



**Mecklenburg County Bar  
Diversity and Inclusion Committee**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**MARCH 13, 2018**

*BOARD APPROVED 4.4.18*

In 2004, the Mecklenburg County Bar created the predecessor of today's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Committee's goal, then and now, is to foster an equitable and inclusive environment within the Bar where every member can feel respected, valued, and culturally enriched; to recognize the individuality of each person and the collective strength of our diversity; and to promote diversity and inclusion initiatives, education, awareness, and dialogue within the Bar and the legal profession as a whole.

Leading attorneys and judges with a demonstrated commitment to diversity are eligible to seek appointment to the Committee. Membership is reviewed annually, and Committee members typically serve staggered three-year terms. Representatives of local affinity bars and the Bar's President and Executive Director serve as ex officio members. The Committee is supported by the Bar and through the commitment of time and money by law firms, companies, attorneys, judges, and other supporters. The Committee meets regularly, maintains meeting minutes, manages an annual budget, and seeks guidance from and provides updates to the law firms and legal departments who support the Committee's purpose.

Recognizing that diversity and inclusion encompass a broad range of subjects, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, and disability, the Committee focuses its efforts on developing, recruiting, hiring, training, mentoring, retaining, supporting, and promoting current and future diverse attorneys in Mecklenburg County.

We understand that Charlotte-Mecklenburg's law firms and law departments must make positive and determined efforts to make our legal community more diverse and inclusive, including vigorous support for the Committee's efforts from the managing partners, boards, or executive committees of law firms and the general counsels and current and future leaders of corporate law departments.

We recognize that individual law departments and firms vary greatly in size, management style, and resources, and they will adopt different structures, programs, and strategies to achieve key recruitment, training, and hiring objectives.

We believe that to achieve meaningful, measurable, and lasting progress toward greater diversity and inclusion, the Committee and its stakeholders, the Bar, and the Charlotte legal community must not only commit to these goals, they must also

commit their individual and collective resources to support initiatives to enhance the diversity and inclusiveness of our Bar. To accomplish these ends, the Committee and its members request that the Bar and the Charlotte legal community join them in committing:

- To embrace diversity in all forms, including race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, and disability.
- To encourage their firms or companies and other legal employers to hire, train, retain, and promote diverse attorneys at all levels, with each employer developing strategies and programs tailored to their specific circumstances consistent with the goal of increasing diversity within the Bar.
- To encourage the Bar to recruit and develop diverse leaders for service on its board of directors and executive committee; regulatory, membership services, and program committees; and staff.
- To serve as a resource on the diversity and inclusiveness of the Bar by continuing to collect and maintain information from law firms and departments regarding the hiring, retention, and promotion of diverse attorneys, as well as the diversity and inclusion initiatives and successes of individual firms and law departments.
- To encourage law firms and legal departments to support and encourage attorneys to volunteer with and contribute to community organizations and initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion.
- To mentor and support diverse attorneys and help them develop skills and relationships that will enable them to advance their careers and become leaders within their organizations, the Bar, and the community.
- To recruit and attract diverse law students and practicing attorneys to practice in Mecklenburg County, thereby increasing the diversity and inclusiveness of the Bar and our community.
- To connect diverse students in middle school, high school, and college with legal professionals to broaden their horizons, leverage these relationships to build social capital and increase access to new networks, and create pathways to careers in the law and equal access to opportunity for all members of the community.

The Committee will accomplish these goals by working together with the Bar's leadership, staff, and members, through the Committee itself, and through the subcommittees described in the attached appendix.

## APPENDIX

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SUBCOMMITTEES

### *Apex Subcommittee*

Apex is a mentoring program designed for associates who are interested in learning how to move to the next level as a senior member, partner or in-house counsel. This is both a mentoring program and a retention program for diverse attorneys. The Apex model will incorporate best practices to ensure the training for mentors and mentees and the program design elements are high quality, thoughtful and impactful. In the first year of implementation, the Apex design will incorporate lawyers from our current Signatories and from other willing participant firms. The additional firms, along with the traditional participating Signatories will sign off on a funding plan that will be evaluated at least annually.

### *Charlotte Legal Diversity Clerkship Subcommittee*

The purpose of the CLDC program is to increase the diversity of lawyers in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County through a collaboration of the Mecklenburg County Bar and supporting law firms and corporate legal departments. Through this partnership, the CLDC attracts high-performing, diverse first-year law students to Charlotte by offering a comprehensive split-summer clerkship between law firms and legal departments. The CLDC also provides clerks with event-based programming, alumni outreach, networking opportunities, as well as exposure to various organizations and government entities. A goal of the CLDC program is to facilitate a career pipeline within the Mecklenburg County Bar community.

### *Membership Inclusion & Engagement Subcommittee*

The purpose of the Membership Inclusion & Engagement Subcommittee is to help cultivate an engaged, diverse, and inclusive membership in the Mecklenburg County Bar. The Subcommittee will evaluate and improve upon existing, and develop new, diverse & inclusive programs to help infuse diversity throughout the Bar. The Subcommittee shall place emphasis on attracting diverse members by seeking a better understanding of the demographic profiles of Bar members and by identifying unique member needs. Through the Membership Inclusion & Engagement Subcommittee the Bar will build awareness of its mission and activities, fostering an inclusive community of members and the visibility of the profession in Mecklenburg County.

### *Pipeline Programming Subcommittee*

The Pipeline Programming Subcommittee connects diverse middle school, high school, and college students with practicing attorneys and resources to encourage their interest in the legal profession. By creating opportunities at an early age, the subcommittee works to ensure that diverse students have the same advantages as other students to succeed in education and the law. The subcommittee's work to build this pipeline currently begins with eighth graders, through the "Lunch with a Lawyer" program. This programming continues with high school and college students, who attend the "Pathways to Inclusion in the Law Diversity Conference." The subcommittee also promotes a culturally inclusive legal profession by supporting and coordinating diversity-related events and initiatives focused on educating diverse communities about the opportunities in the legal profession.