American Bar Association, Section of Family Law Fellowship Program Policy and Guidelines

(Revised January 2019)

1. The Diversity Committee of the ABA Section of Family Law (FLSDC) has instituted a Family Law Fellowship Program (FLFP) in the ABA Section of Family Law (FLS).

2. The fellowship program allows for consistent participation in the section from the Fellows. The fellowship consists of two (2) kinds of fellowships:

   a. Diversity Fellowships, which will be awarded to:
      i. Diverse family lawyers with a proven interest in family law who meet the diversity criteria identified in the section’s Diversity Plan; and
      ii. Based on demonstrated financial need.

   b. Access to Justice Fellowships, which will be awarded to:
      i. Family lawyers working in legal services or non-profit legal organizations whose work centers around providing free or low-cost family legal services to individuals in traditionally underserved diverse communities; and
      ii. Based on demonstrated financial need.

3. The goals of the FLFP are to:

   a. Increase active FLS participation by diverse family lawyers;
   b. Expand active FLS participation by family lawyers providing access to justice to clients in traditionally underserved diverse communities;
   c. Identify and mentor future FLS leaders of diverse backgrounds;
   d. Introduce Fellows to the benefits and resources of the FLS membership and participation;
   e. Facilitate the opportunity for the Fellows to contribute to the FLS in a way that is meaningful to themselves and their practices; and
   f. Create an ongoing community of Family Law Fellows who continue long, rewarding relationships with the FLS.

4. There are up to five (5) available fellowship spots available every year.
5. The Fellowship begins each year in September. Every year, there are up to five (5) first year fellows and up to five (5) second year fellows.

6. The Fellows must be members of the ABA and of the FLS. If the potential fellows are not currently members, they must join the ABA and the Section within ten (10) days of acceptance in the Fellows Program.

7. The Fellowship Program requires a two (2) year commitment from the Fellows and the Section, consisting of the following components:

a. **Year 1**

   i. **Financial support provided to the Fellows:**

   1. Complimentary registration for the Fall and Spring Section Conferences;
   2. Travel and expense reimbursement consistent with current FLS conference reimbursement policy for Council members (See Attachment), subject to the Diversity Committee and the FLS officers’ discretion to refuse reimbursement for failure to adhere to Fellowship guidelines (See Item 10, below);
   3. Complimentary ticket to any newcomers’ dinner/event and the Friday Social event;
   4. One (1) complimentary registration to a teleconference seminar.

   ii. **Career support and FLS involvement:**

   1. Provide a fellowship liaison on the Diversity Committee to be the single point of contact for all fellows (Fellowship Coordinator);
   2. Provide each fellow with a mentor from FLS Officers, Councilmembers or the Diversity Committee (See Attachment);
   3. Connect each first year fellow with a second year fellow to share experiences;
   4. Connect each fellow with the Chairs/Vice Chairs of at least two (2) Committees based on the fellow’s practice and interests;
   5. Fellow should actively participate in the diversity committee;
   6. Fellow should actively participate in another committee of interest to the fellow (appointed committees excluded);
   7. At every conference, Fellow must attend (at the very least) the Fellows meeting, the Newcomers Event (first year only), the Council meeting,
the Friday night dinner event, the Service Project (if applicable), and the Diversity Committee meeting.

b. **Year 2**

i. **Financial support:**

1. Complimentary registration for the Fall and Spring Section Conferences;
2. Travel and expense reimbursement consistent with current FLS conference reimbursement policy for Council members, subject to the Diversity Committee and the FLS officers’ discretion to refuse reimbursement for failure to adhere to Fellowship guidelines;
3. Complimentary ticket to any newcomers' dinner/event and the Friday Social event;
4. One (1) complimentary registration to a teleconference seminar.

ii. **Career support and FLS involvement:**

1. Appointment to an appropriate FLS leadership position, including but not limited to Committee Vice Chair or Chair based on interests, experience and the needs of the Section after the fellow’s service to the section's committee structure;
2. Continued involvement with the Diversity Committee fellowship liaison and mentor from prior year;
3. Assignment as a 2nd year fellowship advisor to a 1st year fellowship recipient;
4. Inclusion in the pool of candidates for consideration as a speaker or moderator by the Section’s CLE committee. The Diversity Committee will provide the CLE committee with candidates of potential speakers or authors of materials of diverse backgrounds who are 2nd year Fellows. All opportunities to present are subject to the normal standards of excellence required by the CLE committee;
5. Fellow shall actively participate in the diversity committee;
6. Fellow will be introduced to the publication opportunities within the section and have the ability to engage in writing an article and/or practice tip for inclusion in The Advocate, eNewsletter, or other section publications (print, non-print, audio, and/or electronic). The section cannot guarantee publication;
7. At every conference, Fellow must attend (at the very least) the Fellows meeting, the Council meeting, the Friday night dinner event, the Service Project (if applicable), and the Diversity Committee meeting.

8. **Application Process**

   a. The diversity committee disseminates information about the fellowship program. Information is sent to diverse bar associations, local bar associations, FAMLAWESQ listserv, officers, council members and other FLS leaders circulating the information, and other resources identified to promote the Fellowship Program.

   b. All interested candidates must submit a detailed application and essay to the diversity committee.

   c. Deadline to submit applications for each year’s fellowship program is May 15th.

   d. The diversity committee chairs assemble a selection panel to review and select the fellows for each year.

   e. The FLS staff and/or diversity committee chairs notify the fellows of their acceptance in the program. An acceptance letter/email is sent to the potential fellow, which must be signed and returned to the FLS office.

   f. Once the signed acceptance letter is received, a welcome packet is forwarded to the fellows.

9. **Mentor/Mentee Process**

   a. Section members who are interested in serving as mentors are sought, in accordance with the Fellowship Mentor/Mentee Program (See Attachment).

   b. If the potential mentor has a specialty niche in family law, the diversity committee requests that information be provided.

   c. The FLS requests a two (2) year commitment from the potential mentor.

   d. The Mentor/Mentee are initially introduced by email, with the contact information for both the Mentor/Mentee provided. The FLSDC requests the Mentor extend a welcome and introduction upon receipt of the email.

   e. The Mentor/Mentee are formally introduced in person at the welcome reception of the Fall conference.

   f. The FLSDC requests the Mentor remain involved and engaged with their assigned Mentees throughout the year. The goal is to have more contact than just at the conference.
10. **Failure to Adhere to Fellowship Guidelines**

   a. Fellows who do not attend one of the conferences, without good cause, in the two (2) year fellowship period will be dismissed from the program. No further support and/or assistance will be provided to the Fellow.

   b. Failure to attend, without good cause, any of the required events at any given conference during the two (2) year fellowship period, will be grounds for dismissal from the Fellowship Program, as well as grounds for refusal of the Fellow’s travel and expense request for reimbursement for that conference, at the Diversity Committee and the FLS officers’ discretion.

   c. The fellows are encouraged to continue their participation in the FLS.

   d. The mentor/mentee connection is encouraged to continue.

   e. The fellow shall remain involved in any committees he/she is participating in.

   f. If a Fellow must miss a conference, the Diversity Committee upon approval from the FLS council may excuse the absence. Excuses will only be provided with good cause.

   g. If a Fellow must miss a required event within the conference, the Diversity Committee may excuse the absence. Excuses will only be provided with good cause.

11. **Recognition**

   a. The fellows will be highlighted on the diversity page of the FLS website. Each fellow shall sign a release allowing the FLS to display a bio, photograph and other information regarding the program participating. No financial information will be disclosed except to those on the selection committee.

   b. The fellows will be introduced to attendees at the FLS conferences.

   c. Upon completion of the two (2) year program, the FLS will honor and celebrate the fellows’ completion of the fellowship program in a ceremony to be further developed.