



## Hudson Yards Apartments

Studio to Three-Bedroom Hudson Yards No-Fee Rentals with Expansive Skyline & River Views.

555TEN

Open >

Home / Law / Law Firms / Advice / Diversity and Inclusion at Law ...

# What to Know About Diversity and Inclusion at Law Firms

Here's how to create a diverse and inclusive law firm.

By [Beth Braverman](#) | [✓ Edited by Susannah Snider, CFP](#) | [✓ Reviewed by Antonio Barbera](#) | July 31, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.



GETTY IMAGES

While percentage of people of color that are law firm associates has increased, that only accounts for about 11% of employees at a partner level.

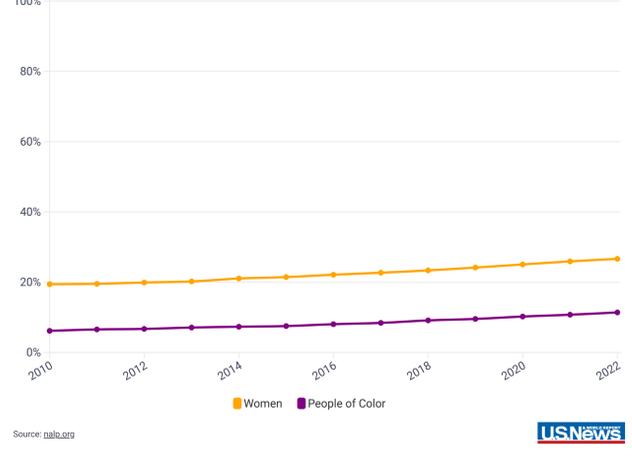
While representation for women and people of color at law firms has grown, experts say the legal industry as a whole has more room for improvement when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion.

In fact, women will likely soon comprise the majority of associates at law firms, according to the 2022 Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms from the National Association for Law Placement. Right now, however, women account for only about a quarter of partners. The percentage of people of color that are law firm associates has increased from about 20% in 2010 to about 28% in 2022. But they only account for about 11% of employees at the partner level.

Experts say that the recent Supreme Court decision on affirmative action could make it even harder for law firms to boost diversity within their ranks.

Here's what to know about DEI initiatives at law firms, including insights from law professionals working in this space.

## Percentage of Partners Who Are Women and People of Color at Law Firms



▶ Related: [Top Marketing Strategies for Law Firms](#)

## What Is Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?

DEI is an acronym for diversity, equity and inclusion. In corporate America, it has become a catch-all term for a range of efforts companies make to promote the fair treatment of all current and prospective employees. DEI approaches recognize that fair treatment can benefit both employees and the company as a whole.

"Diversity and inclusion not only strengthen the breadth and depth of perspectives that contribute to solving clients' complex legal challenges, but they also allow firms to better reflect the diverse clientele and communities that they serve," says Dennis Quinio, chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer at Allen & Overy. "In an increasingly globalized business environment, clients are more inclined to seek services from law firms that exhibit cultural competence and an appreciation for different backgrounds."

Broken down into its three parts, DEI includes:

**Diversity:** This term references the representation of people from a variety of backgrounds, including gender, race and religion. It also includes people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ individuals, parents and nonparents, veterans, people with disabilities and others.

**Equity:** This term refers to just treatment, [pay and opportunities for employees](#) regardless of their identity.

**Inclusion:** This references a sense of belonging for all employees.

▶ READ: [Legal Tax Shelters](#)

## How to Increase Workplace Diversity at Law Firms

Increasing diversity in workplaces such as law firms requires a concerted effort at all company levels. Those initiatives include getting buy-in and support from company executives and leaders, casting a wider net for hiring and looking for ways to make sure that diverse hires see a path forward as they grow and develop in their careers.

▶ Read: [How to Find Legal Help When You Can't Afford a Lawyer](#)

## 5 Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Law Firm

While diversity focuses largely on representation, inclusion emphasizes a sense of belonging for all employees. Law firms that want to create a more inclusive workplace might consider the following strategies:

### 1. Celebrate Diversity Within the Company

Rather than ignoring the differences between workers, recognizing and extolling those variations can make employees more comfortable bringing their "whole selves" to work.

Initiatives that support this goal may include developing programming in connection with cultural heritage months and supporting the creation of [employee resource groups](#), or ERGs, through which diverse employees can connect with one another to discuss shared experiences.

### 2. Set Expectations

Ensure that everyone in the company understands its commitment to inclusion at all levels.

This move "starts with having a policy and procedure manual that makes everyone know they have the right to be heard and are safe," says Andrew Lieb, attorney with Lieb at Law PC. "You need to make it known that everyone is welcome and expected and safe, and you don't have favorites."

### 3. Check in With Employees

Regular employee surveys asking associates whether they feel included can give a company a baseline understanding of where the culture stands. These initiatives may surface insights around areas that need more work.

### 4. Embrace Flexibility

Allowing employees [flexibility in their schedules](#) (to the extent possible) can make it easier for people with different needs in their outside-of-work lives to be productive team members.

"Balancing work demands with personal obligations can be particularly challenging for attorneys, potentially impacting diversity efforts," says Servete Xhudo-Bradley, director of human resources with Mandelbaum Barrett PC.

### 5. Provide Training

In addition to making sure all employees know the company's rules and policies around exclusivity, training on unconscious bias can help employees understand and see how they can change their behavior to become more inclusive.

Companies without in-house expertise might consider outsourcing such work to experts in the field, which can have additional benefits for the firm.

Says Xhudo-Bradley, "Collaborating with professional associations, diversity-focused organizations and community groups can expand networks and enhance diversity efforts."

### 5 Marketing Strategies for Law Firms

Emily Sherman July 31, 2023

Law firm marketing plans may involve using search engine optimization strategies.

Corrected on Aug. 2, 2023: A previous version of this story misspelled Dennis Quinio's last name.

Tags: [law](#), [careers](#), [Company Culture](#), [money](#)

555TEN

### Hudson Yards Apartments

Studio to Three-Bedroom Hudson Yards No-Fee Rentals with Expansive Skyline & River Views.

