

Appendix

Gender Diversity Best Practices Checklist

Directions:

While gender diversity is a critical endeavor across Big Law, the specific solutions implemented will vary from firm to firm. The information below is intended to provide guidance to your firm in developing and/or improving gender diversity and inclusion. Use these best practices as a framework to spark discussion about how the firm can best progress in hiring and retaining a more diverse workforce.

Hiring

- Implement a gender-blind diversity review process.
- Ensure a quorum of women on hiring and lateral hiring committees.
- Perform entry and exit interviews to ensure that female career development options and goals are being communicated and met.

Training

- Create a diversity and inclusion committee and monitor diversity and inclusion initiatives to ensure that stated goals are being met.
- Ensure business development and rainmaking training is sufficiently robust based on individual levels.
- Institute unconscious bias training.
- Ensure that women have access to affiliation networks and are given time to participate.

Firm Practice

- Ensure that the allocation of origination credit is neutral by instituting a gender-diverse committee and third-party oversight.
- Encourage and recognize teamwork and collaboration in awarding origination credit.
- Institute a formal mentorship and sponsorship system – both associate mentors and sponsors as well as partner mentors and sponsors.
- Ensure the firm's succession plan is gender neutral.
- Implement gender diversity targets for partner classes to ensure gender equality.
- Ensure that critical executive committees – including management, compensation, and hiring committees – adequately represent female talent.
- Ensure compensation committee is diverse, and audit committee decisions to ensure equality.
- Establish anonymous channels for employees to voice any concerns.
- Conduct a pay audit to ensure that the firm is not vulnerable to a discrimination lawsuit under the federal Equal Pay Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, or individual state laws.
- Monitor diversity of client teams and ensure diversity across client relationships.
- Ensure that work product without a billable hour count will be considered for promotion and compensation calculations.
- Consider integrating metrics in addition to class year to determine career progression and promotion opportunities.
- Implement review processes that permit both top-down and bottom-up reviews.
- Ensure that diversity initiatives are part of performance targets by implementing bonuses and other incentives for meeting diversity targets and consequences for failure to meet diversity targets.
- Establish a central and neutral party (such as a diversity manager) to monitor distribution of assignments and track staffing patterns.
- Ensure active involvement by firm management in diversity initiatives.
- Create a client plan that includes gender-diverse team members and allocates work to them on an ongoing basis.

Family Matters

- Encourage *both* male and female employees to take parental leave.
- Hire a career coach for working parents to assist in balancing work and home life.
- Invest in or develop a program to assist women in rejoining the legal workforce after taking time off.
- Establish part-time and flex-time programs to assist working parents in joining the workforce despite family obligations.
- Monitor "schedule creep," when part-time attorneys are forced into working full time due to work obligations.
- Create a working parents network to enable working parents to connect and perhaps assist in sharing workloads when necessary.
- Support parent daycare needs and challenges.

Metrics

- Implement a metrics dashboard to track statistics such as gender diversity among practice areas and locations.
- Implement a baseline audit to determine diversity goals for the short and long term.
- Establish career progression targets and regularly communicate criteria for progress.
- Implement metrics for client pitch teams to account for diversity of pitch teams, credit for client pitch, and long-term involvement with the client.