

Law Firm Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarking Guide



**Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion and
Accessibility**

Association of Legal Administrators

This questionnaire is designed to assist you in examining your firm’s diversity and inclusion programs. These questions may also serve as a tool to strengthen your firm’s commitments to these efforts. On the bottom of this page, you’ll find several resources to assist in promoting these critical efforts in your legal organization.

The questions are presented in six categories: formal firm leadership, firm culture, firm policies and workplace inclusion, professional development, organizational diversity and inclusion competency, and community involvement. When answering each question, please consider your firm’s efforts in the previous year. At the conclusion of the questionnaire, you may total your responses in each category to determine areas of strength and identify opportunities for improvement.

While leadership takes different forms and exists at various levels within an organization, formal leadership is necessary to give direction and to set a vision. As the saying goes: One way to know what a person values is to observe where they spend their money, time and talent. The firm’s vision and commitment to diversity and inclusion must have active support from senior leadership and a commitment to hold all leadership accountable for its success.

Optional: Firm Census

Data Point	
Respondent Role	
Size of Firm/Organization	
Geographic Location	
Office Location (City)	
ALA Chapter (if applicable)	

Questionnaire

Formal Firm Leadership	Y	N
1. The firm has an individual or group managing diversity and inclusion efforts.		
2. Senior members of the firm are actively involved in firm diversity and inclusion strategy and member initiatives.		
3. Leadership actively communicates firmwide about the commitment to diversity and inclusion.		
4. Leadership actively participates in diversity-, equity- and inclusion-focused events.		
5. Diversity is included on the agenda for management and leadership meetings.		
6. The firm has developed a diversity strategic management plan.		
Total (Score 1 point* for each Yes in this category.)		

Firm Culture	Y	N
1. The firm has taken an active role in its commitment to creating and fostering an environment that is supportive of diversity, equity and inclusion.		
2. The firm observes cultural heritage months and diversity milestones.		
3. The firm formally adopts programs that include the entire firm in promoting the firm's commitment to diversity and inclusion.		
4. At least once a year, the firm issues a report on its efforts in creating a culture that fosters diversity and inclusion.		

5. The firm ensures that all firm social functions are inclusive of all committed relationships and family members of its attorneys and professional staff.		
6. The firm encourages participation in minority and women’s bar associations and counsel groups.		
7. The firm provides funding and sponsorship for women and diverse attorneys to participate in minority organizations.		
8. The firm conducts regular surveys that include merits on diversity and inclusion.		
9. The firm supports and sponsors internal diversity affinity networks or employee resource groups.		
10. The firm’s mission, vision and values incorporate diversity and inclusion.		
11. The firm includes diversity in all orientation and onboarding programs and provides an overview of the firm’s diversity strategy and initiatives.		
12. The firm sends a welcome letter from the diversity chair or other designated persons to all new hires welcoming them to the firm, emphasizing diversity’s value in the firm, and outlining the firm’s goals and objectives related to diversity and inclusion.		
Total (Score 1 point* for each Yes in this category.)		

Firm Policies and Workplace Inclusion	Y	N
1. The firm has a specific diversity and inclusion policy or other written commitment to the same.		
2. The firm’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement is inclusive of diverse characteristics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.		
3. The firm has a formally stated policy of diversity and inclusion and communicates this policy on the firm’s website, both internally and externally.		
4. Diversity, equity and inclusion training is provided on an annual basis, beginning with leadership.		
5. The firm has a recruiting and hiring policy that reflects the commitment to diversity and inclusion.		
6. The firm has processes and policies to increase the retention of women and diverse attorneys.		
7. The firm has policies and procedures for benefits that achieve parity among its employees to the extent possible in a given jurisdiction (e.g., domestic partner health benefits, maternity and paternity leave).		
8. The firm seeks diversity in applicant pools when hiring attorneys and professional staff.		

9. The firm establishes inclusive policies such as flexible paid time off, prayer and reflection rooms, and lactation rooms.		
10. Performance standards and promotion criteria are clear, explicit and fairly applied to make evaluation and promotion processes objective and equitable.		
11. The firm reviews work allocation processes to ensure opportunities for women and diverse attorneys.		
Total (Score 1 point* for each Yes in this category.)		

Professional Development	Y	N
1. The firm provides both formal and informal professional development opportunities for its attorneys, managerial leadership and professional staff.		
2. The firm provides ongoing sensitivity, unconscious bias, or diversity and inclusion training on an annual or semiannual basis for all attorneys and staff.		
3. The firm diversity training includes content addressing four generations in the workforce.		
4. The firm provides access to local or national resources such as ALA; the National Association for Law Placement (NALP); the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM); Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA); LGBTQ organizations; and other general, specialty and minority-related organizations.		
5. The firm supports attorney and professional staff attendance at conferences or events relating to diversity and inclusion.		
6. The firm offers executive coaching skills on managing, mentoring and supervision.		
Total (Score 1 point* for each Yes in this category.)		

Organizational Diversity and Inclusion Competency	Y	N
1. The firm's operations reflect a high level of organizational competency regarding diversity and inclusion.		
2. The firm ensures that it complies with all federal, state and local laws with concern to hiring practices.		

3. The firm uses metrics to report on the creation and sustainment of diversity and inclusion endeavors.		
Total (Score 1 point* for each Yes in this category.)		

Community Involvement	Y	N
1. The firm is seen as being an involved member in the legal community and community at large.		
2. The firm actively supports and is involved with minority bar associations.		
3. The firm engages in charitable work that heightens attorney and staff awareness of inequality in their community.		
Total (Score 1 point* for each Yes in this category.)		

*0.5 point allowed for firms doing the requirement at a minimal level but have more work to do in order to warrant a full 1 point.

Scoring

Subtotals

Category	Y	N
Formal Firm Leadership		
Firm Culture		
Firm Policies and Workplace Inclusion		
Professional Development		
Organizational Diversity and Inclusion Competency		
Community Involvement		

Grand Total

Yes	
No	

Quick Links and Resources

Toolkits

- [NALP Diversity Best Practices Guide](#)
- [ALA Diversity Toolkit](#)

Articles

- [Generational Differences in the Workplace](#)
- [Generational Mindsets Affect the Office](#)
- [How to Improve Diversity in the Legal Profession](#)
- [Five Diversity Recruitment Best Practices for 2022](#)

Examples

- [Diversity Action Plan](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report](#)
- [EEO Statement](#)
- [Lactation Accommodation Policy](#)
- Incorporating DEI into Firm Mission, Vision and Values
 - [Am Law 100 Firm](#)
 - [Medium-sized Firm](#)
 - [Legal Search Firm](#)

Find additional resources on the ALA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility [Resources Page](#).