GOAL
The immediate goals of this Diversity Plan are: 1) to diversify the Section by making all reasonable efforts to elect minorities to leadership positions and to recruit minority members to the Section, treating minority status as one of the legitimate factors to be taken into account in achieving diversity in leadership and recruitment; 2) to see numbers and percentages of minority leaders, members and speaker that reflect the makeup of the general United States population. The secondary goal of this plan is to generate statistically significant increases in the diversity of leadership, membership, authorship and speakership of not less than 3% per year. If this Diversity Plan is successfully implemented, by October 2011, a substantial number of positions in leadership should be held by minorities, and the Section should see correspondingly positive results in the form of a significant increase in the number of Section members who are minorities, thereby increasing the number of choices for all leadership positions. The ultimate, long-term goal to which the Section should aspire is for the percentage of minorities in both leadership and membership positions to approximate the percentage of minorities in the general population of lawyers eligible for ABA membership.

I. SECTION’S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY
A. The Section recognizes that diversity in the legal profession serves important social, economic, and cultural functions and benefits the legal community and those we, as lawyers, purport to serve.
B. The Section of State and Local Government Law is committed to embracing diversity in its membership and leadership, not only of the Section and the ABA, but also as diversity relates to the practice of law and the general community.

1 The ABA Commission on Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession defines the term “minority” to encompass African Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives. The Section on State and Local Government is fully supportive of the inclusion of “minorities” in the profession, as that term is defined by the Commission. The Section believes, however, that the term “diversity” encompasses a broader spectrum and includes any group that has been historically underrepresented in the ABA or in the profession, as well as any group that faces discrimination and/or other barriers to full participation. Accordingly, the term “diversity,” or “minority,” as used in this Plan encompasses the Section’s efforts to include lawyers of color, women lawyers, disabled lawyers and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LBGT) lawyers.
C. Diverse membership is not a temporary or short-term goal, but rather is a fundamental tenet of the Section’s purpose and mission.  
D. The Section’s purpose with respect to diversity goes beyond mere recruiting new members from diverse populations. Rather, it is based upon retention of all members through fostering an atmosphere of inclusiveness, such that all lawyers feel welcomed in the Section and find their participation in Section activities to be rewarding and free from any barriers.

D. The Section will measure the success of this diversity plan by monitoring the participation of diverse populations in Section committees, programs and events, and by monitoring statistical diversity within the Section’s leadership and membership.

II. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES.
A. Obtain full support and participation of Section officers, Council members, and committee chairs.
(1) The Section Chair will ensure that Section staff provides a copy of this diversity plan and its periodic updates to all current and future Section Officers, Council Members and Committee Chairs.  
(2) Each new Section Chair, upon assuming office, shall issue a letter to all officers, Council members and Committee Chairs, emphasizing the importance of the principles and proposed actions outlined in the Section’s Diversity Plan—and emphasize that it is the leadership’s obligation to implement diversity outreach wherever possible.  
(3) The Section Chair shall include periodically, preferably in conjunction with scheduled council meetings, a summary of the progress toward implementing the strategies articulated in this Plan, as well as any specific initiatives planned for the upcoming year.

B. The Section shall incorporate diversity-related outreach into every scheduled meeting.

(1) An invitation shall be extended to local chapters of the minority bar associations in each city where the Section holds a meeting. The invitation shall advise the local bar groups as to the Section’s programs and events and invite participation from all who might be interested. This outreach shall also include minority law student organizations at local law schools and local members of national minority bar associations. Where possible, these invitations may be offered at reduced or nominal cost for law students. The Executive Committee may consider extending
such invitations to minority attorneys, government attorneys and others based on a case-by-case determination of financial need. (2) Funding shall be provided by the Section, upon prior authorization by the Executive Committee in its discretion, for the purpose of allowing the Chair of the Diversity Committee (See Section C. below) or other members of the Diversity Outreach Committee to travel to prospective meeting sites, prior to the relevant meeting, to meet with minority lawyers and law students for the purpose of (a) personally introducing the minority legal community to the Section and its activities and (b) to ascertain the kinds of programs which would attract the most participation. (3) In order to assist this diversity-related outreach, proponents of any Section program which might be of particular interest to members of minority bar associations in the local area should so indicate to Section staff upon submission of the program proposal. (4) Where appropriate, the Section should sponsor a pre-meeting reception for local law students and/or lawyers with special emphasis on reaching out to minority students and lawyers. All such receptions should include a brief program highlighting the events and program planned for the upcoming meeting and explanation of the benefits of Section membership (e.g.) publications, CLE, and immediate participation opportunities.

C. The Section Chair shall create a Committee on Diversity Outreach as a standing committee within the Section. The Section Chair shall also appoint a member of Council as Chair of the Committee on Diversity Outreach which shall be a permanent position on the Council. The Diversity Outreach Chair shall be an ex officio member of every committee of the Section. Members of Committee on Diversity Outreach shall include (1) the Section Chair-Elect, (2) the Chair of the Committee on Diversity Law, (3) the Section’s liaison to the ABA Commission on Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession, (4) the liaison to Commission on Women, (5) the liaison to Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (6) the Section’s liaison to the Law Student Division, (7) the Section's liaison to the Young Lawyers' Division, and (8) two Section members appointed by the Section Chair, no more than one of whom should be a member of Council. The Committee on Diversity Outreach shall be responsible for: (1) Monitoring implementation of the Section’s Diversity Plan. (2) Updating the diversity plan at least once every three years. (3) Updating diversity-related material on the Section’s website and in the Section’s newsletter. (4) Providing a report to the Section Chair, prior to the Annual
Meeting, regarding the Section’s progress in implementing the Diversity Plan during the preceding year. The Chairperson of the Diversity Outreach Committee shall give a verbal report to the Council pertaining to such matters.

D. The Section shall establish a welcoming protocol for all new members of the Section, including minorities and all first-time attendees at every meeting, whether members or not.

(1) The Section Staff Director shall furnish to the Diversity Chair an advanced registration list of those attending their first ABA meeting as a member of the Section or:

(a) Prepare a special mailing to this group, including the meeting brochure, a list of Committee meetings, and a special invitation to Section social events.
(b) Designate a Section officer who will endeavor to contact and meet each new Section member attendee and match them with a Committee Chair within the Section according to their areas of interest.
(c) Prior to the meeting, mail new attendees the ABA brochure entitled, “How to Get the Most from Your ABA Meeting.”

(2) Designate a group of Council members who will host and meet with members of local minority bar groups that respond to the Section’s invitation to attend events at Section meetings.

(3) A membership enrollment package shall be displayed in the Section Office/Hospitality Room at every Section meeting, event or function, and each such meeting, event or function shall be closed by inviting any nonmembers to join the Section.

(4) Add to all brochures and announcements regarding Section activity a prominently displayed note that says, “Non-Committee members are welcome at all Committee meetings.”

(5) Local lawyers, law students and new members should be invited to attend the Welcome Reception at each Section meeting, introduced to as many Section members as possible, encouraged to learn more about the Section and take an active role in its meetings, and assured of the opportunity to join the Section if not already a member.

(6) Local lawyers, law students and new members should be encouraged to participate in the current informal practice whereby Section members attend “Dutch treat” dinners at local restaurants after the Section reception at Section meetings. Such social events can be given a name, such as “Night on the Town,” and made an event to which local lawyers and law students can
be invited in order to meet and get to know Section members.

E. Use Section sponsorship of CLEs and publications to encourage diversity.
(1) When Section Committees propose a CLE program or a publication, the Publications and Program Chairs shall consider the degree to which the program or publication advances the Section’s Diversity Plan as an important factor when determining whether to sponsor the program or publication.
(2) When another Section or ABA entity seeks co-sponsorship from this Section for a CLE program, publication, or event, the Section should inquire as to the diversity of the panel, the interest of the topic to minority populations, and the outreach efforts planned to achieve a diverse audience. The Section should include these issues as considerations when determining whether to co-sponsor the event or program.
(3) Publish articles in the Section's monthly newsletter, State and Local Law News, and the Section e-news, Local Government Law that highlight specific topics and issues of interest to minority attorneys. Consider inviting guest contributors from nationally recognized organizations such as the Council of La Raza, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, MALDEF, and the ACLU Foundation, and other minority Bar Associations.
(4) Actively solicit and make affirmative efforts to enlist as speakers minority attorneys on all CLE programs and conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by the Section, and make a conscious effort to meet the need of diversifying panels for such programs and conferences by using all available resources within the greater ABA and through other avenues to identify such prospective speakers.
(5) Plan, organize and present a teleconference that focuses upon specific diversity issues from the perspective of attorneys employed by or regularly providing legal services to state agencies, municipal government, county government, special districts and other local government entities. Several possible subjects might include employment, public education, and public contracts.

F. Coordinate with other ABA entities to achieve and implement goals regarding diversity.
(1) The Section will ask its Liaisons to the Law Student Division and Young Lawyer’s Division to seek opportunities to coordinate the Section's diversity-related outreach efforts with those of their Divisions.
(2) The Section will coordinate with the Law Student and Young Lawyer’s Divisions regarding programs and events, with special emphasis on issues of interest to minority lawyers.
(3) The Section's Young Lawyers' Division liaison, in consultation with the Section Chair and Chair of the Diversity Committee, will work with YLD to host or co-sponsor an event at the ABA annual meeting in the Young Lawyer’s hotel or in conjunction with the Young Lawyer’s Division. These events will describe the Section and its activities, provide advice regarding how to participate successfully within ABA Sections, and provide the opportunity to socialize with State and Local Government Law Section members.

G. Establish a substantive outreach to minority bar associations at the national level.
(1) The Chair of the Committee on Diversity Outreach shall contact the national minority bar associations and seek the names of committee chairs within those organizations whose committees have substantive interests that match committees within this Section.
(2) Committee Chairs for any such Committee shall contact their counterparts within the national minority bar associations and attempt to develop a mutually beneficial relationship and participation in one another's events and programs.
(3) The Section Program Chairs shall endeavor to notify national and appropriate local minority bar associations of upcoming Section programs, and attempt to obtain co-sponsorship of those programs where appropriate.
(4) The Section shall seek opportunities to present programs at national conventions of the various minority bar associations.
(5) The Section shall advertise its programs, where appropriate, in publications of the national minority bar associations.
(6) To support achievement of these goals, a member of the Diversity Committee shall be an ex officio member of Section committees concerning publications and CLEs.

III. Monitoring and Publicizing Results.
A. The Section shall publicize its diversity efforts, where appropriate, in Section publications, other ABA publications and in Section program and meeting announcements.
B. The Section shall monitor its progress toward implementing this diversity plan.
(1) The Chair of the Committee on Diversity Outreach shall compare ABA Goal III report card data with that of other sections and report the
comparison at each Council Meeting.
(2) Program Chairs shall familiarize themselves with the ABA Goal III Report received annually by the Section and publicize the Section’s diversity efforts through media stories and press releases in the local area in advance of Section localized events whenever possible.
(3) The Section’s publications shall include photos, reflecting the Section’s diversity whenever possible.
C. The Section will solicit feedback from minority Section members on an ongoing basis in an effort to determine whether and to what extent minority members actually do feel welcome in the Section, whether the proposed programs, events and activities are having their intended effect, and how the Section can better meet these individuals’ needs. Feedback can be solicited informally or through formal mechanisms, such as through a survey.