

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

CHARTER OF THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COUNCIL

Approved by the WSBA Board of Governors on March 7, 2024

Background

Under the delegated authority of the Washington Supreme Court and consistent with the WSBA mission, the DEI Council's purpose is to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal profession and legal system.

Specifically, under Washington General Rule 12(1)(j), in regulating the practice of law, one of the Washington Supreme Court's objectives includes "diversity and inclusion among legal service providers and freedom from discrimination for those receiving legal services and in the justice system." Further, under Washington General Rule 12.2(6), the Washington Supreme Court has expressly delegated to the WSBA the responsibility to "promote diversity and equality in the courts and the legal profession."

In addition to carrying out the objectives and responsibilities outlined in the General Rules and other commitments like the Washington Race and Equity Justice Initiative [commitments](#), the Council also carries out the mission of the WSBA – 'to serve the public and the members of the Bar, to ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice' – by advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal profession and legal system.

Purpose

To advance diversity, equity and inclusion and address the problems of bias, systemic inequities and underrepresentation in the legal profession, the Council's work includes but is not limited to:

- Increasing and supporting members from underrepresented communities by developing and supporting diversity pipeline and mentorship programs and partnering with schools, students and members from underrepresented communities.
- Developing diversity, equity and inclusion educational content and programs for members, volunteers and members of the public.
- Developing diversity, equity and inclusion educational content and programs designed to offer members opportunities to learn, gain skills and fulfill the MCLE ethics requirement on the mitigation of bias.
- Implementing and updating the WSBA Diversity and Inclusion Plan.
- Supporting and collaborating with the Minority Bar Associations to promote mutual goals to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal profession.
- Promoting leadership opportunities in the WSBA, legal profession and legal system by engaging in outreach to underrepresented members and the public, promoting diversity in the judiciary, and recommending candidates for At-Large Governors on the WSBA Board of Governors (BOG).
- Advising the BOG on examining issues through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens and fulfilling its responsibilities outlined in General Rule 12.2(a)(6), WSBA Strategic Goals, the Race and

Equity Justice Initiatives commitments, and approved resolutions concerning diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Council shall work with a variety of interested people and communities to ensure it centers underrepresented members and communities, and will work collaboratively with WSBA staff who manage diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

Governance and Membership

The Council shall consist of up to 18 members who will include four BOG members and 14 members who may be WSBA active members, WSBA pro bono status members, WSBA judicial status members and judicial officers, law students, law school faculty and staff, and members of the public. Of the 14 non-BOG members, at least eight shall be active members.

The membership terms for non-BOG members shall be two years, renewable for a second consecutive term. Non-BOG members who serve two consecutive terms may serve again after at least a two-year hiatus.

The membership terms for BOG members shall be a one-year term, renewable with no limit on the number of terms.

The Council shall be co-chaired by a member of the BOG and a member of the Committee who is not on the BOG. Per WSBA Bylaws, the co-chairs are appointed by the WSBA President. If an individual is appointed as the non-BOG co-chair but is not a new or returning member of the committee, they will be appointed as a member for one year, which may temporarily increase the size of the committee to 19.

The Council co-chairs shall nominate new members to the Board of Governors Nominations Committee. The Council co-chairs shall use the procedures for new member selection which includes reviewing all applications and seeking input from DEI Council members and staff liaisons to inform their nominations to the Board of Governors Nominations Committee for final appointment. Applications to serve on the Council shall be in accordance with WSBA Bylaws, policies, and procedures.

Voting

All members of the Council are eligible to vote. Judicial members may choose to recuse themselves from voting relating to any matters. If judicial members choose to recuse themselves from votes relating to court rules or legislation, on those occasions, and only on those occasions, the membership of the Council, for purposes of determining whether a supermajority have voted in favor or against a proposition, shall be reduced by the number of judges who have recused themselves. This provision does not apply if a judicial member is merely absent.

Membership Expectations

Council members are expected to serve on at least one Council workgroup. Council members who have three consecutive unexcused absences in any 12-month period will be considered as resigned from the Council. Council members may be excused for good cause by either co-chair; such an excuse should be sought prior to the meeting. The Council may seek a replacement member through the regular WSBA volunteer process, unless the absent member was nominated by the WSBA President. In that case, the WSBA President will be asked to appoint a replacement.