



National Association for Law Placement

Diversity Best Practices Guide

2020 Edition

Download this guide at
www.nalp.org/diversitybestpracticesguide

LAW FIRMS

Leadership

There are some universal tenets that have proved essential to a successful strategy for enhancing and embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal industry. First, there must be a strong demonstrated commitment from leadership. Second, diversity, equity, and inclusion must be defined as core values of the organization and woven into all. Finally, specific goals must be identified, and metrics must be utilized to ensure accountability and progress. Effective and innovative leadership is critical on all of these fronts.

Commitment from Leadership

Law firms that have demonstrated progress on the diversity, equity, and inclusion landscape have, without fail, credited strong firm leaders with their success. This is in large part due to their identification of diversity as a top priority of the firm and their commitment of financial, operational, and human resources to diversity.

Communication

- Identify diversity and inclusion as one of the firm's key strategic initiatives or core values.
- Formalize a diversity and inclusion plan with measurable action steps; define leadership and management roles in the plan; incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into the firm's strategic plan and business model.
- Communicate the importance the firm places on diversity, equity, and inclusion internally and externally, including the firm's goals, programs, and progress.
- Utilize firm-wide e-mails to discuss the firm's diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities and plan; distribute the firm's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic statement and plan.
- Include diversity, equity, and inclusion on the agenda for meaningful discussion at firm retreats and strategic planning sessions.
- Provide information about the firm's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion on the firm's public website and intranet webpages, in its recruiting materials, and in client communications.

Resources

- Retain a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant to conduct a firm cultural assessment and examine how the firm can enhance inclusiveness and improve the recruitment, retention, development, and advancement of diverse lawyers.
- Hire a full-time diversity, equity, and inclusion professional to serve on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, facilitate the implementation of the firm's initiatives in these areas, serve as a development resource for diverse lawyers, and assess whether minority, first generation, female, LGBTQIA, and associates with disabilities have access to opportunities and are working on matters for clients with the most sought-after work.

Involvement of Leadership in Day-to-Day Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Legal employers making successful strides on the diversity, equity, and inclusion front realize that firm leaders must do more than just “talk the talk” about the firm’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. They need to “walk the walk” as well, actively participating in the day-to-day journey and leading by example.

- Include the firm’s Managing Partner and/or Executive Committee members on the firm’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.
- Schedule periodic face-to-face meetings between firm leaders and diverse lawyers and staff to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, concerns, and successes.
- Actively engage firm leaders in internal minority lawyer, first generation lawyer, women lawyer, LGBTQIA lawyer, and lawyers with disabilities business development meetings and programs.
- Encourage firm leaders to participate in diverse bar associations and other community organizations that foster and enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Visibly and vocally support firm mentoring programs and lead by exemplary participation.

Many law firms and law schools have created an affinity group for First-Generation students and lawyers (FGP), recognizing the unique issues and needs these professionals face when beginning their career. Latham & Watkins started its FGP affinity group last year and took a broad approach to membership.

At **Latham**, FGP has a three-prong definition:

- First in family to graduate from college
- First in family to graduate from professional school or enter a professional career
- From a low-income or working-class background

Representation of Diverse Lawyers at All Leadership Levels

The diversity, equity, and inclusion landscape can be improved by integrating minorities, women, and lawyers with disabilities into leadership positions. Diverse associates convey this message during the hiring and exit interview processes, explaining that it is very difficult to integrate and believe that success is not possible if no one at the leadership level seems to share your diverse traits.

- Appoint diverse lawyers to serve on the firm’s Executive Committee, Management Committee, Hiring Committee, Partner Compensation Committee, and Associate Evaluation Committee.
- Appoint diverse partners to serve as Chairs of offices and practice groups.
- Ensure that minority, first generation, female, LGBTQIA, and partners with disabilities fill major client service roles and meaningfully participate on client service teams.

Leadership Training

Many legal employers have recognized the importance of providing additional training opportunities for firm leaders charged with implementing diversity and inclusion goals and initiatives. Improving individual leadership competencies necessarily contributes to a more inclusive and rewarding work environment.

- Provide diversity, equity, and inclusion training to attorneys and staff to strengthen diversity and inclusion awareness and communication skills. Such training should include, but not be limited to, implicit bias, gender pronoun usage, and recognizing and leveraging privilege to further diversity and inclusion goals.
- Offer executive coaching services on management, mentoring, and supervision skills.
- Encourage participation at national diversity and inclusion conferences, both within the legal industry and in multi-industry contexts.

Accountability of Leaders

As is true with all strategic goals and initiatives, it is essential to hold firm leaders accountable for progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Firm management should stay actively engaged in reviewing progress on the diversity, equity, and inclusion front, and in rewarding diversity, equity, and inclusion enhancement contributions.

- Monitor progress made on diversity, equity, and inclusion goals by utilizing metrics, soliciting feedback from the firm's internal affinity groups, and maintaining and actively monitoring diversity and inclusion hiring and attrition statistics.
- Include and track diversity, equity, and inclusion-related contributions in the tally of "firm commitment" or "firm administration" hours for statistical review purposes.
- Hold practice group leaders accountable for setting diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and engaging in enhancement efforts.
- Incorporate hours recorded for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and individual diversity, equity, and inclusion enhancement efforts into evaluation and compensation determinations for firm leaders, including management and office/practice group leaders.
- Encourage firm leaders, including practice group leaders, office managing partners, committee chairs, etc. to set personal diversity, equity, and inclusion goals to adopt and implement within one year. Examples of "personal" diversity, equity, and inclusion goals include the following: committing to sponsor an associate different from them; hosting, organizing, or leading a diversity, equity, and inclusion program; seeking out partnership opportunity with a local affinity bar association.
- Establish transparent processes that fairly and equitably distribute work and training opportunities among all associates.

One of **Foley and Lardner's** diversity initiatives is a work allocation system:

"The program is based on the recognition that diverse lawyers and the firm as a whole benefit when premier assignment opportunities are actively and fairly distributed among all associates, ensuring the best fit between professional skills and career advancement opportunities."

Retention, Culture, and Inclusion

The twin goals of retention and creating a firm culture that genuinely values and reflects diversity, equity, and inclusion weave together as key components of any effective firm diversity, equity, and inclusion program that achieves inclusiveness. While many efforts impact both retention and culture, efforts on the retention front tend to cluster in the programmatic realm, while those on the cultural front tend to focus on internal and external communications. Interestingly, firms' retention efforts focus primarily on lawyers, while cultural efforts are directed more broadly to both lawyers and staff. For multi-office firms, although centralized programming is helpful in advancing specific programs and initiatives, tailoring efforts for improved retention and inclusion to individual offices is key. The participation and buy-in of local office populations is critical, as is ensuring that the programs and events are meaningfully geared to a particular office culture and its constituents. As demonstrated below, achievement of diversity and inclusion as reflected in a successfully inclusive culture requires a long-term visible commitment from the firm and its leaders.

Retention

- Analyze existing systems and policies for unintended and/or historic bias, including the firm's work allocation system, the process for inclusion at firm events, the internal training programs, and the committee appointment process.
- Require annual reports by practice area leaders on goals and efforts to diversify practice groups.
- Make firm leaders accountable for meeting diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, including achievement of goals as a factor in the compensation process.
- Encourage all firm members to participate in women's, LGBTQIA's, and minority bar associations and minority counsel programs. Sponsor memberships in these bar associations and fund participation at these events; support lawyers in leadership roles in professional organizations. Partner with affinity bar associations to identify and hire diverse lateral attorneys.
- Count diversity, equity, and inclusion-related activities toward "firm commitment" or other qualified billable hours.
- Institute anonymous upward reviews, with diversity, equity, and inclusion competence as a component.
- Provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities to ensure maximum productivity.
- Promote work/life balance through equity/non-equity partnership options, on-site day care and free emergency childcare, a sabbatical program, and part-time/flex-time options that maintain partnership eligibility.
- Sponsor minority attorney participation in professional development conferences, (see www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1266838); Minority Corporate Counsel Association's "Creating Pathways to Diversity Conference" (see www.mcca.com), or Corporate Counsel Women of Color's Career Strategies Conference of Law Firm Associates (see www.ccwomenofcolor.org).
- Develop and support internal diversity, equity, and inclusion networks/affinity groups for minority, LGBTQIA, first generation, women, and disabled attorneys; encourage different affinity groups within the same organization to collaborate on programmatic and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

- Institute reverse mentoring, whereby senior attorneys are paired with junior diverse attorneys to open channels of communication and potentially learn about the challenges these attorneys face.
- Periodically reevaluate practice area assignments and attorney choices to assess fit.
- Mandate and track equal access for diverse attorneys to quality work assignments, marketing efforts, formal and informal events, and clients.
- Conduct annual internal seminars, retreats, conferences, or similar programs for first generation, women and minority lawyers, including sessions and panels on business development and general networking skills, leadership development, presentation skills, billing practices, and other pertinent topics related to career and professional development. Such programming should be parallel to and/or otherwise supplement similar programming for all attorneys.
- Evaluate and remedy issues of accessibility in the office building, workspace, and parking facility.

Culture and Inclusion

- Create a diversity, equity, and inclusion vision statement embodying the firm's commitment and disseminate both internally and externally.
- Develop and implement a firm-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan and incorporate measurable benchmark goals.
- Develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee composed of a staff diversity and inclusion director, attorneys, and staff across all offices, with access to/participation from the Management Committee and key decision makers, to identify key internal issues and to propose solutions, events, and training.
- Provide annual diversity, equity, and inclusion training for all lawyers and staff, and management training for supervisors, including hiring attorneys, management, and practice area leaders. The annual training should include recognizing and acknowledging privilege and identifying ways those in a position of privilege can be allies, advocates, and supporters of diverse colleagues. Tailor content and materials to the firm and its culture.
- Send a welcome letter from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair to all entering attorneys (entry-level and lateral) highlighting the firm's valuing of diversity, equity, and inclusion and outlining the firm's goals and initiatives. The welcome letter should emphasize the responsibility that all attorneys have in creating an inclusive firm culture.
- Celebrate diverse cultures through firm-wide or office-wide events and recognition, including Asian Pacific Heritage Month, Black History Month, Gay Pride Month, Hispanic History Month, Women's History Month, National American Indian Heritage Month, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and International Pronouns Day, as well as other observations throughout the year that highlight multiculturalism and diversity and inclusion.
- Acknowledge or host firm celebrations for diversity, equity, and inclusion milestones and diverse religious holidays, for example: the anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education, the anniversary of the end of Apartheid, or Martin Luther King, Jr. Day — or host or sponsor an annual day of service event on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Kwanza, etc. (what works best for the firm culture and employee population). One example is to have information on the milestone or religious holiday in a newsletter or internal calendar/website.

- Sponsor local diversity bar association membership and events, as well as community outreach efforts.
- Survey lawyers and staff regarding outside activities and share information about connections with community minority organizations both internally and externally; promote and encourage such involvement.
- Co-sponsor local minority networking series with other area firms.
- Partner with diversity, equity, and inclusion directors of local bar associations with diversity and inclusion initiatives, such as the New York City Bar Association, Philadelphia Bar Association, Bar Association of San Francisco, and others.
- Develop a regularly distributed internal diversity and inclusion communication highlighting diversity and inclusion achievements, awards, reports on conference attendance, updates to firm policies, and reports from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee; include articles of interest and website links to diversity and inclusion organizations; specify avenues for active involvement by firm lawyers in diversity and inclusion enhancement efforts and acknowledgement of religious holidays and diversity and inclusion milestones.
- Build strong relationships and strategic alliances with external legal organizations (e.g., the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA); the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); the National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Bar Association; the National Association of Law Students with Disabilities (NALSD); women and minority bar associations, and local community outreach organizations committed to diversity and inclusion.
- Sponsor national affinity group organization events, including law students' and practitioners' conferences.
- Create a diversity, equity, and inclusion scholarship or internship program to attract diverse candidates.
- Develop a firm webpage focused solely on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Establish ongoing relationships with law school affinity groups and support activities, conferences, job fairs, and other events organized by the groups.
- Create law firm diversity, equity, and inclusion scholarships at partner law schools.
- Inaugurate an annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Day, including a celebration, speakers, and discussion groups.
- Provide domestic partner benefits and a salary gross-up to make whole associates who are taxed differently for those benefits.
- Include gender identity and gender expression in the firm's EEO statement; provide health insurance benefits related to transgender needs/status.
- Ensure that social invitations are inclusive by using wording that is inclusive of all. Provide public firm-wide support for diversity, equity, and inclusion. For example, be a signatory to the New York City Bar Association's statement of goals for law firms, or similar local strategic initiatives.
- Institute policies that enable prospective and current employees to identify their gender pronouns. These may include, but are not limited to, application forms, email signature blocks, business cards, and name badges. Firm partners should lead by example in identifying their gender pronouns in order to create an environment in which associates, and staff members feel comfortable identifying their own gender pronouns.
- Include diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and achievements in the firm's annual report.

- Develop goals to identify and utilize minority and women-owned businesses as firm vendors and co-counsel.
- Participate in or develop pipeline programs to introduce diverse high school, college, and law school students to private practice and the legal profession.
- Be cognizant and accommodating of employees from different faith communities. Where firm events are concerned, think about accommodations such as having non-alcoholic alternatives, providing employees with the ability to “opt-in” to meals that meet any dietary restrictions, and being mindful of any conflicting major religious holidays. With respect to the workplace, send around a general inquiry to see if there is a need to designate an appropriate room in the office for daily prayers — or where space is severely limited, allow employees the time to congregate in other locations. Also be aware of, and find effective ways to work around, practices that may limit an employee’s communication with others for a certain span of time (e.g., those who observe Shabbat need to leave the office before sunset on Fridays and may discontinue use of electronic devices until Saturday night). Post religious holidays on firm calendars where all will be aware of the dates.

Weil, Gotschal & Manges LLP launched the “Upstanders@Weil” initiative in 2015 to promote inclusion in the workplace, community, and at home by encouraging all attorneys and staff to serve as allies for diverse individuals. The Upstanders campaign expands on the “ally” concept within the LGBTQIA community to a broader spectrum of groups, including people of color, women, veterans, etc. To promote inclusion and encourage “allyship,” Weil published the Upstander guide, which builds upon four main components: (1) Listen Up: Learn, read, ask questions, and discuss — to step into the shoes of someone from a different demographic group; (2) Show Up: Attend, actively participate, and contribute to diversity programs; (3) Talk Up: Lift up careers by sponsoring, opening doors, making connections, and finding opportunities for colleagues of different backgrounds; and (4) Speak Up: Identify and interrupt bias and stereotyping, even if unconscious or subtle, whether in the moment or shortly after.

See www.weil.com/~media/diversity/upstander/2018/180424_upstander_action_guide_v1_no-link.pdf?la=en.

Perkins Coie prepares an annual diversity report “Diversity Driving Excellence”. The report highlights the initiatives – affinity groups, pipeline, advancement, etc. The 2014 report also included message from the managing partner and a diversity consultant. The final report is posted on the website and can be used as both a recruiting and business development tool. See www.perkinscoie.com/en/about-us/firm/diversity/index.html.

Professional Development

One of the critical components of a successful diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative is a multi-faceted and integrated professional development program. Successful programs must have flexibility, adequate resources, and accountability. Moreover, firms must demonstrate a solid commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion from the top down and actively integrate diversity concepts into the fabric of every facet and level of firm management.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training

The centerpiece of an effective professional development program that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion is the diversity and inclusion education or training program. The essential components to such a program are as follows.

Needs Assessment

In order to ensure that the content of a diversity, equity, and inclusion training program will be effective, the firm must conduct an assessment of its diversity and inclusion, history, culture, and any other applicable demographic data. The assessment should be focused on understanding the climate of the firm, successes, and areas for improvement. There are several effective methods of assessing the particular issues and concerns that must be addressed. These methods include focus groups; questionnaires; a review of documents, policies, complaints, and litigation history; and one-on-one interviews with partners, associates, and staff, including members of diverse groups.

Participation

The success of a diversity, equity, and inclusion training program is dependent on the level of participation from each and every member of the firm community — from senior partners to mail clerks. The firm should do everything in its power to make the training accessible and ensure 100% participation.

- Partners should be trained first to set the tone and lead by example for the entire firm.

Training sessions should be offered on at least an annual basis and should be integrated into new staff and lawyer orientations as well as annual associate conferences.

Sessions should be divided appropriately — partners with partners, associates with associates, and staff with staff. This allows trainers to tailor their material to the various levels of responsibility and address relevant issues of concern in a safe environment for all lawyers and staff.

Trainers

It is critical that firms carefully select trainers in order to ensure effective and engaging sessions. At a minimum, trainers must:

- Have experience with and knowledge of legal issues to avoid potential legal problems that can result from diversity, equity, and inclusion training.
- Understand employee relations and the particular problems that can arise from diversity and inclusion issues in a law firm.

- Have strong and engaging communication skills, as well as intercultural competency, and be able to communicate effectively with the full spectrum of employee classifications.
- It may be helpful if trainers also reflect the diversity, equity, and inclusion (or perhaps desired diversity, equity, and inclusion) of the firm.

Content

The content of the training program must be developed according to the results of the assessment and the specific needs and culture of the firm. It is essential to consider variations in state law as well as the individual “personalities” of each office when tailoring training to each individual location. While there will be variation in content based on the particular needs of the firm, diversity, and inclusion training — across all offices — should include:

- A discussion about the value the firm places on diversity and inclusion, including moral, legal, economic, policy, and ethical motivation.
- A broad and thorough definition of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- A frank and candid discussion and acknowledgment of privilege: i.e., the right or exemption from liability or duty granted as a special benefit or advantage; having unearned advantages or receiving the benefit of the doubt simply because of one’s group membership - and how those in a position of privilege can advocate and uplift diverse people.
- A discussion of cultural differences, stereotypes, and biases.
- An explanation of the types of harassment.
- A discussion on the specific responsibilities of managers (both lawyers and non-lawyers).
- Effective communication.

Methods

An engaging training program employs a variety of presentation methods including written material, video vignettes, discussion, and interactive case studies. In addition, each session must be prepared and presented according to the various levels of knowledge of each group. For example, a presentation to lawyers should assume a certain level of legal knowledge.

Other Educational Programs

- Offer more classes. An effective professional development program includes training on a variety of skills to ensure that all lawyers are able to succeed in the firm. Suggested courses include marketing, business development, persuasive writing, public speaking, client communications, community involvement, and, of course, traditional legal skills.
- Provide information about and sponsor external educational opportunities. In addition to solid internal programming, a firm must also provide sufficient opportunities for associates to learn and network outside the firm. A variety of opportunities exist for lawyers at all levels to join and actively participate in minority bar associations and their affinity-group-centric specialty sections, minority corporate counsel groups, and outside conferences. Active involvement and leadership in such organizations not only add to associates’ professional development but also can help lawyers acquire effective business development techniques.

- Conduct retreats. Several law firms have found it useful to hold annual retreats to bring diverse lawyers together from all offices, allowing women, minority, LGBTQIA, first generation, and attorneys with disabilities to network with one another, discuss experiences, and get involved in various diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion dialogues. Dialogues provide opportunities for small groups to discuss what diversity, equity, and inclusion means to them and what the firm can do to support it.
- Support affinity groups. Groups that are formed voluntarily or are organized by the firm can serve as support networks for diverse lawyers. They can meet formally to discuss issues within the firm, and informally for support and social activities. Affinity groups for attorneys of color, attorneys with disabilities, first generation attorneys, and LGBTQIA attorneys can also be excellent sources of ideas on recruiting and various aspects of firm management.
- Encourage affinity groups to host external speakers and programming regarding topics of interest to their affinity group members that are open to firm wide participation to encourage dialogue amongst members of the firm.
- Offer programming to address unique issues faced by women, minority, LGBTQIA, first-generation attorneys, and attorneys with disabilities such as financial literacy and navigating the firm.
- Nominate senior associates to participate in the LCLD Fellows program.
- Celebrate diverse cultural events. Host firm events to celebrate Black History Month (February), Women's History Month (March), Asian Pacific Heritage Month (May), Gay Pride Month (June), Hispanic History Month (September 15 - October 15), International Pronouns Day (October 16), National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October), and National American Indian Heritage Month (November).
- Provide firm awareness events about different religions and traditions that cover a wide range of topics (e.g., the meanings and origins of different attire and social practices, such as practices within some religious traditions of avoiding physical contact with a member of the opposite sex who is not a spouse).

Individual Career Development

As with any initiative, one size does not fit all. A new trend in professional development is for firms to employ a career development manager who works individually with associates to help them assess and guide their careers and skill development. Some firms have successfully drafted career development guidelines for each practice group. These guidelines are used by career development professionals to evaluate the progress of each associate and to monitor competency. Individual career development professionals can also review billing reports and work assignments to ensure fair and appropriate distribution of work to diverse lawyers. Additionally, considering contracting with external anonymous coaching professionals to assist attorneys who may have difficulty navigating and adjusting to firm culture.

Mentoring / Sponsorship

A mentoring/sponsorship program can be integral to the success of a diversity and inclusion program if it is conceived within the context of the firm's culture, if it is managed properly, and if pairings are made in a judicious manner. Elements of a successful mentor/sponsorship program include:

- Mentors / sponsors must be trained in appropriate techniques and rewarded for success.
- The parties must set mutual expectations and be provided specific and regular opportunities to meet.
- Mentors / sponsors must be assigned carefully. Consider the following:
 - Self-guided pairing - allows the employee to identify a senior leader as a mentor/sponsor.
 - Pairing diverse lawyers with other diverse lawyers.
 - Pairing each associate with both an associate and a partner to allow a variety of resources to address individual needs and goals.
 - Establishing a supplemental program during the third or fourth year to assist associates during this crucial period of career development.
 - Pairing members of the senior management team with diverse lawyers to allow information to flow between these two important groups.

Accountability

Even the best diversity, equity, and inclusion programs have little chance of success without mechanisms to ensure accountability and continuous evaluation of both the programs and the participants. The firm must manifest the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion by investing professionals with visible power through having them report to senior firm management. It is also beneficial to attach economic significance to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts — for example, tying some degree of partner compensation to success in meeting diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and allowing associates to count diversity, equity, and inclusion-related activities toward their billable hours requirement.

Faegre Baker Daniels offers a Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship, which in addition to a summer clerkship provides a mentor and a financial award to recipients (2019). See www.faegrebd.com/fellowship.

Weil Gotshal & Manges offers a mentoring / sponsorship program to all female attorneys at the firm. “Women@Weil embraces the talents and energy of women across Weil, focusing on mentoring, networking, recruiting, retention, advancement, pro bono initiatives, business development and outreach. Women@Weil is committed to helping the Firm’s women achieve their potential in their professional and personal lives and addressing the challenges they may encounter along the way.” (2019). See www.weil.com/about-weil/diversity-and-inclusion/women-weil.

Recruitment

Recruiting diverse legal talent is an obvious goal in any diversity, equity, and inclusion plan. To do so effectively, recruitment best practices should be multi-dimensional and incorporate a network inclusive of law schools, clients, internal and external affinity groups, women, minority, LGBTQIA, and other affinity bar associations, and city-wide law consortia.

Recruitment Practices Aimed at Law Schools

- Foster good working relationships with law school career services professionals.
- Participate in minority clerkship or fellowship programs.
- Challenge traditional assumptions of “success” by “bursting the pedigree bubble” and evaluate law student candidates based on factors other than class rank and US News law school standings.
- Meet with and support law student leaders and student affinity groups; host events sponsored by these groups.
- Participate in mentoring programs for diverse law students.
- Conduct résumé workshops.
- Participate in mock interview programs.
- Take part in career panel presentations.
- Host receptions for women, first generation, minority, LGBTQIA, and disabled law students.
- Host a reception for admitted students from a local law school with which the firm has strong ties.
- Advertise in law student association publications directed toward women, first generation, minorities, LGBTQIA, and disabled students.
- Add predominantly minority law schools to the firm’s recruitment program.
- Communicate the firm’s diversity and inclusion goals to deans, professors, career services professionals, and Diversity & Inclusion professionals; ask for assistance in identifying and referring promising women, first generation, minority, LGBTQIA, and disabled students.
- Communicate the firm’s commitment to accommodating students and practicing attorneys with disabilities.

The **University of Cincinnati College of Law**, in partnership with Cincinnati law firm, **Keating Muething & Klekamp**, developed a two-day competition where diverse law students step into the roles of associates and advise clients on real-world legal programs to demonstrate their skills before hiring partners and general counsel. The Law Student Diversity Case Competition aims to promote the hiring of diverse law students by showcasing a student's ability to solve and tackle client matters — precisely the type of work they will complete as summer associates and new associates — rather than relying on antiquated hiring models that primarily focus on grades and [culture] “fit interviews.” See www.law.com/2019/01/15/law-students-get-to-show-it-not-tell-it-in-firm-jobs-competition.

Internal Recruiting Efforts

- Support affinity groups in the firm. Ask for their ideas and support of recruitment efforts.
- Host dinners for minority attorneys and diverse law student recruits.
- Involve the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee in recruitment efforts, including direct follow-up communications from Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee members to minority recruits. Consider forming a special subcommittee or task force focusing on recruitment.
- Hire minority, first generation, LGBTQIA, and disabled law students to work part-time during the academic year in addition to participating in minority clerkship or fellowship programs, which typically take place in the summer.
- Enlist the firm's Hiring Partner to take an active role in diversity and inclusion recruitment.
- Educate interviewers on best practices for interviewing diverse candidates. Ensure that any firm training or interview practices include a discussion of questions that may reflect bias and impede effective evaluation of women, first generation, minority, LGBTQIA, and disabled candidates.
- Implement blind resume review to avoid implicit bias issues.
- Encourage interviewers to use a uniform set of behavioral interview questions to ensure uniformity and fairness throughout the interview process.
- Bolster the firm's marketing materials; create an additional recruitment brochure to emphasize the firm's commitment to diversity and inclusion, diversity and inclusion goals, and diversity and inclusion achievements.
- Utilize executive search firms that specialize in the placement of minority, first generation, LGBTQIA, or disabled lawyers for lateral hiring.
- Maintain contact with exceptional minority applicants who chose other employment.
- Set diversity and inclusion recruitment goals consistent with management's priorities.
- Sponsor a summer associate reception hosted by the firm's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.
- Host or participate in a minority law student job fair.
- Devote a section of the firm's website to diversity and inclusion issues and include substantive, specific information on firm initiatives.
- Work with clients in recruiting diverse lateral partners.

External Recruiting Efforts

- Contribute to nonprofit educational programs that introduce minority, first generation, LGBTQIA, and disabled youth to the legal profession.
- Fund minority law student scholarships for students attending area law schools.
- Advertise in minority professional publications and on minority professional association websites.
- Develop relationships with and seek opportunities to support disability-focused legal organizations at both the student and practicing attorney levels.
- Post lawyer positions online on diversity and inclusion organizations' websites such as the MCCA (Minority Corporate Counsel Association) and NALSWD (National Association of Law Students with Disabilities).
- Participate in LCLD Scholars 1L Diversity Hiring program, SEO Law pre-law internship program, or other regional or local diversity hiring programs.
- Hire law clerks who attained a clerkship through Just The Beginning Foundation.
- Form strategic alliances with local and national diversity and inclusion organizations to identify diverse candidates.
- Participate in minority and disabled student/attorney job fairs throughout the country.
- Take part in pipeline programs that encourage diverse high school, college, and law school students to consider a career in the private practice of law.
- Partner with others in your community who are reaching out to diverse elementary and high school students to improve their education and encourage them to consider legal careers.
- Collaborate with other area law firms to promote diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.
- Support affinity groups in the community.
- Participate in the ABA's National Conference for Minority Lawyers, which holds a forum for in-house counsel and private practice lawyers to discuss methods of increasing diversity and inclusion.
- Participate in the Minority Corporate Counsel Association's fall diversity conference and other MCCA events.
- Participate in NALP's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit and Annual Education Conference programming on diversity and inclusion issues.
- Participate in CLI's annual Legal Inclusiveness & Diversity Summit and Inclusiveness Institute.

Sidley established the Sidley Prelaw Scholars Program “aims to increase diversity in law schools and, eventually, in the legal profession by subsidizing the LSAT preparatory course and law school application expenses of diverse, high-performing college students who have difficulty paying the expenses associated with applying to law school.” In addition to the summer clerkship the program helps with the law school application process, courses, and instruction on the legal industry and how to succeed at law school and assists with building relationships in the legal community. See www.sidley.com/en/services/sidley-prelaw-scholars.