

BCBA Diversity and Inclusion Plan

I. BCBA Commitment to Diversity

During the 2019-2020 Bar Year (“BY19/20”), the Baltimore County Bar Association created the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, an ad hoc committee to: (1) promote full and equal participation in the BCBA, our profession, and the justice system by all persons and (2) eliminate bias in the legal profession and the justice system. A diverse profession will benefit the BCBA and its members, as diversity increases our strengths, capabilities, and adaptability. A diverse group of talented legal professionals is important to the success of law firms, public service organizations, and any other organizations that involve attorneys.

In 2018, however, the American Bar Association reported that 85% of lawyers in the United States were Caucasian/white and 36% identified as female. A 2018 Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms by the National Association for Placement reported that (i) minority women continue to be the most underrepresented group at the partnership level, (ii) there are wide geographic disparities in the number of LGBT lawyers, (iii) reporting of lawyers with disability is scant, and (iv) representation of Black/African-American lawyers among partners has barely increased since 2009. The BCBA currently does not have any statistics related to the diversity of its membership.

The BCBA issues this Diversity Plan to affirm its commitment to diversity and inclusion for itself and our partners. Through increased diversity and inclusion, the legal profession in Baltimore County can more effectively address societal and individual needs by bringing forth varied perspectives, knowledge, and experience to the practice and administration of law.

For the purposes of the BCBA Diversity Plan, it is our intent to recognize all legally protected characteristics recognized in Maryland. For the purposes of the Plan, the term “diversity” generally represents diversity and inclusion, but to the extent necessary to distinguish them:

- “Diversity” means the recruitment of those from targeted populations to ensure sufficient representation within the BCBA. Diversity often pertains to the numbers - ensuring sufficient numbers of targeted populations are represented. Diversity is often associated with recruitment.
- “Inclusion” means the retention and promotion of individuals from targeted populations in all aspects of the BCBA. Inclusion addresses how well diverse individuals are included in all aspects of the organization. Inclusion plays a pivotal role in retention and promotion.

II. Goals and Objectives

a. Goal #1 - Promote Diversity within the Legal Profession

- i.** To increase the diversity of law clerks, provide contact information from all specialty bar associations to judges for Baltimore County.

- ii. Coordinate with local law firms which have a diversity program.
- iii. Provide members with contact information to all specialty bar associations to distribute job vacancies.
- iv. Create a statement of diversity principles and coordinate with local law firms to become a signatory.

b. Goal #2 - Promote and Track Diversity within the BCBA

i. Create a database to track diversity for:

- 1. Leadership Positions
 - a. Executive Council
 - b. Chairs of Committees
- 2. Awards
 - a. The composition of nominating committees should be tracked, as well as, award recipients and individuals nominated.
- 3. Membership
 - a. Request pertinent information in membership application to be supplied at the applicant's option and update information on background.

ii. Promote Diversity among BCBA Leadership

- 1. Consider diversity as an emphasis in all leadership nomination processes, including diversity of the nomination's decision-makers.
- 2. Consider diversity as an emphasis for chairs of committees.
- 3. Consider diversity in leadership training and development programs.

iii. Promote Diversity among BCBA Membership and Events

- 1. Membership materials should be welcoming to diverse population.
- 2. Develop a mentoring program to assist in the introduction of diverse members to the BCBA and its members.

3. BCBA should engaged in active marketing, recruitment and outreach efforts to specialty bars and other professional organizations, legal communities, and law schools to promote diversity.
4. BCBA shall host an annual diversity event with specialty bar associations.

iv. Promote Diversity of CLEs and Programs

1. Any CLE in which BCBA participates or organizes with more than two speakers must include a speaker with a diverse background.
 - a. For CLEs with two or less speakers, the BCBA shall made best efforts to include a speaker with a diverse background.
 2. Urge Committees to explore partnering with specialty bar associations and other organizations that can contribute to diversity.
- v. Creation of a Standing Diversity and Inclusion Committee
1. As outlined in Section II, the standing Committee would implement and review the Diversity Plan.
 2. The Committee Chair would work directly to Executive Director and an At-Large Member designated by the current President.
- c. Goal #3 - Dissemination of the Diversity Plan to BCBA leadership, members, and the public.
- i. Membership-wide dissemination and distribution of the Diversity Plan to all members via email with letter from BCBA President.
 - ii. Availability of the Diversity Plan through BCBA website.
 - iii. Accessibility of the Diversity Plan to members with any disabilities.

III. Implementation and Revision of the Diversity Plan

- a. Implementation
 - i. Revise the BCBA Bylaws to make the Diversity and Inclusion Committee a standing committee.
 - ii. Develop the goals and objectives of the Committee and methods to implement the goals and objectives.

b. Revision

i. On an annual basis, the Committee shall:

- 1.** Review each method to implement the goals and objectives to determine whether any changes are necessary.
- 2.** Develop new methods to implement the goals and objectives.
- 3.** Review the Diversity Plan to determine if any of the goals and objectives should be revised.
- 4.** Coordinate with the Maryland State Bar Association, local bar associations, and specialty bar associations to determine best practices to revise and implement the Diversity Plan.