

The Connecticut Legal Community's Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Pledge

Each Signatory to this Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Pledge (the "Pledge") hereby reaffirms its ongoing commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within our own organizations and within the Connecticut legal community. We hereby declare that the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion is a core value of our organization. In making this declaration, we pledge to respect the diversity of all individuals who are a part of our organization and to create equitable and inclusive environments within our organizations. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, reflects our deep and full commitment to the principles of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all individuals that make up the fabric of our organization. All of our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts will be undertaken in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Diversity, as it is used in the Pledge, refers broadly to the representation of individuals of diverse identities, so that our organizations are reflective of the rich diversity of our society, the legal profession and law school graduating classes, and that of the clients that we serve. Diversity is an inclusive concept, embracing the wide range of identities, seen and unseen, that may be important to the individual, including but not limited to age, ancestry, background, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, familial or marital status, gender identity, gender expression, language, national origin, military or veteran status, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background.

Equity, as it is used in the Pledge, refers to the creation of a level playing field, and the provision of true equal opportunity to all members of our organization, regardless of identity and according to individual needs. Equity requires the evaluation, identification, and elimination of formal and informal barriers to equal opportunity and full participation for all. Our equity efforts center on our organizational systems, policies, culture, and processes, and the elimination of improper biases and barriers from these elements, towards the guarantee of fair and equal treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all members of our organization.

Inclusion, as it is used in the Pledge, refers broadly to the culture of embracing the diverse identities within our organization, at all levels. Our commitment is to meaningful inclusion, meaning that individuals of diverse identities are able to fully participate in the work and mission of our respective organizations, are appropriately included in the decision-making processes of the organization, experience a sense of belonging, feel respected and valued, contribute to the overall strength of our organization, and fully receive the just benefits and rewards of those contributions.

We recognize that we are stronger, more effective, and more capable of advancing our organizational mission and interests, and meeting the needs of our clients and other external constituencies if we embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion. We also affirm that creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive legal community will positively impact the fair and just application of the law and strengthen the public trust in the administration of justice. We further recognize that the collaboration of the signatories to this Pledge, through the identification, development, and implementation of best practices, common tools, and resources, will allow us to more effectively accomplish the goals of this Pledge.

To fully realize these goals, we therefore also pledge our commitment to fully participate in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan (the "Plan") described herein.

The Connecticut Legal Community's Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Plan

As a signatory to the Connecticut Legal Community Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ("DE&I") Pledge, we are committed to the strategic and consistent implementation of effective DE&I initiatives within our organizations, with accountability and in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Our participation in the Connecticut Legal Community Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan ("Plan"), described herein, is one way in which we will advance that commitment.

The Plan is intended to allow any Connecticut legal organization that employs attorneys to join and participate in this collaborative effort, according to that organization's ability and resources, and in a manner that suits the organization's needs. The Plan does not represent a finite initiative with a firm beginning and end, nor are the steps described below intended to be exhaustive or mandatory.

The efforts of the Signatories, and the collective implementation of the Pledge and the Plan, will continue to be supported by the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA), acting through its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Organizational participation in the Plan will consist of the following events, initiatives, and action steps:

Annual Assessment

Each year, in September, each Signatory organization will complete and return an Annual Assessment to the CBA DE&I Committee, providing aggregate diversity metrics, and describing the organization's DE&I efforts and initiatives in accordance with the Steps described below. The organization's annual assessment response shall be maintained confidentially by the CBA and shall only be reported out in the aggregate. The purpose of the Assessment is to ensure appropriate accountability, to inform and consider the efficacy of the organization's debiasing and DE&I efforts, and to allow the organization to better serve its people. An organization's failure to submit an Annual Assessment response for two continuous years shall result in the removal of that organization from Pledge Participation.

Annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit

Each year, in October, representatives of the Signatory organizations will gather for the Annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit. The Summit will feature opportunities for interactive learning and training, discussion and collaboration, and aggregate reporting on the diversity metrics and collective DE&I efforts of the Signatories during the previous year. Each organization shall ensure the representation of its organizational and diversity, equity, and inclusion leaders at the Summit each year.

Quarterly Meetings

In addition to the Summit, representatives of the Signatory organizations shall meet quarterly for training, discussion, updates, planning and implementation of collaborative projects such as the Future of the Legal Profession Scholars Program, and other topics relevant to the implementation of the Pledge and Plan.

Signatory Implementation of the Pledge and Plan

The original Pledge and Plan, in effect from 2016 through 2025, invited Signatory organizations to focus each year of their efforts on a different element of a successful DE&I program. By way of illustration, the first year of the original Plan focused on infrastructure building, the second year on hiring practices, the third on pipeline initiatives, etc. Broadly, the original Plan allowed a

Signatory organization to join the Pledge and Plan, and implement, over the course of multi-year participation, a comprehensive DE&I organizational program.

In this iteration, the Plan retains its focus on the implementation of DE&I best practices within each Signatory organization, tailored to that organization's size, needs, mission, and available resources. This revision of the Plan continues to anticipate and allow for Connecticut legal organizations to join at any stage of their own DE&I journey. The Plan is changed, however, to reorganize the various elements of a successful DE&I program into three "Steps," to reflect the implementation of a basic, intermediate, and advanced DE&I organizational programs.

Care has been exercised so that the three levels are not merely a reflection of financial resource allocation or the size of an organization. The three Steps are rather intended to reflect an organization's intentional and comprehensive implementation of DE&I initiatives, with attention to the efficacy and impact of those efforts, over the course of years. For this reason, the specific actions within each Step are not intended as an exhaustive or mandatory list. Instead, each Step is intended to provide guidance on how an organization may implement, grow, and maintain an effective DE&I program over time. Organizations will be assessed each year on their DE&I efforts and listed according to their Step designation on the CBA Pledge Signatories page.

Step One: Basic

An organization at Step One of its DE&I journey will demonstrate the implementation of the majority of the steps below:

- The organization has adopted a formal DE&I policy, and the policy is readily accessible to employees and stakeholders in a variety of means.
- The organization has formed and maintains a DE&I Committee.
- The organization's DE&I Committee meets regularly, is visible within the organization, maintains regular programming throughout the year, and is open for participation by interested attorneys and members of the organization.
- The organization promotes attorney employment opportunities broadly, including to diverse organizations, such as affinity bar associations or affinity law student organizations.
- The organization has provided some training within the past three years addressed to issues of DE&I, implicit bias, cultural competency, antidiscrimination and antiharassment, and similar topics.
- The organization engages in various forms of support for or participation in external DE&I initiatives and programs within the broader Connecticut legal community.

Step Two: Intermediate

An organization at Step Two of its DE&I journey will demonstrate its implementation of the majority of the action items in Step One, as well as some or all of the efforts described below:

- The organization's DE&I efforts and commitments are visible and promoted broadly internally and externally.
- The organization provides work time or billable hour credit recognition for its attorneys to participate in DE&I efforts.
- The organization has provided multiple trainings to its attorneys within the past three years addressed to issues of DE&I, implicit bias, cultural competency, antidiscrimination and antiharassment, and similar topics related to the legal workplace. Such trainings are mandatory and/or provided through an organized program of study.
- Attorney promotion and advancement criteria and processes are clear, transparent, and accessible to all.
- Training and professional development opportunities in necessary skills for promotion and advancement are made broadly available to interested attorneys as they grow within the organization.
- The organization participates, through individual and organizational participation, in lawful pipeline and mentorship programs designed to increase the diversity and inclusiveness of the legal profession.
- The organization utilizes hiring techniques designed to minimize the potential for improper biases, e.g., independent resume review by multiple screeners, diverse hiring committees with representation from different job categories, blind resume review, behavioral or skills-based interviewing, uniform evaluation systems, group interview feedback discussions, etc.
- The organization employs equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplace facilities, policies, and procedures. The organization reviews its facilities, policies, and procedures periodically for opportunities to improve accessibility, inclusiveness and equity.
- The organization surveys its members anonymously at least once every three years to obtain feedback on organizational culture, morale, the individual's sense of belonging and access to opportunity within the organization, and to improve equity and inclusion within the organization.
- The organization provides confidential, meaningful, safe, and effective opportunities for individuals to raise and address DE&I issues that might arise within the workplace. The organization engages in active follow-up to ensure the success of the process and prevent adverse side effects.
- The organization provides desirable work assignments in an open and equitable manner, ensuring that all attorneys have opportunities for challenging and rewarding work that will allow for the demonstration of skill and potential for growth and advancement.
- Informal growth and advancement opportunities are made broadly available within the organization.
- The organization ensures that all attorneys are able to participate equally in formal and informal sponsorship, mentorship and leadership development opportunities within the organization.

Step Three: Advanced

An organization at Step Three of its DE&I journey will demonstrate its implementation of a significant number of action items in Step One and Two, as well as some or all of the efforts described below:

- The organization incorporates DE&I directly into its mission advancement efforts, through its work, pro bono efforts, and other organizational programs.
- The organization demonstrates the retention and advancement of diverse attorneys within the organization over time.
- The organization maintains data (e.g., exit interviews, statistical information, informal discussions) regarding the retention and advancement of diverse attorneys within the organization or challenges to the same. Such information is collected and reported to appropriate leaders of the organization to inform organizational decisionmakers regarding challenges to retention and advancement and potential improvements.
- The organization maintains a dedicated professional position committed to the organization's DE&I efforts on a full or part time basis.
- The organization maintains a partner position or similar attorney leadership position committed to DE&I efforts within the organization.
- Attorneys are given the opportunity to work with many different mentors and supervisors early in their careers, to allow for the exploration of skills, interests, and future potential. Feedback upon the attorney's performance is solicited broadly from these individuals, so that reviewers and decisionmakers have the benefit of diverse and broad perspectives on the attorney.
- Attorneys who are starting their careers are given the opportunity to explore and demonstrate proficiency across many different necessary skillsets. Feedback and appropriate training and instruction are given early, directly, and in a positive and affirming manner, to allow for personal and professional growth. The attorney's feedback and professional interests are solicited regularly, and inform growth and development in a structured and open manner.
- The organization assesses its leadership for inclusive leadership traits and evaluates its leadership on the basis of the retention, growth, and success of attorneys under each leader's supervision and mentorship.
- The organization regularly conducts DE&I training and education for attorneys within the organization pursuant to a consistent education and training plan implemented over a course of years.
- Hiring decisionmakers attend periodic training on the recognition and elimination of improper biases from the hiring process and hiring best practices.
- Attorneys with supervisory and leadership responsibilities receive regular training on inclusive leadership skills, designed to equip the leader with the ability to work with attorneys of diverse backgrounds, develop attorney potential, and promote a healthy and productive working culture.
- Attorneys who return from parental, family, sick or other forms of leave are actively supported in their return to an appropriate level of work responsibility. Matters that were temporarily reassigned during that attorney's leave are reassigned as appropriate, or effort is made to ensure that comparable responsibility and opportunity is provided as appropriate.
- The organization encourages and supports participation in bar associations and professional organizations of the individual attorney's choice, including affinity bar associations and other professional organizations committed to advancing DE&I.
- The organization organizes and sponsors its own lawful mentorship and pipeline

initiatives, designed to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the legal profession.

- The organization's DE&I Committee leadership, DE&I partner, and/or DE&I professional is directly engaged in the executive decision-making of the organization.
- The organization maintains a fellowship, internship, or externship that incorporates DE&I efforts as part of a broader justice initiative (e.g., an access to justice fellowship committed to addressing a critical area of law that is affected by racial and ethnic disparities).

By signing below, our organization is committing to participate fully in the Connecticut Legal Community's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Pledge and Plan, in accordance with our organizational capacity and in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Organization: _____

By: _____ Date: _____

Name & Title: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Please upload completed forms online at www.ctbar.org/DEIPledgeSubmission