
STATE BAR OF WISCONSIN

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION GUIDE

Why does diversity and inclusion matter?

A diverse and inclusive bar is necessary to attract and retain talented employees and leaders; effectively serve diverse clients with diverse needs; understand and adapt to increasingly diverse local and global markets; devise creative solutions to complex problems; and improve access to justice, respect for the rule of law, and credibility of the legal profession.

State Bar of Wisconsin Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

The term “diversity” has a dynamic meaning that evolves as the demographics in the state change. It is an inclusive concept that encompasses, among other things, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation and disability. Inclusion helps to create a culture that embraces people from the widest range of talent and experience and promotes understanding and respect for all people and different points of view in the legal profession.

Ways to Expand Diversity of Section Leadership:

- 1) Develop a diversity and inclusion plan that helps identify and encourage diverse candidates to run for leadership positions. Deliberately and intentionally commit to the plan.
- 2) Study strategies that have worked for other groups and tailor these strategies to your section. Take advantage of resources available from the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Committee and the State Bar in formulating your diversity and inclusion plan.
- 3) Use a variety of forms of communication in advertising leadership opportunities to reach a wide audience. These include but are not limited to section or division webpages, e-lists, social media pages, blogs, newsletters, and word of mouth. Do not be afraid to think outside the box in finding creative and effective ways to reach your targeted audience.
- 4) Develop and maintain a working relationship with local and specialty bar associations. Collaborate with them to promote leadership opportunities.

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- 5) Consciously consider diversity and inclusion when your section board: (a) nominates or appoints section members for board elections, (b) fills vacancies on your board or other committees and (c) establishes new committees or sub-committees to transact section business.

Ways to Expand Diversity of Section Membership:

- 1) Set the tone of your section by adopting a diversity and inclusion statement and incorporating it into your section bylaws.
- 2) Deliberately and intentionally model diversity in the governance and operation of all section business.
- 3) Examine the current level of diversity and inclusion within your section. Work on ways to increase diversity and inclusion in needed areas.
- 4) Consider appointing a diversity chair charged with promoting membership to diverse groups.
- 5) Have your committees identify ways to be more diverse and inclusive in their work and charge.
- 6) Consider financially supporting diversity initiatives.
- 7) Reach out to local and specialty bar associations to share upcoming opportunities and events.
- 8) Encourage speaker diversity at CLE programs.
- 9) Hold joint programs with local and specialty bar associations or special diversity events.
- 10) Conduct outreach to law students and new lawyers.
- 11) Make section programs accessible to government and public interest lawyers.
- 12) Welcome out-of-state lawyers who attend your programs.
- 13) Use conference calls/video conferences to make meetings more accessible.
- 14) Hold regional events throughout the state.

Special thanks to the State Bar of Wisconsin Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Committee, the State Bar of Wisconsin staff, and the Oregon State Bar in developing this guide.

