



**DIVERSITY PLEDGE OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION  
FOR LAW FIRMS AND LAW RELATED ORGANIZATIONS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

- The San Diego County Bar Association (“SDCBA”) and the Signatories hereto remain committed to fostering diversity in the legal profession.
- We recognize that diversity is an inclusive concept that encompasses, without limitation, race, color, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, and disability.
- We believe that a diverse group of talented legal professionals is critically important to the success of every law firm, corporate law department, law school, public service organization, and every other organization that includes attorneys. With greater diversity, we can be more creative, effective, just, and bring more varied perspectives, experience, backgrounds, talents, and interests to the practice of law and the administration of justice. We further recognize that diversity in the legal profession is good for the profession, good for business, good for our communities and critical for enhancing the public’s confidence in the judicial system.
- We acknowledge that the American Bar Association and the California State Bar both have the goal to promote the full and equal participation of racial minority groups, women, and all other persons of diverse backgrounds in the legal profession. We agree.
- We recognize that although San Diego County is ethnically diverse, African-Americans, Latinos, Asian Pacific Americans, and other racial minority groups continue to be underrepresented, particularly in the upper echelons, among attorneys practicing in the law firms and corporate law departments in San Diego County. These and other racial minorities; women; gays, lesbians and transgender persons; disabled persons; and other groups historically underrepresented in the legal profession shall be referred to throughout this document as “Underrepresented Attorneys.”
- We agree that it is in the best interest of the San Diego County legal and business communities to craft creative and workable solutions to the enduring problem of the lack of diversity among practicing attorneys.
- We are willing to make efforts to increase, through hiring, retention and promotion, the number of Underrepresented Attorneys practicing in the law firm or corporate law department, at all professional levels, including the number of Underrepresented Attorney Partners and Senior Corporate Counsel.

- We acknowledge the need to facilitate diversity in the hiring, retention, and promotion of attorneys and in the elevation of attorneys to leadership positions within our respective organizations.
- We recognize that diversity is not about quotas or different standards. Rather, the opportunity to increase diversity should be one important consideration in the decision-making process. We also acknowledge that the goals set forth in the Diversity Pledge are not quotas. We further recognize that specific examples of practices in the Pledge are to be viewed as guidance, and may not be feasible or appropriate for all organizations.
- We recognize that achieving diversity is an evolutionary process that requires a continued renewal of our commitment to strategies of inclusion. Accordingly, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles, goals, and practices contained in this Diversity Pledge, and further agree to participate in SDCBA programs designed to measure our progress.
- Accordingly, each Signatory pledges to support all or a substantial portion of the diversity goals listed below, and use its best efforts to implement all or a substantial portion of the diversity practices listed below, as follows:

#### **LAW FIRMS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

**Diversity Goals for Law Firms:** In furtherance of the Diversity Pledge, the Law Firm Signatories support all or a substantial portion of the following goals:

**Hiring:** To hire entry-level classes that substantially reflect the diversity, as a whole, of the law student classes from which the attorney classes were hired. We will strive in good faith to achieve this level of diversity as soon as we can, with a goal of doing it not later than three years from the date of this Diversity Pledge. We also will take diversity goals into consideration in our lateral hiring, and are mindful of the need in general for our hiring to reflect the diversity of the San Diego County community.

**Retention:** To maintain a level of diversity throughout a class's progression that is at least as great as when the class was first hired. We will strive in good faith to achieve this retention rate as soon as we can, with a goal of doing so within five years from the date of this Diversity Pledge.

**Promotion:** To be able, within 10 years, not only to hire diverse first-year classes, but also to reflect that diversity to the point when Senior Associates are promoted to senior positions, including Senior Counsel and Partner. When we have successfully achieved representative diversity in our associate classes, it will be our goal that our promotions reflect that diverse workforce.

**Leadership:** To achieve leadership positions throughout San Diego County Law Firms that reflects the diversity among our senior legal professionals, recognizing that promoting diversity in leadership positions reflects our fullest commitment to diversity in the legal profession.

### **LAW DEPARTMENTS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

**Diversity Goals for Law Departments:** In furtherance of the Diversity Pledge, the Law Department Signatories support all or a substantial portion of the following goals:

**Hiring:** To hire entry-level classes that substantially reflect the diversity, as a whole, of the law student classes from which attorney classes were hired. We will strive to achieve this level of diversity as soon as we can, with the goal of doing so within five years from the date of this Diversity Pledge. We also will take diversity goals into consideration in our lateral hiring, and are mindful of the need in general for our hiring to reflect the diversity of the San Diego County community.

**Retention:** To maintain a level of diversity throughout a class's progression that is at least as great as when the class was first hired. We will strive in good faith to achieve this retention rate as soon as we can, with a goal of doing so within five years from the date of this Diversity Pledge.

**Promotion:** To be able, within 10 years, not only to hire diverse first-year classes, but also to reflect that diversity to the point when attorneys are promoted to senior positions. When a department has successfully accomplished representative diversity in its midlevel ranks, it will be its goal that its promotions reflect that diverse workforce.

**Leadership:** To achieve diversity in leadership positions throughout San Diego County Law Departments, recognizing that promoting diversity in leadership positions reflects our fullest commitment to diversity in the legal profession.

**Diversity in Outside Counsel:** We expect the law firms that represent our companies to work actively to promote diversity within their organizations. In selecting outside counsel, we will consider a law firm's commitment to and progress toward achieving diversity goals, including its success in meeting the goals set forth in the Diversity Pledge. We will further seek to ensure that law firms that represent us to provide opportunities to Underrepresented Attorneys to work on and have responsibility for matters in which the law firm represents us.

## DIVERSITY PRACTICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

**Diversity Practices:** To realize the Diversity Pledge, the Signatories agree to use their best efforts to pursue all or a substantial portion of the following:

- **Hiring Practices:** In an effort to increase the number of Underrepresented Attorneys hired, to pursue all or a substantial portion of the following practices:
  - Increasing the Underrepresented Attorney law student applicant pool by:
    - Augmenting interviewing efforts at law schools with significant Underrepresented law student populations; and Identifying diverse students by contacting placement administrators, faculty members, former summer associates, and minority law student organizations at law schools, and by holding receptions and other activities for law students. Such activities will be planned and conducted with the specific objective of identifying, recruiting, and hiring greater numbers of students from Underrepresented Attorney groups.
  - To the extent a law firm or law department engages in lateral hiring, increasing the lateral Underrepresented Attorney applicant pool by:
    - Contacting law school placement administrators and faculty members for referrals to practicing Underrepresented Attorneys; Requesting professional recruiters to include Underrepresented Attorney candidates in their searches; Contacting the SDCBA and minority bar associations for referrals; Contacting leaders of minority law firms for referrals; and Advertising lateral hiring positions in publications whose readership is specifically targeted to Underrepresented Attorney groups.
  - Recruiting Underrepresented Attorney applicants by:
    - Introducing interviewees to senior partners and senior lawyers during interviews; organizing special programs to welcome Underrepresented Attorney applicants.
- **Retention Practices:** In an effort to increase retention rates for Underrepresented Attorneys, the Signatories agree to pursue all or a substantial portion of the following practices:
  - Instituting programs aimed at increasing retention rates for all attorneys (whether or not members of Underrepresented Attorney groups), focusing on allocation of desirable work, training and guidance, relationships with

Partners and Senior Counsel, mentoring programs, work-life balance issues, client contact, feedback, and pro bono commitment.

- Providing opportunities for Underrepresented Attorneys, equivalent to the opportunities provided to non-Underrepresented Attorneys, to be assigned work on a consistent basis of the type necessary to develop skills and acquire experience necessary for success and advancement.
  - Creating a work environment and policies regarding promotion and advancement that are as hospitable for Underrepresented Attorneys as for non-Underrepresented Attorneys, including, but not limited to:
    - Including Underrepresented Attorneys as contributing members of the team; Assuring that Underrepresented Attorneys receive significant work assignments for important clients;
    - Including Underrepresented Attorneys in work-related social activities with other attorneys and with clients;
    - Adopting policies evidencing an institutional commitment to pro bono legal work and to our community; and Adopting a policy prohibiting law firm or law department sponsored functions at, or support of, or supported by, institutions or organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, age and disability.
- **Promotion Practices.** In an effort to increase rates of promotion to partnership and management for Underrepresented Attorneys, the Signatories agree to pursue all or a substantial portion of the following practices:
- Identifying and recommending Underrepresented Attorney candidates for promotion in the same manner that non-Underrepresented Attorney candidates are identified and recommended for promotion; Guiding the development of Underrepresented Attorneys, i.e., grooming them for promotion, in the same manner as non-Underrepresented attorneys are groomed for promotion; Making efforts to ensure that Underrepresented Attorneys are mentored by influential senior attorneys within the law firm or law department; Assigning responsibility for important client matters to senior Underrepresented Attorneys as they near consideration for partnership or senior counsel in the same manner as such matters are assigned to senior non-Underrepresented Attorneys.

- **Diversity Committee.** We each agree to create a Diversity Committee in our law firm or organization. A senior Partner or executive should be responsible for leading the committee and promoting its efforts. The Diversity Committee should itself be diverse. Diversity Committee recommended practices include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - The development of a mission statement and formal goals; Analysis of the organization's historical diversity practices, deficits, and achievements; Identification of current needs; and Development and implementation of practices designed to promote diversity and establishment of a system of measurements to gauge the organization's success. Some successful diversity committees engage outside consultants to assist in these efforts. One of the goals of the Diversity Committee should be to make the current work environment equally hospitable to all attorneys. A welcoming work climate facilitates hiring, increases retention, and leads to the promotion of professionals who add to our diversity. The Diversity Committee should ensure that all Underrepresented Attorney groups:
    - have available meaningful mentoring;
    - receive equal opportunities to perform significant work for important clients;
    - receive equal training, guidance and feedback; and
    - are fully included in work-related social activities with other attorneys and clients. The Diversity Committee also should help monitor firm activities or events to ensure that such activities are not exclusionary in nature.
- **Diversity Training.** We agree to participate in appropriate diversity awareness training programs. Such training is most successful when it is mandatory at all levels.
- **Diversity Enhancing Programs.** To enhance the potential for success of our diversity efforts, the Signatories agree to support or pursue all or a substantial portion of the following practices:
  - adopt programs to promote the success of our Underrepresented Attorney hires;
  - adopt programs for expanding diversity recruitment, including internships/summer associate positions for diverse law students;
  - participation in job fairs for diverse law students;

- involvement of members of all Underrepresented Attorney groups in hiring; and diversity training for our recruiting personnel;
  - adopt viable work/life programs such as maternity/paternity leave, and child care, as well as benefit plans that offer registered domestic partners the same benefits offered to married couples; and
  - organize networks of Underrepresented Attorney groups that support the attorneys and provide outlets and channels of communication with senior management.
- **Measuring and Awarding Success.** The Signatories and the SDCBA recognize that it is important for all of the Signatories to share information about their successes, as well as their failures, and to be supported in the programs they implement.

Thus, we agree that we will participate in a yearly survey from the SDCBA's Ethnic Relations and Diversity Committee designed to measure our progress as to this Diversity Pledge. The aggregate statistics for all Signatories collected from the survey will be distributed to each Signatory and the SDCBA may report those statistics in annually the *Bar Report*.

The SDCBA may annually recognize and award publicly a law firm or corporate law department that has made an outstanding contribution to promoting and achieving diversity.

