



Inclusion Blueprint Strategic Planning Guide

An Inclusion Roadmap For
Firm Leadership

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Inclusion Blueprint Guide for Firm Leadership

Diversity Lab is providing law firms with the **Inclusion Blueprint Strategic Planning Guide** as a north star for assessing their firm's current inclusion efforts and determining what additional actions they should employ to ensure that all of their lawyers — including those from historically underrepresented groups — have fair and equal access to compensation, leadership roles, and other critical career-enhancing opportunities.

In addition to measuring inclusion at the firmwide level, this Guide provides average and above-average diversity benchmarks to allow firm leaders to assess their current and progressive representation of women lawyers, underrepresented racial and ethnic lawyers, LGBTQ+ lawyers, and lawyers with disabilities.

Underrepresented racial and ethnic lawyers, or UREs, include the historically underrepresented racial and ethnic populations outlined by the EEOC, including Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, plus Middle Eastern and North African populations.

The Inclusion Blueprint is intended to create fair and inclusive practices; firms are advised to seek legal counsel before implementing any actions or changes.

For questions, please reach out to Amber Carter, Director of Inclusion Innovations at Diversity Lab, at ambercarter@diversitylab.com.



Why Measure Inclusion? Inclusion begets diversity. The more inclusive the firm and the practice group are, the more likely that diverse teams of lawyers will thrive and succeed long-term.

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Section I:

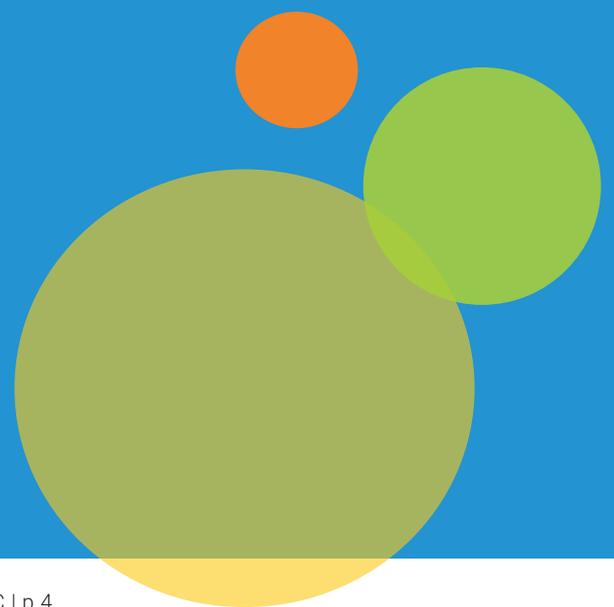
How to Use this Guide

This Guide includes average and above-average diversity representation benchmarks and a comprehensive list of inclusion activities that firm leaders can adopt to measure and improve inclusion at the leadership levels and firmwide.

Leveraging this Guide, firm leaders can clearly identify what they are already doing to ensure inclusivity and what they can do in addition to enhance their firm's efforts to be more inclusive so that all lawyers have fair and equal access to career advancement and success. Leaders can also assess where their firm stands in comparison to the diversity representation informational benchmarks that are established.

As a starting point for tracking and measuring diversity and inclusion, this Guide asks leaders to focus on four historically underrepresented groups in law at the leadership levels – specifically, women lawyers, underrepresented racial/ethnic lawyers (“URE”), LGBTQ+ lawyers, and lawyers with disabilities.

As part of the firm's tracking, it is also important to disaggregate these groups and take an in-depth look at inclusion and equity within each group and among the individuals. For instance, are Black women getting the same opportunities as white women? Are Latinx men and women getting equal access to work and sponsorship?



Section II:

Tracking Diversity Representation in Firm Leadership

Does your firm have a mechanism, system, and/or person that tracks the representation of the various lawyer populations firmwide – including the four historically underrepresented groups* – for analysis and oversight by Firm Leadership?

In Progress

Strategic Plan

Current associate population

Current partner population (non-equity and equity)

Promotions to non-equity (if applicable) *and* equity partner

Lateral associate and partner hiring

Associate and partner attrition

Primary governance committee (e.g., management or executive committee or the equivalent) and compensation committee

Practice group leaders and office heads

Top partner compensation earners

**Women lawyers, underrepresented racial/ethnic lawyers (“URE”), LGBTQ+ lawyers, and lawyers with disabilities*

Section III:

Assessing Current Representation of Historically Underrepresented Lawyers in Firm Leadership

Fill in each box with one ✓ for average and two ✓✓ for above average.

If your group meets neither benchmark for particular populations, leave it blank.

Does your firm currently meet the percentage representation benchmarks for the various populations of underrepresented lawyers at the leadership levels and firmwide?

	Women Lawyers	URE Lawyers	LGBTQ+ Lawyers	Lawyers with Disabilities
Average 2021 Equity Partners, as reported by the MCCA*	At least 24%	At least 11%	At least 2%	At least 1%
Above Average Inclusion Blueprint Benchmarks	At least 30%	At least 15%	At least 5%	At least 5%
Primary governance committee (e.g., mgmt. or exec. comm., board of directors, or equivalent)				
Nominating/Partner Promotions Committee				
Compensation Committee				
Practice group leaders				
Office heads				
Top 25% of partner compensation earners				
C-Level Staff Roles (e.g., COO, CMO, CTO, CHRO)				
Equity partnership				
Non-equity partnership (if applicable)				
Most recent class promoted to equity partnership				
Most recent class promoted to non-equity partner (if applicable)				
Lateral partner hiring over the last 12 months				

*The 2021 data from the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) is the most recent publicly available information for the representation of equity partners in the legal profession. We recommend updating these benchmarks, when available.

Yes No

Does your current chairperson or managing partner identify as a historically underrepresented lawyer?

Section IV:

Inclusion Practices in Firm Leadership

Firm leadership's involvement is critical to supporting inclusion at the firm. Does your firm employ the following inclusion practices?

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Strategic Plan

Ask what each partner has done to **contribute to D&I** at the firm and/or in their practice group during the annual compensation review process

Incorporate meaningful contributions, or lack thereof, to **D&I** into **partner compensation for practice group leaders**; **compensation** is impacted as a result of positive or negative **inclusion efforts** within their group

Include a formal report on diversity headcount and inclusion activities as a **routine agenda item** during the firm's primary governance committee meetings

Ensure a **member of the firm's primary governance committee** leads or actively participates on the firm's **diversity and inclusion committees**

Inclusion Practices in Firm Leadership (continued)

Transparency is crucial to ensure that all lawyers understand the criteria for career advancement. Has your firm documented and distributed the following to your lawyers?

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Strategic Plan

The process for allocating and crediting base and bonus **compensation factors** (e.g., origination credit, matter expansion credit, or other business development and client service elements)

The firm's **leadership appointment, nomination, or election procedures** for governance roles (e.g., management committee, practice group leaders)

The firm's formal **process for lawyers to question and appeal origination credit allocation**

The firm's **promotion criteria** and procedures for elevation to non-equity (if applicable) and equity partnership

The firm's performance review and compensation criteria and procedures for **associates and partners**

Inclusion Practices in Firm Leadership (continued)

True Inclusion for each individual will improve the long-term success of building and maintaining diversity. Is your firm taking the following actions?

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Participating in the **Mansfield Rule**



Expressly including and welcoming **all gender identity expressions** on bathrooms



Amending or eliminating **policies that discourage employees from bringing their authentic self to work** (e.g., policies against piercings, tattoos, natural hair, or displaying preferred pronouns in signature lines)



Tracking inclusion activities to ensure that lawyers who identify in more than one category (often termed **intersectionality**) are provided with equal access to opportunities (e.g., do Black female lawyers get the same access to opportunities as white female lawyers; do LGBTQ+ female lawyers get the same access to opportunities as heterosexual, cisgender female lawyers)



Offer at least 50 hours of **billable credit** to lawyers for meaningful **contributions to diversity and inclusion** at the firm and in the profession (e.g., taking a leadership role in firm DEI efforts, leading affinity or inclusion groups, taking a leadership role in diverse bar or other trade organizations, sponsoring and mentoring diverse lawyers (whether formally or informally), partnering with clients on DEI efforts, etc.).

Inclusion Practices in Firm Leadership (continued)

In Progress

Strategic Plan



Tracking **non-billable activities** (e.g., firm hours, office housework) **and** making meaningful changes to remedy inequitable distribution across demographic populations



Tracking **all business generation factors that impact base and bonus compensation** (e.g., origination credit, matter expansion credit, or other client development elements) **and** ensuring there is fair and equitable distribution of credit across demographic populations



Tracking **succession planning** of work and client relationships for partners nearing retirement and semi-retirement **and** taking action to ensure equal access across demographic populations



Conducting a **pay equity analysis** at least every two years **and** making meaningful changes to remedy issues to keep them from reoccurring



Providing **supplemental professional opportunities** (e.g., targeted client development coaching, leadership coaching, or sponsorship programs) specifically for underrepresented lawyers (which may be one part of a larger mentoring or professional development program open to all lawyers) **and** tracking those programs' effectiveness on retention and advancement for such populations



Participating in **non-traditional recruiting** activities (e.g., **OnRamp Fellowship**, veteran job fairs, 1L internships from non-T14 and non-Ivy League law schools) to specifically encourage historically underrepresented lawyers to apply for job opportunities (which, if done effectively, should lead to more diverse hiring through a neutral, merit-based process)

Section V:

Inclusion Practices in Practice Groups

Actions taken at the practice group level can often be more impactful on a lawyer’s experience than firmwide policies. In reviewing inclusion at your firm, consider how many of your practice groups have the following inclusive practices in place and work to implement these practices in more practice groups over time.

	None of our Practice Groups	Some of our Practice Groups (Less than 50%)	Most of our Practice Groups (50% or more, but not all)	All of our Practice Groups (Or firmwide if no pgs)
Tracking and analyzing client matter team diversity to assess diversity on client teams and identify areas where greater inclusion efforts may be warranted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing whether client pitch opportunities are equitably distributed across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing lawyers’ access to consistent and direct interaction with clients via written correspondence, phone or video, or in-person meetings to ensure all lawyers have equal access to clients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing non-billable activities for partners and associates (often called firm hours or office housework) to ensure there is an equitable distribution across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A system, tool, or person in place to ensure equitable staffing on client matters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing work experiences (e.g., first chair trial experience, taking depositions, managing deal closings, drafting licenses) for associates to ensure all lawyers have equitable access to career-enhancing work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing whether sponsorship relationships/activities are equitably distributed across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Inclusion Practices in Practice Groups (continued)

	None of our Practice Groups	Some of our Practice Groups (Less than 50%)	Most of our Practice Groups (50% or more, but not all)	All of our Practice Groups (Or firmwide if no pgs)
Tracking and analyzing the allocation and usage of business development funds (e.g., client dinners, events) to ensure they are equitably distributed across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing feedback for associates throughout the year to ensure it is provided fairly and equitably across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing leave (e.g., maternity, paternity, gender neutral, elder care) to ensure it is being used and/or made available equitably across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing whether part-time, flextime, or other agile work options are equitably utilized across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing whether nominations for various industry awards and honors (e.g., Chambers) are equitably distributed across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing whether succession planning of work and client relationships for partners nearing retirement or semi-retirement is equitably distributed across various demographic populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing whether all business generation factors that impact base and/or bonus compensation (e.g., origination credit, matter expansion credit, or other business development and client service elements) for partners and counsel originating and expanding business are fairly and equitably distributed across various demographic populations (i.e., ensuring that firm policies are applied consistently across demographic groups)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Inclusion Practices in Practice Groups (continued)

	None of our Practice Groups	Some of our Practice Groups (Less than 50%)	Most of our Practice Groups (50% or more, but not all)	All of our Practice Groups (Or firmwide if no pgs)
Tracking and analyzing recruiting and hiring outcomes to assess equity across all demographic groups? (e.g., does the firm track the percentage of white lawyers who were hired from a candidate pool compared to the percentage of URE lawyers hired) and identify areas for enhanced inclusion efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking and analyzing retention/attrition to understand whether there are discrepancies across various demographic groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A sponsorship program focused on expanding underrepresented partners' access to clients (which may be one aspect of a larger firm program open to all lawyers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Include diversity and inclusion activities as a routine agenda topic in practice group meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>