

HENNEPIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION POLICY  
STATEMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE HIRING, RETENTION,  
AND PROMOTION OF LAWYERS OF COLOR, WOMEN  
LAWYERS AND OTHER HISTORICALLY  
UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The number of lawyers of color, women lawyers and lawyers from other historically underrepresented groups, such as disabled lawyers and gay and lesbian lawyers ("Underrepresented Groups") practicing in law firms, corporate legal departments and government offices in the Twin Cities metropolitan area is a small percentage of the total number of lawyers so employed.

2. The population of Minnesota has become increasingly diverse. Statistics, based on the 1990 Census, from the Demographer's Office in Minnesota Planning indicate that the minority population (defined as African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic Origin, American Indian/Alaskan and Other Races) has increased by 72% between 1980 and 1990. Minority population growth is expected to account for a larger share of total population growth in the future. Between 1980 and 1990, the non-white population was approximately one-third of Minnesota's total population growth. Between the years 2010 and 2020, non-white population growth is projected to account for 80% of the state's total growth. The total proportion of Minnesota's population that is non-white is expected to rise from 6.3% in the year 1990 to about 15% in 2020. The percentage of gay and lesbian people in the general population is less easily measured, but some studies suggest that 10% of the population is lesbian or gay.

3. There has been increased enrollment of people of color and women in law schools. In the nineteen law schools from which Twin Cities legal employers most often recruit, the average percentage of law students of color is 26.8%; women law students make up 43.29%. \* The percentage of women in the three Minnesota Law School are: Hamline

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\*Source: "A Changing Population, The Next 30 Years", Martha McMurry & R. Thomas Gillaspay, State Demographer's Office, Minnesota Planning.

45.2%, University of Minnesota 42.1% and William Mitchell College of Law 45.6%. The percentage of racial/ethnic minorities (consisting of African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic origin, native American/Alaskan) in the three Minnesota Law Schools are: University of Minnesota 14.9%, William Mitchell College of Law 10.5% and Hamline 8.8%. Disabled persons and gay and lesbian individuals appear to be attending law schools in greater numbers, although statistical information is difficult to obtain. This increase in enrollment affords an opportunity for increasing the representation of lawyers of color, women lawyers and other Underrepresented Groups in the Twin Cities and Minnesota law firms, corporate legal departments and government offices.

4. In a profession that prizes its leadership in the fight for equal opportunity under the law, further progress must be made to achieve greater representation from historically Underrepresented Groups at all levels of legal employment.

5. In 1993, the HCBA promulgated and adopted its Glass Ceiling Task Force Report, which documented the lack of equality of opportunity for lawyers of color and women lawyers. It is one of several recent reports which have studied and documented the lack of opportunity in the Twin Cities legal community. Other organizations, including the Minnesota State Bar Association, Minnesota Women Lawyers and the Minnesota Minority Lawyers Association have adopted or approved the report and its recommendations.

With the adoption of the Glass Ceiling Task Force Report, the HCBA Diversity Committee was established to implement its numerous recommendations for improving the opportunities for lawyers from Underrepresented Groups. One of its specific recommendations was to the establishment of Goals and Timetables for hiring and retention by legal employers.

## II. POLICY STATEMENT

**We will work diligently to achieve the participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers and lawyers from other Underrepresented Groups at all professional levels within our organization.**

## III. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

We will undertake the following in our Recruitment Process:

1. Review, consider and adopt as appropriate the Recommendations for Legal Employers contained in the 1993 HCBA Glass Ceiling Task Force Report.

2. Continue to use hiring criteria for all lawyers that go beyond consideration of academic grades to include communication skills, integrity, resourcefulness, and other indications of potential for success (e.g. performance in clerkship programs).

3. Increase pool of candidates interviewed at law schools from historically Underrepresented Groups, by identifying candidates through law school faculty and administrators, law student/alumni organizations, recruitment conferences, receptions, and participation in clerkship programs.

4. With regard to lateral hires, increasing the pool of candidates from historically Underrepresented Groups by:

- (a) Requesting referrals from placement officers and faculty members for practicing attorneys.
  - (b) Requesting special bar associations such as MMLA, MWL, Minnesota Hispanic Bar, Minnesota American Indian Bar, National Asian Pacific American Bar-MN Chapter, and GLBA-MN chapter to refer or notify prospective candidates, and to seek referrals from women partners and partners of color in the community.
  - (c) Requesting professional recruiters to refer women, candidates of color and candidates from other Underrepresented Groups.
5. Communicating to all our employees and members the organization's commitment to this Policy Statement.

#### IV. RETENTION AND PROMOTION

We will undertake the following with respect to Retention and Promotion:

1. Review, consider and adopt as appropriate the recommendations for legal employers set forth in the Glass Ceiling Task Force Recommendations.

2. Exercise diligence and sensitivity to ensure that opportunities for lawyers of Underrepresented Groups are equivalent to those provided to majority lawyers in the assignment of work and business development.

3. Enhance programs for retention of all lawyers through the provision of interesting work, training, feedback, mentoring, client contact, and pro bono activities.

4. Exercise diligence and sensitivity to create a hospitable work environment for all lawyers by:

- (a) Ensuring that women lawyers, lawyers of color and other Underrepresented Groups receive equal training, mentoring, feedback and opportunity to perform significant work for important clients.
  - (b) Including women lawyers, lawyers of color and other Underrepresented Groups in work related social activities with other lawyers and clients.
  - (c) Adopting programs for all new lawyers that enhance their understanding of business concepts, client relations and other work-related matters.
  - (d) Adopting policies that prohibit firm or corporate functions at private clubs that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, or other protected class status.
  - (e) Adopting a written policy on harassment and offensive conduct.
5. Ensuring equal opportunities for women lawyers, lawyers of color, and other Underrepresented Groups to achieve partnership or senior counsel status by:
- (a) Using the same criteria for such lawyers as for all other lawyers in evaluation and promotion.
  - (b) Guiding professional development and assigning important client matters to such lawyers in the same manner as other lawyers.

## V. ASPIRATIONAL GOALS AND TIMETABLES

In addition to adopting the policies and procedures set forth in III and IV above, we support the adoption of aspirational numerical goals to improve the representation and inclusion of lawyers of color, women and other historically Underrepresented Groups in our organization. The numerical goals set forth below are considered long range objectives and represent a means to achieve parity with the demographic representation of new graduates and lawyers in our community.

In adopting these goals, we recognize that our organization is subject to individual circumstance and economic factors which may make it difficult to predict our future hiring requirements. Therefore, our commitment is to measure ourselves against ourselves and make progress, year over year, toward the long range objectives of the aspirational goals set forth below.

Using year-end 1994 organizational demographic representation as a baseline,

success will be determined by continuous improvement and increasing trend lines for lawyers of color, women lawyers and lawyers from other traditionally Underrepresented Groups in three categories: new hires, partnership or senior status promotion and internal development.

V. 1. Hiring of Historically Underrepresented Groups:

We aspire, that when viewed in the aggregate, a minimum of 10% of all new lawyers hired over the next five calendar years will be lawyers of color.

We aspire, that when viewed in the aggregate, a minimum of 45% of all new lawyers hired over the next five calendar years will be women lawyers.

We aspire to remove all barriers to the full participation of Underrepresented Groups in the hiring process.

2. Retention and Promotion of Partners and Senior Corporate or Government Counsel:

We aspire to a year-over-year increasing trend line of representation of lawyers of color, women lawyers and lawyers of Underrepresented Groups promoted or invited to partnership, shareholder status, senior status in corporate or government offices who meet our criteria, until parity with their statistical representation in the Twin Cities legal community is achieved.

3. Internal Development:

We aspire to increase the appointment of lawyers of color, women lawyers and lawyers of Underrepresented Groups to management positions and positions of leadership within our organization year-over-year until representation of such lawyers reaches parity with their statistical representation in the Twin Cities legal community.

We believe that these goals are related and mutually dependent and expect that, if recruitment, retention, promotion and development programs are successful and the recommendations of the Glass Ceiling Task Force are fully implemented, the number of new hires, partners, senior counsel and lawyers in leadership roles in our organization will correspond more closely to the percentage of people of color, women and members of other Underrepresented Groups who are members of the Twin Cities legal community.

Our commitment is to sustaining the efforts to increase participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers and lawyers from other Underrepresented Groups at all professional

levels within our organization and to show progress year-over-year toward the long range objective of parity.

VI. SCOPE

This is a statement of aspirations and intentions. It does not create any legal obligation of any signatory to any other person.

Name of Signatory\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Corporate/Government Entity Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

As adopted by the HCBA Governing Council in April 1995.