



DIVERSITY PLAN

I. GOAL: ELIMINATE BIAS AND ENHANCE DIVERSITY

Objectives:

- 1) Promote full and equal participation in the Chapter, the legal profession, and the justice system by all persons.
- 2) Eliminate bias in the legal profession and the justice system.

II. PURPOSES OF THE DIVERSITY PLAN

This Diversity Plan is intended to lead the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, Western New York ("WBASNY WNY") to achievement of the Goal as it applies to the Chapter itself, and thereby to ensure full and equal participation in the Chapter by all eligible persons (including attorneys and law students) and the elimination of any actual or perceived bias in WBASNY WNY. When implemented effectively, the Diversity Plan will foster the recruitment and retention of diverse lawyers and law students in WBASNY WNY, and their advancement through its leadership; enhance opportunities for diverse individuals to participate in WBASNY WNY activities and programs, including the provision of accommodations to

persons with disabilities; promote a culture of inclusion that attracts diverse members of the profession to WBASNY WNY; educate Chapter members and leaders about the benefits and importance of diversity; and, by building diversity within the Chapter, support WBASNY WNY efforts to promote diversity in academia, the judiciary, and public and private legal workplaces.

For purposes of this Diversity Plan, the term “diversity” generally represents both diversity and inclusion. Diversity often pertains to the numbers - insuring sufficient numbers of targeted populations are represented. Inclusion addresses how well the diverse individuals are included in all aspects of the organization. Diversity is often associated with recruitment; inclusion plays a pivotal role in retention. In summary, this Diversity Plan is designed to achieve not just diversity - the presence of lawyers and law students from all backgrounds - but inclusion as well - their full and equal participation in the Chapter.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE DIVERSITY PLAN

The Diversity Plan sets forth numerous objectives and broad goals. In addition, certain implementation recommendations are set forth as specific actions WBASNY WNY is urged to undertake in the immediate future.

- A. Require wide dissemination of the Diversity Plan within WBASNY WNY, and public availability of the Diversity Plan, including:
 - 1. Membership-wide dissemination of the Diversity Plan after adoption, with a cover letter or email from WBASNY WNY President.
 - 2. Continuous availability of the Diversity Plan through pertinent pages on the WBASNY WNY website.

3. Distribution of the Diversity Plan, or emailing a link to the Diversity Plan, to all new WBASNY WNY members.
 4. Reference to the Diversity Plan in member solicitation materials.
- B. Promote and track diversity within WBASNY WNY's leadership, including:
1. The Chapter's Officers.
 2. The Chapter's Committees Chairpersons including: Standing Committees, Ad Hoc Committees, Working Groups, and other presidentially appointed positions.

Implementation Recommendation 1: *That the Chapter designate the President or Diversity Committee Chairperson or other designee selected by the President, principally to include oversight of the implementation of this Diversity Plan. Each year, that person will develop and secure approval of specific annual implementation steps with a corresponding time line, proposed budget and assessment procedure. This person should be a non-voting member of the Executive Board.*

- C. Promote and track diversity in WBASNY WNY's leadership nominations, and leadership development processes.
1. Require diversity as an emphasis in all leadership nominations processes, including diversity among the Nominations Committee members.

Implementation Recommendation 2: *That WBASNY WNY review the composition of its Nominations Committee, to ensure that the purpose of this Diversity Plan is being served in the nominations process.*

2. Require diversity as an emphasis in the Presidential nominations process, including diversity among the nominations committee members (such diversity to be measured, at least in part, by consideration of data that indicates the diversity of Chapter membership).
 3. Urge committees to emphasize diversity in program development and event planning.
 4. Build diversity-related sessions into Continuing Legal Education events, leadership training efforts, annual meetings, and all programs.
- D. Urge adoption by Committees, specific committee diversity initiatives that are consistent with the objectives of this Diversity Plan.
- E. Promote diversity in WBASNY WNY membership.
1. Marketing and membership solicitation materials should be welcoming to diverse populations.
 2. WBASNY WNY should consider compiling and disseminating uniform statistics and other information on lawyers and law students - both WBASNY WNY members and non-members - for each of the major diversity categories, and target the non-WBASNY WNY members for

membership solicitations.

3. WBASNY WNY committees are urged to engage in active marketing, recruitment and outreach efforts to affinity bars and other professional organizations, legal communities, and law schools to promote diversity.
4. WBASNY WNY committees are urged to have formal or informal liaison relationships with the diversity-focused committees of the WBASNY WNY(e.g., the Minority Bar Association of WNY, Inc., and various affinity groups with SUNY Buffalo School of Law), and appoint persons who will be active liaisons to these organizations.
5. WBASNY WNY should consider collaborating with affinity and specialty bar associations and explore additional membership campaigns designed to enhance diversity.

Implementation Recommendation 3: *That WBASNY WNY consider creating an event, award or other form of recognition to honor on an annual basis the WBASNY WNY individual, committee, organization, law firm, corporation or any other entity that has shown outstanding leadership in diversity-related membership initiatives and/or other diversity efforts.*

F. Promote diversity in CLE and other programming.

1. Implement strategic actions to improve diversity among speakers, moderators, and attendees.

2. Ensure program content appeals to diverse communities, consistent with the partnering agency or sponsoring entities' subject matter specialties, if any.
3. Urge WBASNY WNY committees to explore partnering or co-sponsoring opportunities with affinity bars and other organizations that can contribute to diversity.
4. Ensure program venues and materials are accessible to participants with disabilities.
5. Urge WBASNY WNY committees to use program locations and venues, as well as social media, to enhance opportunities for participation by diverse lawyers and law students (e.g., locations that may minimize cost barriers; venues that may increase diverse community participation, including the law school, affinity bar association locations, and social networking sites that may increase marketing efforts to diverse communities).

Implementation Recommendation 4: *That WBASNY WNY present at least two CLE program focused on diversity each year.*

G. Promote diversity in WBASNY WNY publications (hard copy and electronic).

1. Implement strategic actions to increase diversity in WBASNY WNY

- members responsible for editorial policy and content of publications.
 - 2. Ensure content of publications appeals to diverse communities, consistent with the committee or sponsoring entities' subject matter specialties.
 - 3. Ensure content of publications are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- H. Promote diversity in WBASNY WNY “marquee” events (e.g., annual awards and events), including:
- 1. Diversity of speakers.
 - 2. Diversity of award recipients.
 - 3. Diversity of planning and award nominations committees.
- I. Enhance the current tracking and reporting of progress in diversity efforts, including:
- 1. Urging more robust participation and tracking by WBASNY WNY committees and encourage greater promotion of the reporting process by WBASNY WNY leadership; and accountability for committees that require significant improvement in their diversity efforts.
 - 2. Ensure widespread dissemination of the membership year-end diversity committee report among WBASNY WNY leadership, committees and members, including when possible in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and through posting on the website.

Implementation Recommendation 5: *That WBASNY WNY explore the preparation of a Diversity Impact Statement to assess any challenges in the implementation of the Diversity Plan, as well as the positive outcomes and results.*

Implementation Recommendation 6: *That WBASNY WNY consider coordinating a centralized data collection and reporting center for diversity information, combining data from committees, national and regional affinity bars, and law school affinity groups.*

- J. Urge WBASNY WNY committees to develop or enhance mentor programs that target young lawyers and law students, and are designed to advance diversity within the Chapter.
- K. Promote WBASNY WNY diversity accomplishments, including the following:
 - 1. Develop and prominently post on the WBASNY WNY website information about successful diversity programs and activities of the Chapter and its committees, and other partners in the legal profession.
 - 2. Invest in a regular presence in pertinent legal and diversity publications to showcase WBASNY WNY diversity accomplishments.
 - 3. Urge WBASNY WNY committee chairs, and others deemed by the president to have the expertise in diversity areas, to regularly write and speak on behalf of WBASNY WNY and its diversity initiatives and plans.