

Reviewing the Connecticut Bar Association Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

In March of 2015, the Connecticut Bar Association adopted its first Diversity and Inclusion Policy, approved unanimously by the CBA House of Delegates.¹ Later that year, the CBA adopted its first Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, to take concrete steps to implement the newly adopted Policy. Over the past eight years, that Strategic Plan has guided the CBA's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

During this time, the CBA has made significant progress in its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, with greater diversity of representation in all levels of leadership, important committees and task forces, and other organizational efforts. The CBA has maintained a dedicated director of diversity position within its staff, which has allowed for consistency and support for the CBA's varied diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. The CBA has produced robust diversity, equity, and inclusion programming and initiatives, including the Constance Baker Motley Speaker Series on Racial Inequality; the Connecticut Legal Community Diversity and Inclusion Pledge and Plan, with over 40 signatory organizations; and our CBA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit, which has been held annually for the past seven years. The CBA has also focused on ensuring diversity in the pipeline to our profession, with its Future of the Legal Profession Scholars Program, and its annual LAW Camp. You may review the CBA's various diversity and inclusion efforts and programs by visiting ctbar.org/diversity.

The CBA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Committee is currently undertaking a review of the 2015 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan to consider its effect over the past eight years and whether revisions are necessary as we look to the future of the CBA's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. As part of that process, the CBA DE&I Committee would welcome your comments and feedback on our current Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, which is reprinted below. Has the current plan been effective in advancing the CBA's Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Constitutional purpose "to promote diversity within the Bar and the Bench"?² Should it be revised and/or updated for the future? What changes may be necessary as the CBA continues to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Connecticut legal community? **Please review the CBA's current plan, consider the CBA's DE&I efforts and progress over the past eight years, and share your candid feedback to DEI@ctbar.org by the end of this bar year, on June 30.**

THE CBA STRATEGIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

This Plan sets forth numerous objectives and broad goals. In addition, certain implementation recommendations are set forth as specific actions the CBA will undertake in the immediate future.

II. ELEMENTS OF THE CBA DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

A. The President-Elect or the Vice President of the CBA shall serve as a chair of the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion for the purposes of implementing and ensuring compliance with this Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

B. Encourage wide dissemination of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan within the CBA, and make the Plan publicly available including:

1. Membership-wide dissemination of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan after adoption, with a letter from the CBA President, President-Elect, Vice President and CBA Executive Director.
2. Creation of a diversity page on the CBA website which will include the CBA's Diversity and Inclusion Policy, this Diversity and Inclusion Plan, the biennial Diversity Reports and other relevant information on the CBA's diversity and inclusion efforts.
3. Distribution of the CBA Diversity and Inclusion Plan and the URL for the Plan on the website to all new CBA members.
4. Make the CBA Diversity and Inclusion Plan reasonably accessible to members with disabilities or visual/language barriers.
5. Make reference to the CBA Diversity and Inclusion Plan in appropriate member solicitation materials.

C. Promote and track diversity within the CBA's leadership, including:

1. CBA officers (President, President-Elect, Vice President, Immediate Past President, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer).

2. House of Delegates.
3. Board of Governors.
4. All sections, committees, task forces, commissions, and institutes and the presidentially appointed leadership positions for these groups.
5. It is understood that implementation of this goal will be subject to the then-current provisions of the Constitution and applicable bylaws and rules of procedure, and that said governing documents may require modification to implement the provisions of this plan.

ACTION RECOMMENDATION 1

The CBA shall designate the Executive Director with the assistance of the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion to provide oversight of the implementation of this Diversity and Inclusion Plan. The Executive Director with the assistance of the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion will assess the current levels of diversity within the CBA and prepare a report as required by this Plan. After the initial assessment, a survey and assessment will be conducted every two years to gauge the increased diversity and inclusion within each entity (the biennial CBA Diversity Report).

D. Promote and track diversity and inclusion in the leadership nominating and leadership development processes throughout the CBA:

1. Encourage diversity and inclusion as an emphasis in all leadership nominating processes, including diversity among the nominating decision-makers.
2. Encourage diversity and inclusion as a factor in the presidential election process.
3. Encourage the CBA Nomination Committee, Sections and Committees, and other CBA entities to emphasize diversity and inclusion in leadership training and development programs.
4. Build diversity and inclusion-related sessions into committee and section conferences, leadership training efforts and the CBA Legal Conference.

ACTION RECOMMENDATION 2

The CBA shall review the composition of the House of Delegates and Board of Governors to ensure that the Diversity and Inclusion Policy is being executed.

E. Each section will adopt and submit to the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion specific diversity and inclusion plans that are consistent with the CBA Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

1. Require biennial review and updating of Section diversity and inclusion plans.
2. Recommend designation of Section diversity liaison or other Section leader with responsibility for ensuring implementation of Section diversity and inclusion plans and

to interact with the Executive Director and the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion.

3. Broad dissemination of CBA Section diversity and inclusion plans.

F. Promote diversity and inclusion in CBA membership

1. CBA marketing and membership solicitation materials should be inclusive and welcoming to diverse populations.
2. CBA entities are encouraged to engage in active marketing, recruitment and outreach efforts to organizations, legal communities, and law schools to promote diversity and inclusion.
3. The CBA will reasonably support affinity bar associations and other organizations dedicated to the promotion of diversity and inclusion in the Connecticut legal community.
4. The CBA will continue to explore additional membership campaigns and incentives designed to enhance and encourage a diverse and inclusive membership.

ACTION RECOMMENDATION 3

The CBA shall create an award or other form of recognition to honor on an annual basis the CBA Section demonstrating outstanding leadership in diversity and inclusion related membership, leadership initiatives, and other diversity and inclusion efforts.

G. Promote diversity and inclusion in continuing legal education and other programming, both live and virtual.

1. Encourage CBA entities to continue to offer and increase opportunities to improve diversity and inclusion among speakers, moderators, and attendees.
2. Ensure program content appeals to diverse communities, consistent with sponsoring CBA entities' subject matter specialties.
3. Encourage CBA entities to explore opportunities with affinity bars and other organizations that can contribute to diversity and inclusion.
4. Ensure that program venues are accessible to participants with disabilities, or visual/language barriers.
5. Encourage CBA entities to use program locations and venues, as well as social media, to enhance opportunities for participation by diverse lawyers and law students.

ACTION RECOMMENDATION 4

The CBA shall encourage all CBA Entities to increase opportunities for diverse attorneys to participate actively in programming.

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ACTION RECOMMENDATION 5

The CBA shall present at least one CLE program focused on diversity and inclusion at the Connecticut Legal Conference.

H. The CBA shall encourage diversity and inclusion in CBA publications (hard copy and electronic).

1. Implement strategic actions to increase diversity and inclusion in CBA members responsible for editorial policy and content of publications.
2. Ensure the inclusion of content of publications relating to the Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

I. The CBA shall encourage diversity and inclusion in CBA events (e.g. annual awards dinners, luncheons, receptions, etc.) including:

1. Diversity of planning and award nominations committees.
2. Diversity in speakers.
3. Diversity of award recipients.

J. Develop tracking and reporting of progress in diversity and inclusion efforts, including:

1. Encourage robust participation and tracking by CBA entities, using the resources and support provided by the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion and encourage greater promotion of the reporting process by CBA leadership and accountability by entities that require significant improvement in their diversity and inclusion efforts.
2. Provide widespread dissemination of a biennial CBA Diversity Report to CBA leadership and to all CBA entities and through posting on the CBA website.

K. Encourage CBA entities to develop and enhance mentoring of young lawyers and law students, and are designed to advance diversity and inclusion within these CBA entities.**II. PROMOTION OF THE CBA DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The CBA Diversity and Inclusion Plan accomplishments shall be promoted through various means, including the following:

- A. Develop and prominently post on the CBA website information about successful diversity and inclusion programs and activities.
- B. Contribute content to pertinent legal and diversity publications to showcase CBA diversity and inclusion accomplishments.

ACTION RECOMMENDATION 6

The CBA shall actively promote in all possible media, diversity and inclusion advancements.

Thank you for reviewing the CBA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. Please send your comments to DEI@ctbar.org by June 30, 2023 so that they may be timely reviewed and considered as the CBA DE&I Committee undertakes its review of the CBA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. Your involvement and input are crucial in this process, and we thank you for your thoughtful consideration. ■

NOTES

1 The CBA Diversity and Inclusion Policy, adopted unanimously by the House of Delegates on March 23, 2015, provides as follows:

The Connecticut Bar Association is committed to diversity in its membership, officers, staff, House of Delegates, Board of Governors, executive committee, sections and committees, and their respective leaders. Diversity is an inclusive concept encompassing gender, gender identity, race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, and disability.

We are a richer and more effective association because of diversity, as it increases our association's strengths, capabilities, and adaptability. Through increased diversity, our organization can more effectively address member and societal needs with the varied perspectives, experiences, knowledge, information, and understanding inherent in a diverse relationship.

2 CBA Constitution, Article II (Purpose).

Double Negative

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on real property ownership by nonresident aliens and supporting enactment of Connecticut legislation to repeal such restrictions; the article observed that as of its writing "Connecticut [was] one of only four States that still recognize[d] this ancient restriction").

7 See Constitutional Amendment 4 appearing on the 2002 New Mexico general election ballot, summarized at www.nmlegis.gov/Publications/New_Mexico_State_Government/Constitutional_Amendment/Constitutional_Amendments_2002.pdf (Last accessed April 18, 2023).

8 See, e.g., summary of Amendment 11 appearing on the 2018 Florida general election ballot contained at www.floridabar.org/the-florida-bar-journal/amendment-11-property-rights-removal-of-obsolete-provision-crimi-

[nal-statutes/](http://www.floridabar.org/the-florida-bar-journal-statutes/) (Last accessed April 18, 2023).

9 See E. Delcorto, Repeal of alien land law long overdue, some say, *Naples Daily News* (Oct. 24, 2008), copy available at <https://archive.naplesnews.com/news/politics/elections/repeal-of-alien-land-law-long-overdue-some-say-ep-401019129-344350812.html> (Last accessed April 18, 2023).

10 See D. Cave, "In Florida, An Initiative Intended to End Bias is Killed," *New York Times* (Nov. 5, 2008), copy available at www.nytimes.com/2008/11/06/us/06florida.html (Last accessed April 18, 2023).

11 The 2018 Florida proposal (known as Amendment 11) bundled the proposed alien land law repeal with amendments to remove an obsolete high-speed rail provision and to repeal a prohibition against legislative amendments to criminal statutes applying to prosecutions or punishments for crimes committed

before such amendments. See also *Detzner v. Anstead*, 256 So.3d 820 (Fla. 2018) (per curiam) (rejecting challenges to (*inter alia*) Amendment 11 and holding that the bundling of three unrelated proposals in Amendment 11 and the ballot language summarizing Amendment 11 did not cause Amendment 11 to be defective; the Florida Supreme Court therefore ordered Amendment 11 to appear on the November 2018 general election ballot). All three of these constitutional amendments were proposed by the Florida Constitution Revision Commission. (See n. 8 *supra*.) Ballotpedia scored the title and summary of Amendment 11 at grade levels 16 and 15, respectively. See [https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_11_Repeal_Prohibition_on_Aliens_Property_Ownership_Delete_Obsolete_Provision_on_High-Speed_Rail_and_Repeal_of_Criminal_Statutes%27_Effect_on_Prosecution_Amendment_\(2018\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_11_Repeal_Prohibition_on_Aliens_Property_Ownership_Delete_Obsolete_Provision_on_High-Speed_Rail_and_Repeal_of_Criminal_Statutes%27_Effect_on_Prosecution_Amendment_(2018)) (Last accessed April 18, 2023).