

**Applications Now Available for Florida Bar Board Certification in Adoption Law: Legal Specialty Is First of Its Kind in The Nation**

Tallahassee - Applications are available on The Florida Bar Web site at [FloridaBar.org/certification](http://FloridaBar.org/certification) for Florida lawyers interested in adoption law board certification – the first legal specialty of its kind in the U.S. The first application filing deadline for adoption law board certification is July 31, 2010, and the exam is scheduled for March 2011.

Certified attorneys are the only Florida lawyers allowed to identify or advertise themselves as specialists or experts or to use “B.C.S.” to indicate board certified specialist. Board certification evaluates attorneys’ special knowledge, skills and proficiency in various areas of law and professionalism and ethics in practice.

Adoption law certification is for lawyers who deal with complexities and legalities – both prior to and after placement of a child for adoption – in interstate and intrastate adoption placements and civil controversies arising from termination of biological parents’ parental rights.

Adoption law board certification applicants must:

- have at least five years of law practice, of which at least 50 percent has been spent in active participation in adoption law.
- demonstrate substantial experience in adoption law, including substantial involvement in at least 50 adoption placements or 15 contested adoption proceedings or appeals during the five-year period immediately preceding application.
- undergo peer review by attorneys and judges.
- complete 30 credit hours of approved continuing legal education in adoption law during the three-year period immediately preceding the date of application.
- pass a rigorous examination.

A lawyer who is a member in good standing of The Florida Bar and who meets the standards prescribed by the state's Supreme Court may become board certified in one or more of 24 certification fields. Only 4,300 of Florida's 87,000 lawyers are board certified. Certification is the highest level of evaluation by The Florida Bar of the competency and experience of attorneys in areas of law approved for certification by the Supreme Court of Florida. Florida offers the greatest number of state-approved certification areas in the nation.

Standards, certification committee members and staff contacts for adoption law are available at [FloridaBar.org/certification](http://FloridaBar.org/certification). Please contact The Florida Bar's Legal Specialization & Education Department at (850) 561-5842 or Adoption Law Certification Committee Chair Michael A. Shorstein at (904) 348-6400, [mshorstein@shorsteinkelly.com](mailto:mshorstein@shorsteinkelly.com), for more information.

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