

# Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion & Equity

WSBA's inside-out philosophy holds that a significant inward focus is the best foundation for impacting diversity, inclusion, and equity in the legal profession. Investing in the personal development of cultural competency and awareness for WSBA staff and volunteers positively impacts how decision making, member engagement, and bar services are approached and implemented.

A 2012 membership study illustrates the diversity of the legal profession in Washington.

**Number of individuals Reporting Membership in Underrepresented Groups\***

Group	Number of Members
Women Attorneys	10,546
Attorneys of Color	2,760
LGBTQ Attorneys	489
Attorneys with Disabilities	501

\*Total WSBA membership approximately 37,000

- In 2003 the Washington State Bar Association formally established diversity as one of its nine strategic goals.
- In 2006 the Board of Governors formed its own Diversity Committee to help improve diversity within the elected leadership.
- In 2007 WSBA adopted five guiding principles, one of which was advancing and promoting “diversity, equality, and cultural understanding throughout the legal community.”
- In 2013 the WSBA Board of Governors adopted the Diversity and Inclusion Plan demonstrating its strong commitment to creating a culture of inclusion both inside the WSBA and beyond. Since that time, we have made significant progress and created community resources along the way.

## Inside

WSBA holds regular staff trainings and provides learning opportunities to staff and volunteers.



### Tools and Resources

- Diversity Dictionary
- Culture of Inclusion Philosophy
- Section Diversity Demographics



### Continuing the Conversations

- Variety of diversity related topics including:
  - Implicit Bias & Decision Making
  - Access & Ability
  - Age & Ageism
  - The Pitfalls of Color Blindness
  - Intersectionality



### Staff Training

- The Importance of Language and Ally Skills
- Race: The Power of an Illusion



### Volunteers

- Presented diversity and inclusion tools at Fall Section Leaders meeting and the Committee Chairs meeting
- Provided “Developing a Culture of Inclusion” conference call for Section leaders
- Training for the Board on equity and equitable decision making

## Out

WSBA provides events, resources and community education opportunities for the legal community.



### Tools and Resources

- Equitable Decision Making Tool
- WSBA Diversity Research Literature Review
- WSBA Intersectionality Report



### WSBA/MBA Community Outreach Events

- Varied locations across the state
- Average attendance: 30 people



### Community Education

- Attorney General's Office: Why Diversity is Important
- ATJ Conference: Equity in Decision Making [Mind the Gap]
- National Association of Bar Executives Annual and Midyear Conference



### Community Partnerships

- All 3 Law Schools - 1L Diversity Fellowships
- Seattle University - Academic Resource Center Reception
- 17 Minority Bar Associations

WSBA's Diversity & Inclusion team hosts several events throughout the year, many focusing on mentorship. A meaningful opportunity to engage with seasoned leadership is one way of expanding the experience and network of underrepresented groups. These connections, whether brief or ongoing, have the potential to positively influence an attorney's commitment to remaining in the profession.

### Experience Exchange Breakfast

Washington State Bar Association's first Experience Exchange provided newer attorneys from underrepresented groups the chance to partner with seasoned attorneys for mentoring and guidance. We look forward to expanding this event.

*"I came to this event thinking it would be my last effort at finally gaining momentum or a foothold in starting my legal career in Washington ... I am no longer wandering alone in the darkness."*

Ashton Lawrence  
Experience Exchange Mentee



*"Experience Exchange is a rare opportunity to bond and learn from someone I would otherwise have never had an opportunity to meet. My mentor is outstanding, inspirational, and quite hilarious. She was so very supportive and was happy to share her struggles and accomplishments. I look forward to the day when I can turn around and pay it forward to my own mentee."*

Dua Abudiab  
Experience Exchange Mentee



### Community Networking Events

Building community throughout Washington provides newer attorneys the chance to meet with peers in their area, forging strong community ties and strengthening professional networks.



### ARC Reception

We are proud to host the ARC Reception each year for first-year law students from the Academic Resource Center at Seattle University. It provides great opportunities for students to visit with many different attorneys, and gain their unique perspective into the law school experience.



*"We know from our Minority and Justice Commission study on perceptions of justice that people of color feel the justice system is not fair. We also know from our studies about the unmet legal needs in Washington that many people, particularly women, feel locked out of the justice system. It is the responsibility of the bench and bar to ensure an accessible system that works for everyone. The WSBA has heeded these studies and findings and is taking the issues of diversity and inclusion seriously. I am proud to be a judge and lawyer in Washington, where the legal profession is willing to look at itself critically and rise to meet the challenges that we know exist for our profession."*

Chief Justice Barbara A. Madsen,  
Washington Supreme Court

*"Thank you so much for taking the time to set up and host the 2016 ARC Reception. I met a bunch of great, passionate lawyers that gave me valuable advice. I feel so welcomed and encouraged."*

Angelica & ARC Students

Diversity & Inclusion Programs are made possible by charitable gifts to the Washington State Bar Foundation.

Donations provide funding for training, community events, program outreach and staffing.

Please support the WSBA's diversity efforts with a tax-deductible gift at [www.wsba.org/foundation](http://www.wsba.org/foundation) or [foundation@wsba.org](mailto:foundation@wsba.org)



Advancing WSBA's Vision of a Just Washington