Magazine in the area of family law."

b) Subjective claims sound like advertising and are inappropriate. Please don't include any language describing collaborative law as "better" than other methods, "less expensive," or "producing a better result." Generally, subjective statements stated as facts are not permissible. Lawyers cannot participate in websites or advertising making subjective claims.

Eg. Prohibited: "Because collaborative law is the most effective way to reach settlement in divorces, and the least expensive, attorney. X solely dedicates himself to collaborative law cases."

Eg. Acceptable: "Mr. X dedicates himself to collaborative law cases exclusively, because he believes the process is successful and cost-effective for many couples."

4) Use of the terms "expert" and "specialist." In Maryland, lawyers cannot describe themselves in advertising as "experts," attorneys with "expertise," "specialists," "attorneys specializing in" or any variation of these concepts. Some mental health professionals are permitted by their own

professional rules to state that they are, for example, “child specialists.” Other professions, such as CPAs, may have no applicable rules. Generally, unless specifically allowed by your licensing group and profession, use facts rather than labels to suggest your competency.

Eg. Prohibited: “Mr. Y is an attorney who specializes in family law.”

Eg. Acceptable: “Mr. Y practices exclusively in the area of family law.”

Eg. Not desirable: “Ms. Z is a specialist in retirement planning and retirement valuation.”

Eg. Acceptable: “Ms. Z is a financial planner who works with individuals to prepare for retirement, and she has qualified as an expert witness in local courts for the valuation of retirement plan interests.” (Note-qualifying as an expert witness in a court of law is an objective fact, while claiming one is an expert is not.)

Eg. Not desirable: “Mr. Q has an expertise in working with children of divorce.”

Eg. Acceptable: “Mr. Q has treated children about divorce issues for three decades.”

5) **Permissible links.** Your listing will have a link to your official business website. No other links are allowed directly from the CDRP biographies. Of course, you may have links to other materials or sources on your own separate business websites.

* * *

Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that your biographical material on the CDRP website complies with the ethics requirements of your profession, these rules, and other applicable laws or guidelines. All bios and changes to bios will be reviewed by designated representatives of CDRP who may ask members to make changes in their bios to conform with these requirements. CDRP reserves the right not to post any language or information it deems to be inappropriate or inconsistent with these guidelines or with the goals of the organization.

* * *

I have read these guidelines and agree to be bound by them. The biographical information I am submitting with this form is current and consistent with these guidelines and with the applicable rules of my licensing profession.

Name

Date