



American Bar Association  
Young Lawyers Division

# DIVERSITY PLAN



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**2006-2007 ABA YLD**  
**Diversity Plan Revision Committee**

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# ABA YLD DIVERSITY PLAN

*(Approved Spring 2000)*

*(Amended October 2001)*

*(Amended May 2007)*

*(Amended October 2007)*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ABA Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) is the largest voluntary bar association division in the United States. It has a total membership of approximately 150,000+, and is also recognized as an entity within the ABA that institutionally promotes and embraces diversity. The ABA YLD acknowledges and recognizes that its strength and success is due, in large part, to the diversity that its membership brings.

In an effort to improve diversity in the profession and ensure that diversity is preserved and encouraged throughout the life of the ABA YLD despite leadership changes, this Diversity Plan has been adopted.<sup>1</sup> The Plan is not only a road map, but it is also a written commitment designed to assist and encourage the members and leaders of the ABA YLD to ensure full and equal participation for lawyers regardless of race, sex, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or sexual identity.

This Diversity Plan, consistent with Section 1.4 of the ABA YLD's Bylaws,<sup>2</sup> is made in conjunction with Goal IX of the ABA Goals: "To create full and equal participation in the profession by minorities, women and persons with disabilities." Twenty years ago, the ABA adopted Goal IX – a bold initiative towards diversity within the profession. Goal IX paved the way for the formation of the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession (CREDIP), and its sister entities, the Commission on Women in the Profession (COWIP) and the Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law (COMPDL). In February 2007, the ABA amended its Goal IX mission statement to read as follows: to promote full and equal participation in the legal profession by minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and persons of differing sexual orientations and gender identities.

In May 2007, the ABA YLD revised its Diversity Plan in a renewed effort to ensure that diversity is consistently being promoted and preserved throughout the profession and the Division.

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<sup>1</sup>The YLD Council at its Spring 2000 meeting approved the original Diversity Plan.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1.4 of the YLD Bylaws (as amended February 2005):

### § 1.4. Diversity

(a) **Pluralism.** The Division shall encourage the participation and representation in its membership and leadership, and in the bar association and the legal profession generally, of the many diverse groups within the community that the Division serves. For the purposes of these bylaws, "diversity" includes but is not limited to consideration of (1) any status on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited or discouraged by these bylaws; and (2) kind, size, or place of practice.

(b) **Nondiscrimination.** The Division shall not discriminate, and shall actively oppose discrimination, on the basis of (1)(A) ancestry, color, or race, (B) cultural or ethnic background, (C) economic disadvantage, (D) ideological, philosophical, or political belief or affiliation, (E) marital or parental status, (F) national or regional origin, (G) physical disability, (H) religion, or religious or denominational affiliation, (I) sex, or (J) sexual orientation or preference; (2) kind, size, or place of practice; and (3) any other status on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited or discouraged by (A) these bylaws, (B) federal law (whether or not the law applies directly to the Division or the Association), or (C) the Association.

## **DIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT**

To promote diversity within the profession and ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for all lawyers regardless of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity in the membership, leadership, programming, and other activities of the ABA YLD by doing the following:

- Actively recruiting lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) lawyers;
- Fostering an environment of inclusion to assist in retention of lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers;
- Identifying and attempting to remove all barriers, whether institutional, attitudinal or behavioral, to the full and meaningful participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers in the ABA YLD;
- Actively seeking the participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities and LGBT lawyers in ABA YLD events and on programs, task forces, and working groups; and
- Providing lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers with opportunities and training to take on leadership roles within the ABA YLD.

## **ANNUAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Orientation**

1. In an effort to encourage unequivocal support and participation of ABA YLD Officers, Council Members, Committee Chairs, and Committee Liaisons in implementing the Diversity Plan, a copy of the plan will be provided to all ABA YLD Officers, Council Members, Committee Chairs, and Committee Liaisons at each orientation of the new bar year.
2. At each orientation of the new bar year, a presenter shall provide diversity training to stress the importance of diversity and its long-term benefit to the ABA YLD. (To ensure attendance, reimbursement shall be tied to attendance of this meeting.)
3. New incoming National Affiliate Representatives shall receive the same timely invitation and funding from ABA YLD as new incoming District Representatives receive to attend each orientation of the new bar year. Their orientation shall include all training sessions, including but not limited to FEMA training, and social functions to which incoming District Representatives are invited.

### **Collaborative Efforts**

4. Coordinate efforts among other members of the Diversity Team, to include the Minorities in the Profession Committee (MIPC), Women in the Profession Committee (WIPC), and the Individual Rights and Responsibilities Committee (IRR) regarding the provision of diversity training and related programs, by doing the following:
  - Seeking the active participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers by funding their travel and lodging expenses through existing scholarship or fellowship programs, or by the establishment of new programs.
  - Publicizing and distributing information regarding these scholarship programs to the young lawyers divisions of the National Minority Bar Associations.<sup>3</sup>
  - Participate annually in a “joint booth” ABA project at the national meetings of the National Minority Bar Associations to provide materials about ABA YLD services, programs, projects, and publications.
  - Communicate the existence of ABA YLD affiliate benefits to the leadership of the National Affiliates and the National Affiliate Representatives.

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<sup>3</sup> “National Minority Bar Associations” include but are not limited to the National Affiliates. “National Affiliates” currently include the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association (NLGLA).

## **National Affiliates and National Affiliate Representatives**

5. Current ABA YLD bylaws Art.3.1(b) provide that, “the council may recognize as a national “affiliate” any affiliate that applies for recognition if it includes, (1) chapters in at least ten states, and (2) at least six thousand young lawyers”.

6. The ABA YLD shall appoint as member of the Council, upon recommendation by each National Affiliate, an individual to serve as the representative to the ABA YLD for said National Affiliate. The length of term for a National Affiliate Representative shall be two (2) years and shall begin at the same time as that of incoming District Representatives.

- The HNBA and NBA will appoint their National Affiliate Representative to the ABA YLD for a two-year period beginning in 2008, and shall appoint or reappoint a representative every even year thereafter.
- The NAPABA and NLGLA will appoint their National Affiliate Representative to the ABA YLD for a two-year period beginning in 2009, and shall appoint or reappoint a representative every odd year thereafter.
- Future appointments by newly recognized National Affiliates should occur on a staggered basis, based on a two-year length of service for the newly appointed National Affiliate Representatives.

7. The ABA YLD shall fund the National Affiliate Representatives in the same manner that District Representatives are funded, and said funding shall be in accordance with the ABA YLD Reimbursement Policy.

8. The ABA YLD Chair or Chair-elect may appoint National Affiliate Representatives to other positions within the ABA YLD (in addition to the Diversity Team), in an effort to provide said representatives with the opportunity to experience meaningful involvement within the ABA YLD.

9. Where appropriate, the ABA YLD shall prospectively use the terms “National Affiliate Representatives” and “District Representatives” together in all ABA YLD resource materials which define, discuss, or describe the duties of said representatives within the ABA YLD.

## **Mentoring Program**

10. Encourage ABA YLD Officers, Council Members, Committee Chairs and Liaisons to serve as mentors for lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers.

## **Speakers/Articles**

11. Promote and encourage participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers on ABA YLD programs and on ABA counterpart programs.

12. Utilize existing speaker’s bureau database to promote lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers.

13. Promote and seek active participation of lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers in the ABA YLD’s publications.

## Appointments

14. The ABA YLD Chair or Chair-elect shall make appointments within the Division and committee leadership to ensure that diversity will be reflected. The ABA YLD Chair or Chair-elect shall also ensure that a member of the Diversity Team is present on the Appointments Committee. In an effort to ensure the continuity of the provisions contained within the Diversity Plan, despite changes in administration, the ABA YLD Chair or Chair-elect shall also do the following:

- Appoint an individual within the ABA YLD whose primary goal is to carry out the Diversity Plan and to promote Goal IX of the ABA. This person shall hold the title of “Diversity Director”;
- Appoint a Diversity Team, consisting of the MIPC Chair, WIPC Chair, IRR Chair, Liaisons to ABA Commissions (Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, Women in the Profession, and Mental and Physical Disability Law), all National Affiliate Representatives, and any ABA YLD members at large; and
- Appoint any Vice Director(s) to assist the Diversity Director in implementing the Diversity Plan.

## Goal III Responsibilities

*“To promote the full and equal participation in the legal profession by minorities, women and persons with disabilities”. ABA Goal IX*

In February 2007, the ABA amended the Goal III mission statement to read as follows: to promote full and equal participation in the legal profession by minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and persons of differing sexual orientations and gender identities. The CREDIP also produces the annual Goal III Report which assesses minority<sup>4</sup> representation in ABA leadership, and its general membership, and reviews other ABA diversity-related initiatives as follows:

- Determining the representation of minorities in the ABA and its leadership positions;
- Presenting information on diversity-related initiatives through the ABA, including administrative and operational departments;
- Identifying and developing ongoing strategies and practices to assist sections, Divisions, and Forums and other ABA entities in increasing minority participation, particularly in those areas where minorities are underrepresented; and
- Recognizing progress in achieving great minority representation and the objectives of Goal III.

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<sup>4</sup> According to the 2005-2006 Goal IX Report, the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity utilizes the term “minority” to describe racially and ethnically diverse lawyers (e.g. those persons of African, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native American ancestry).

15. The Diversity Director shall be responsible for ensuring that the ABA YLD is accomplishing and complying with Goal III duties by doing the following:

- Ensuring all ABA YLD committees are keeping Goal III in mind when selecting speakers/writers for programs;
- Ensuring that the ABA YLD Council make-up reflects diversity;
- Working with relevant ABA YLD Committees to recruit more lawyers of color, women, persons with disabilities, and persons of differing sexual orientations and gender identities;
- Assisting YLD Staff in completing the Goal III report card for submission to CREDIP;
- Promoting lawyers of color, women, persons with disabilities, and persons of differing sexual orientations and gender identities, to other ABA sections; and
- Acting as a liaison to CREDIP, COWIP or the Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities (IRR).

### **Conferences, Programs and Meetings**

16. The ABA YLD shall make all reasonable efforts to make first-timers, lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBT lawyers alike, feel welcome and included in all aspects of their meetings, events and activities, by doing the following:

- Including in the registration form an optional check-off box for attendees' background, i.e., whether the attorney is minority, female, disabled, LGBT and/or a first-time attendee. This information shall be used only by ABA YLD staff ahead of time to identify these attendees;
- Conducting a first-timers reception at the Annual, Mid-Year and other National conferences in conjunction with members of the Diversity Team;
- Ensuring that the Diversity Director introduces newcomers to people within the ABA YLD, especially to the ABA YLD Officers, Council Members, Committee Chairs, and Committee Liaisons; and
- Prior to the ABA YLD Annual, Mid-Year and other National Conferences, have the ABA YLD Chair or Chair-elect send a welcome letter to the newcomers regarding conference programming the first-timers' reception.

17. Have a diversity training program at the Annual, Mid-Year and other National Conferences, the goal of which is to provide affiliates with information to disseminate to their local bar associations and related affiliates for implementation.

18. Encourage joint and substantive programming with CREDIP, COWIP, COMPDL and IRR during the Annual, Mid-Year and other National Conferences. This programming shall be designed to address the issues and concerns of lawyers of color, women lawyers, lawyers with disabilities and LGBT lawyers.

## **Outreach to National Minority Bar Associations**

19. The ABA YLD Chair, ABA YLD Chair-elect or member of the Diversity Team shall, whenever possible, attend the national meetings of the National Minority Bar Associations, including the National Affiliates, in an effort to establish a presence with these associations.

20. The ABA YLD shall make all reasonable efforts to correspond with National Minority Bar Association leaders located in the city where the Annual, Mid-Year or other National conference is being held. Whenever possible the ABA YLD Chair, ABA YLD Chair-elect or Diversity Director shall do the following:

- Send an introduction/welcome letter to the Chair, Leader or President of each National Minority Bar Association, and include a current copy of the ABA YLD's Diversity Plan; and
- Invite leaders of these National Minority Bar Associations to attend the ABA YLD Council dinner or the first-timers' reception.

21. The ABA YLD shall encourage the co-sponsoring of a young lawyers division event (e.g., continuing legal education seminar, luncheon), where appropriate, at the annual conferences of National Affiliates.

### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

The ABA YLD's diversity commitment extends beyond its organizational structure. The Division shall encourage the following suggested activities to enhance its outreach efforts:

#### **Law Student Outreach**

22. The ABA YLD shall make all efforts to provide assistance to or support the ABA Law Student Division in its outreach efforts to law students of color, women law students, law students with disabilities and LGBT law students during law school.

#### **Community Outreach**

ABA YLD may pursue and to encourage affiliates to assist in the promotion and understanding of diversity within the community by doing the following:

23. Develop a diversity forum where young lawyers knowledgeable about diversity may educate the community regarding diversity and its impact on the community, the educational system, children, and future generations; and

24. Work with National Minority Bar Associations to provide Law Day advice in multiple languages (e.g., staff locations with bilingual attorneys.)