

Talent Advisory Board Research Update – September 7, 2011
Legal Industry Diversity Reports

The State of Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession

The Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession, September 2011

http://www.theiilp.com/resources/Documents/IILP2011_Review_final.pdf

The annual review of the state of diversity in the legal profession provided current data and statistics about the diversity population in the legal industry, as well as essays that examine topics of diversity and inclusion. According to the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the minority and female representation in the legal profession had increased between 2000 and 2009, from 9.7 percent to 11.6 percent and from 28.7 percent to 32.4 percent, respectively. Despite the gains, female attorneys continue to be underrepresented at senior levels and the percentage of minority law students dropped in recent years. According to report, the percentage of female partners and associates was highest in San Francisco while Miami had the highest percentage of minority partners and associates. Some of the topics covered in the essays included discussions of the pipeline problems for African American in the legal industry; the lack of Hispanics in the legal profession despite being the fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States; the barriers faced by attorneys with disabilities and LGBT Attorneys of color; and the diversity challenges for Asian American Lawyers despite being the fastest growing racial minority group in the legal industry.

Sponsoring Women to Success

Heather Foust-Cummings, Sarah Dinolfo, Jennifer Kohler, Catalyst, August 2011

http://www.catalyst.org/file/497/sponsoring_women_to_success.pdf

Based on the findings from 93 interviews of both the sponsors and protégés, the report clarified the concept of sponsorship within an organization and how it is especially important for women to help them advance to the top level. Unlike traditional mentoring, sponsors often provided more actionable and targeted coaching specific to prepare protégés for the complexities of new roles or assignments, and advice on how to make broader and more strategic contributions to the organization. Sponsors also often helped protégés to develop skills that are necessary for advancement and gain visibility within the firm. As protégés advance to more senior levels, sponsors also play an important role in serving as advocates for protégés. For female high-performers in particular, the report discussed how sponsorship can help women to overcome the barriers they face in career advancement. The four critical features of a sponsorship relationship based on the study were trust, honesty, communication and commitment. Sponsors can also benefit from the sponsorship relation by gaining information that leads to career growth as well as personal and professional satisfaction. In order to foster sponsorship, the organization must also ensure explicit and transparent expectations for senior leaders to act as sponsors.