

# Benchmarks: Raising the Bar on Adult Civics Education

"**Benchmarks: Raising the Bar on Civics Education**" offers attorneys and judges activities they can use when they are invited to speak to adult civic and community groups. Increasing public awareness of how the government and courts work is a critical mission for The Florida Bar. An informed public is the best defense of the rule of law and a fair and impartial judiciary. Benchmarks activities are available online, grouped in three categories:



- [Constitution and the Bill of Rights](#)
- [Courts and the Judicial Branch](#)
- [And Special Topics](#)

Attorneys who become trained in Benchmarks — by watching the [webinar](#) or attending a seminar — are eligible to earn CLE credits. Sign up with the [Speakers Bureau](#) to learn about presentation opportunities. To order free Constitution pamphlets for your presentation in Florida, call (850) 561-5834.

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## Activity for Constitution Day Sept. 17!

Just in time for Constitution Day, Sept. 17, Benchmarks presents a new activity: [Citizenship, Constitution & Courts: Rights of the Accused](#). This activity celebrates the 228th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution and Citizenship Day by examining the U.S. Constitution and the rights the Constitution protects. It is a great activity for Benchmarks speakers invited to give presentations for Constitution Day.



## Informed Voters-Fair Judges Project

The [Informed Voters-Fair Judges Project of the National Association of Women Judges](#)  focuses on increasing the knowledge of citizens regarding the importance of a fair and impartial judiciary. Florida Supreme Court Justice Barbara Pariente serves as state



coordinating committee co-chairperson for the initiative. Learn [more about the Informed Voters Project and download materials for presentations.](#)

### **Constitution Pamphlet**

Benchmarks speakers may request up to 50 copies of the [Constitution Pamphlet](#), which also contains the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence. Send requests to [pubinfo@floridabar.org](mailto:pubinfo@floridabar.org) or call (850) 561-5834.

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### **Benchmark Activities:**

#### **Benchmarks Toolkit**

We're glad you want to make Benchmarks presentations! This Benchmarks Toolkit will help you get started! Tools included are:

- [Why Benchmarks Matters](#) 
- [Suggestions for groups to contact](#) 
- [Benchmarks contact form for civics groups](#) 
- [A Listing of Benchmarks activities](#) 
- [Tips for making a good Benchmarks presentation](#) 
- [An evaluation form to give to groups](#) 
- [Information on how to apply for CLE credit](#) 



### **Constitution and the Bill of Rights**

Activities in this category examine methods of amending Florida's Constitution and the limited role the courts have in that process; the method by which a judge would weigh a law whose constitutionality is being challenged; the rights included in the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution; and an exploration of the courts and the Constitution through a case study.

- [What's Not in the Bill of Rights?](#)
  - [Is it Unconstitutional? The Case of the Scarlet Tag](#)  [Amending Florida's Constitution: The Role of the Courts](#)
  - [Case Study: Is It Reasonable?](#)
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## **Courts and the Judicial Branch**

Benchmark activities in this category include explorations of the way labels are used to explain judicial decisions; how judges approach making their rulings and the factors they must consider; how judges are elected in Florida and how Florida's merit selection/retention process works; and the role of juries.

- **[Beyond Labels: Exploring the Meaning of Judicial Independence](#)**
  - **[How to Judge Judicial Candidates](#)**
  - **[Judge for Yourself](#)**
  - **[The Role of Juries](#)**
  - **[What the Law Means](#)**
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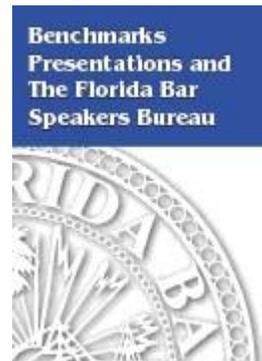
## **Special Topics**

Benchmark activities in this category include testing participants' basic knowledge about the structure and function of the government as well as an examination of voting practices historically and currently in the United States.

- **[Could You Pass the Test?](#)**
  - **[Who Has the Right?](#)**
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## **Request a Speaker or Become a Speaker**

To request a speaker for your group, please fill out the [online request form](#). Attorneys can become Benchmarks speakers by watching the [online webinar](#) (29 minutes) or by attending a Benchmarks training. When training is completed, sign up with [The Florida Bar Speakers Bureau](#). Presenters can earn one ethics credit hour for each presentation for up to three presentations in a three-year reporting period. [Form to apply for credit.](#) 



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## **Evaluation of Presentation**

Thank you for participating in a Benchmarks seminar. Please fill out the [evaluation form](#) and give it to the seminar coordinator or email to [staff@flrea.org](mailto:staff@flrea.org).