

**New York State Bar Association
Young Lawyers Section**

DIVERSITY PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York State Bar Association Young Lawyers Section (the “**Section**”) is a section within the New York State Bar Association (“**NYSBA**”) that has always promoted and embraced diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst its members and affiliates. The Section recognizes that its strength and success is due, in large part, to the diversity and inclusivity that its membership brings.

This Diversity Plan (the “**Plan**”) is not only a road map, but also a written continued commitment designed to assist and encourage the members, leaders, and staff of the Section to provide full and equal participation and access to resources for all members of the Section regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability, veteran status, familial status, citizenship or immigration status, or socioeconomic status. We rely on this Plan to preserve our pledge regardless of changes in leadership or staff.

While many suggestions and ideas are included within the Plan, it is not intended to limit any ideas and suggestions above and beyond the Plan. Further, the Section endeavors to revise the Plan annually in a renewed effort to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are consistently and vigorously being promoted and preserved throughout the profession and the legal Section.

The Plan is drafted to align with the NYSBA’s diversity plan which was adopted by the House of Delegates on January 31, 2020 (the “**NYSBA Diversity Plan**”). This Plan specifically addresses the section of the NYSBA Diversity Plan that aims to “*urge adoption by all entities within the NYSBA of entity-specific diversity plans.*”.

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Plan is aimed at promoting and advancing an environment of diversity, inclusion and equity where all members are acknowledged and encouraged to contribute equally.

The Section is committed to enhancing the professional and personal development of young lawyers and law students through educational, leadership, networking, advocacy, and public service opportunities, with a dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of its efforts.

We recognize that authentic and measurable diversity, equity, and inclusion advancement can only be achieved with the support and participation of Section leadership and the individual commitment from each Section member.

The Diversity Committee Chair(s) shall administer the Plan and have authority to ensure the Section is accomplishing and complying with its strategic goals, the Plan, and the purposes underlying the Plan. Final authority for the Plan’s interpretation and implementation rests with the Diversity Committee Chairs. Notwithstanding this authority, the entire Section, its leadership, staff, and membership are responsible and accountable for the Plan’s execution.

The Section’s strategic goals are to:

1. Increase membership diversity and promote inclusivity within the Section;

2. Increase engagement and collaboration between the Section and minority bar associations and diverse law student organizations;
3. Establish a diversity mentorship program whereby diverse law students are mentored and sponsored by more senior members of the Section;
4. Increase funding/sponsorships opportunities for diverse members to attend different Section, NYSBA and minority bar associations events; and
5. Creation of a Diversity Scholars Program that give participants an opportunity to become involved in the work of the Section, provide opportunities for leadership roles, and enhance their knowledge of the Section.

STRATEGIC GOALS OVERVIEW

1. Increase membership diversity and promote inclusivity within the Section.

According to the recent survey by the American Bar Association (the “ABA”)¹, diversity within the legal profession is lagging behind diversity of the U.S. population. As such, the Section aims to not just mirror the diversity numbers within the legal profession but to mirror diversity numbers of the U.S. population in general.

The ABA estimates that as of Jan. 1, 2020, there were 1,328,692 active lawyers in the U.S., however, the lack of diversity within the legal profession is alarming. Of all the lawyers in the U.S.:

- 86% are non-Hispanic white people, in comparison, roughly 60% of U.S. residents are non-Hispanic white people;
- 5% of all lawyers are African American, in comparison, roughly 13.4% of the U.S. population are African American;
- 5% of all lawyers are Hispanic, in comparison, roughly 18.5% of the U.S. population are Hispanic;
- 2% of all lawyers are Asian, in comparison, roughly 6% of the U.S. population are Asian; and
- 0.4% of all lawyers are Native America, in comparison, roughly 1.3% of the U.S. population are Native America.

Given the above, the Section aims to increase membership diversity in line with the U.S. population as follows:

- 13.4% Black or African American;
- 18.5% Hispanic;
- 6% Asian; and
- 1.3% Native American.

The above targets will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect demographic changes within the U.S. population and the legal profession.

2. Increase engagement and collaboration between the Section and minority bar associations and diverse law student organizations.

As a means of increasing diversity and inclusion, and increasing the Section’s visibility, the Section plans to strengthen its ties with, and support of, minority bar associations and diverse law student organizations. Some of the organizations that the Section aims to partner with include, but is not limited to, the following:

- The Metropolitan Black Bar Association (“MBBA”)

¹ <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2020/07/potlp2020.pdf>

- Association of Black Women Attorneys (“ABWA”)
- the Hispanic National Bar Association (“HNBA”);
- the National Bar Association (“NBA”);
- the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (“NAPABA”);
- the National Native American Bar Association (“NNABA”);
- the National LGBT Bar Association (“NLGBTBA”);
- the South American Bar Association (“SABA”);
- National Black Law Students Association (“NBLSA”);
- Northeastern Black Law Students Association (“NEBLSA”); and
- the various Black Law Students Association (“BLSA”), Latino American Law Students Association (“LALSA”), Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (“APALSA”) and Native American Law Students Association (“NALSA”) at different New York law schools.

The Section intends to achieve it’s goal by undertaking the following steps:

- Co-Sponsor programming, networking, and social events with the aforementioned organizations.
- Encourage joint programming with some of the minority bar associations.
- Provide funding for Section leaders, representatives, or staff to attend minority bar association meetings and events.
- Provide membership materials to diverse law schools organizations that focus on membership benefits , scholarship and mentoring opportunities and strengthening the pipeline.

3. Establish a diversity mentorship program whereby diverse law students are mentored and sponsored by more senior members of the Section

The mentorship program is aiming at connecting diverse law students with senior attorneys within the Section that can guide and assist them as they navigate law school and the early stages of their legal career as well as assist in the integration into the Section. The mentorship will be open to all diverse law students, but preference will be given to law students in their final year of law school.

The formal mentoring program is intended to be a 12-month experience; however, the aim is that informal mentoring connection will continue indefinitely.

4. Increase funding and sponsorships opportunities for diverse members to attend different Section, NYSBA and minority bar associations events.

The Section aims to increase funding and sponsorship funds for diverse members to attend different hosted by the Section, NYSBA and minority bar associations such as the annual NYSBA Trial Academy, the MBA Annual Gala event, etc. The goal of this initiative is to help diverse members network and increase their visibility within the profession.

5. Creation of a Diversity Scholars Program that give participants an opportunity to become involved in the work of the Section, provide opportunities for leadership roles, and enhance their knowledge of the Section.

The goal of the Diversity Scholars Program is to give participants an opportunity to become involved in the work of the Section, provide opportunities for leadership roles, and enhance their knowledge of the Section. The Scholar's Program consists of the following scholarship categories:

- Government, military, public service and non-profit lawyers;
- Minorities in the profession; and
- Solo and small firm practitioners.

To be eligible, a Section Scholar must be a young lawyer as defined by the Section's bylaws. Applicants for the program should fall within at least one of the scholarship categories. There is no requirement that applicants be presently involved with a Section affiliate; however, such involvement is encouraged. Although applications will be accepted from non-NYSBA members, any person chosen as a scholarship recipient must be an NYSBA member to accept the appointment as a Scholar. Further, any applicant must confirm that they will attend all funded conferences if selected.

The Diversity Scholars Program will consist of a total of 3 Scholars from each of the aforementioned categories who will be selected at the start of each bar year and participate in the program for the entire bar year.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In an effort to ensure the continuity of the provisions contained within the Plan, despite changes in administration, the Diversity Committee Chair(s) or Chair-elect shall also do the following:

- Appoint an individual within the Section whose primary goal is to carry out the Plan. This person shall hold the title of "Diversity & Inclusion Champion";
- Work with NYSBA staff to compile statistics regarding the diversity of the Section applicants and appointees;
- Review this plan bi-annually to ensure that the Section is on track to meet its strategic goals; and
- Review and revise this Plan annually to ensure that the Plan is in line with the NYSBA Plan and the overall legal market.