American Bar Association
Section of State and Local Government Law
Committee on Diversity Outreach Diversity Plan
2009
Revised 2013

GOALS

The primary goals of this Diversity Plan are:

1) to diversify the Section by making all reasonable efforts to elect diverse members to leadership positions and to recruit diverse individuals 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 achieve participation by diverse leaders, members and speakers that reflects the makeup of the general United States population;

3) to provide social and educational opportunities for networking for diverse members in order to further these objectives.

The secondary goal of this plan is to generate statistically significant annual increases in the diversity of leadership, membership, authorship and speakership. In order to accomplish the ultimate goal to which the Section aspires: that the percentage of minorities in both leadership and membership positions approximates the percentage of minorities in the general population of lawyers.

The ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity defines the term “minority” to include African Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans and Alaska Natives. This Plan encompasses any group historically underrepresented in the ABA or the profession including women, lawyers of color, disabled lawyers, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LBGT) lawyers.

I. COMMITMENT

A. The Section recognizes that diversity in the legal profession serves important social, economic, and cultural functions and benefits the legal community.

B. The Section is committed to embracing diversity in its membership, its leadership, the practice of law and the general community.

C. This Plan seeks to recruit new members from diverse populations and to retain all members through fostering an atmosphere of inclusiveness, so that all lawyers feel welcome in the Section and find their participation in Section activities to be rewarding and free from any barriers.
D. The Section measures the success of this 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 communicate in writing to all officers, Council members and Committee Chairs, the importance of implementing the principles and actions outlined in the Plan.

(3) The Section Chair shall provide a summary of the progress toward implementing the strategies articulated in this Plan, as well as any specific initiatives planned for the upcoming year at the Midyear and Annual Meetings.

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 about the Section’s programs and events and invite participation. This outreach shall also include minority law student organizations at local law schools and local members of national minority bar associations.

These invitations may be offered at reduced or nominal cost for law students. The Executive Committee may extend such invitations gratis to minority attorneys, government attorneys and others based on a determination of financial need.

(2) Funding shall be provided by the Section, upon prior authorization by the Executive Committee, in its discretion, to allow the Chair of the Diversity Committee or other members of the Diversity Outreach Committee to travel to prospective meeting sites to meet with diverse lawyers and law students in order to

(a) personally introduce the diverse legal community to the Section and its activities and

(b) to ascertain the kinds of programs which would attract the most participation
(3) Proponents of any Section program of particular interest to members of minority bar associations in the local area should advise Section staff upon submission of the program proposal.

(4) The Section should sponsor a meeting reception for local law students and/or lawyers with special emphasis on reaching out to diverse students and lawyers. All receptions should highlight the benefits of Section membership, events and programs planned for the upcoming meeting and immediate participation opportunities.

C. The Committee on Diversity Outreach shall be 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 the Committee on Diversity Outreach shall include
(1) Section Chair-Elect,
(2) Chair of the Committee on Diversity Law,
(3) Section liaison to the ABA Commission on Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession,
(4) Section liaison to the Commission on Women,
(5) Section liaison to the Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
(6) Section’s liaison to the Law Student Division,
(7) Section's liaison to the Young Lawyers' Division, and
(8) two Section members appointed by the Section Chair of whom one shall be a member of Council.

The Committee on Diversity Outreach shall be responsible for:
(1) Monitoring implementation of the Section’s Diversity Plan.
(2) Review of the diversity plan every year.
(3) Updating diversity-related material on the Section’s website and in the Section’s newsletter.
(4) Providing a written 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 Chair of the Diversity Outreach Committee shall also give a verbal report to the Council of all plans for the Meeting.

D. The Section shall establish a welcoming protocol for all new members of the Section 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;
(a) Prepare a special mailing to this group, including the meeting brochure, a list of Committee meetings, a special invitation to Section social events and the Brochure “How to Get the Most.

(b) Designate a Section member or officer who will endeavor to contact and meet each new Section member attendee and match him or her with a Committee Chair within the Section according to areas of interest.

(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 non-members to join the Section.

(4) All brochures and announcements regarding Section activity shall prominently state: “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 of Section unsponsored dinners at local restaurants after the Section reception at its meetings. Each Section participant will endeavor to invite local lawyers and law students so that they may 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 Plan as an important factor when determining whether to sponsor the program or publication.

(2) When another Section or ABA entity seeks co-sponsorship 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 consider these issues 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 as well as other 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 concerted 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 webinars and teleconferences that focus 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.

F. Coordinate with other ABA entities to achieve and implement PLAN goals.

(1) Liaisons to the Law Student Division and Young Lawyer’s Division shall seek opportunities to coordinate the Section's diversity-related outreach efforts with those of their Divisions.

(2) The Section will collaborate with the Law Student and Young Lawyer’s Divisions to develop programs and events with emphasis on issues of interest to minority lawyers.

These programs and events will describe the Section and its activities, advise how to participate successfully within ABA Sections and provide the opportunity to socialize and network with 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 identify officers within those organizations whose committees have substantive interests that match those of Section committees.

(2) Section Committee Chairs shall contact their counterparts within the national minority bar associations and attempt to develop mutually beneficial relationships and participation in their respective events and programs.
(3) Section Program Chairs shall endeavor to notify national and local minority bar associations of upcoming Section programs and seek 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 Publication and CLE committees.

III. Monitoring and Publicizing PROGRESS.

A. The Section shall publicize its diversity efforts and accomplishments, including photographs, in Section publications, other ABA publications and in Section program and meeting announcements.

B. The Section shall monitor its progress toward implementing this 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 publicize the Section’s diversity efforts through media stories and press releases in the local area in advance of Section localized events whenever possible.

C. The Section will solicit feedback from Section members regarding, the extent to which its programs, events and activities are having their intended effect.