

More Than a Medallion: State Bar Launches Partners in Diversity Program



BY JENNIFER SMITH-PULSIPHER,
NEVADA LAWYER STAFF

Innovative ideas, higher morale, engaging clients – these are just a few of the benefits that come when law firms and other businesses invest in their organization’s culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). DEI programs are smart not only for your people, but they are also smart for the bottom line.

And that’s why in March 2023, the State Bar of Nevada launched its Partners in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program. We want to recognize those firms that have already incorporated DEI initiatives into their law practices, share those firms’ success stories to inspire others, and help partners share the important

DEI work they have done with their peers and current and former clients. Partners in the program receive a vibrant medallion that they are encouraged to display on websites, social media posts, and other outlets.

McDonald Carano was the first firm to earn its medallion through this new program. Firm vice president and attorney Mackenzie Warren Kay said that she’s proud of the hard work the medallion represents.

“While McDonald Carano is incredibly proud to be the first law firm in the state to receive the DEI Medallion – it’s the work behind the accolade that matters,” she said. “We plan to use the medallion as a continuous reminder that, while grateful for the small head start, there is much work to be done. McDonald Carano understands that DEI is essential to our future, and we are committed to putting in the work to earn that medallion each day.”

To earn the medallion, firms must submit a statement affirming that they have completed at least five initiatives from a list of those projects the state bar has identified as being meaningful to the support of DEI. Examples of qualifying initiatives include:

- **Recruitment** activities, such as actively recruiting diverse job applicants through outlets such as affinity bar associations and minority job fairs;
- **Retention** practices, such as establishing empowerment committees or mentor programs to support women and minority attorneys;





- **Pipeline** initiatives, such as supporting law-related education activities through local high schools or participating in pro bono work;
- **Training** programs, such as ensuring all firm attorneys take three hours of CLE programming on DEI; or
- **Other** DEI work, such as unique programs at your firm that can be shared to inspire others.

One example of a qualifying initiative can be seen in the work being done by the National Diversity Task Force established by Wood Smith Henning & Berman LLP (WSHB).

According to Janice M. Michaels, partner at the firm, “From recruitment to training to opportunity and advancement, we honor and value diversity as the driving force behind our growth and success as a firm. ... The National Diversity Task Force has implemented mentoring and training programs to support the development of diverse talent. ... In addition, WSHB actively partners with law schools, firm clients and industry organizations across the country to further mutual diversity objectives. WSHB’s National Diversity Task Force develops and presents a wide array of webinars, presentations and celebrations of diversity as well as overseeing a comprehensive mentoring program.”

Kaempfer Crowell also has a DEI Committee staffed by attorneys. This year, the committee’s work has focused on hosting monthly heritage events.

“In February, our firm luncheon was catered by two Black-owned businesses in honor of Black History Month, and an associate gave a presentation about the businesses,” said Briana

Martinez, co-chair of the firm’s DEI Committee. “In March, we had Sandra Douglass Morgan, the president of the [Las Vegas] Raiders, come in and speak to the entire firm for Women’s History Month. We had our monthly luncheon catered by women-owned businesses and highlighted those businesses in a newsletter.”

The state bar has announced several organizations that have earned the medallion in 2023. As of April 2023, the partners were:

- Armstrong Teasdale;
- Clark Hill;
- Collins + Collins;
- Dickinson Wright;
- Evans Fears & Schuttert LLP;
- Goldsmith and Guymon;
- H & P Law;
- Hone Law;
- Hutchison & Steffen;
- Kaempfer Crowell;
- Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada;
- Lewis Roca;
- McCormick, Barstow, Sheppard, Wayte & Carruth, LLP;
- McDonald Carano;
- Sherman & Howard;
- Shook and Stone;
- Snell & Wilmer;
- Taylor Law Group; and
- Wood Smith Henning & Berman.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

State Bar Launches Partners in Diversity Program

Lewis Roca’s qualifying initiatives included the work done monthly by its 12-member DEI committee and a legal writing internship the firm provides to minority law students. According to Whitney Murray at Lewis Roca, the Partners in Diversity program is one more source of motivation to support the firm’s efforts. Murray said the state bar’s “focus on diversity encourages our firm’s efforts to ensure diversity and inclusion in an industry that has historically been resistant to change.”

The state bar helps firms communicate their DEI efforts and successes. Qualifying partners not only receive the medallion image for their own marketing efforts, but the bar will also promote partners in its own outlets, such as *Nevada Lawyer* magazine, the state bar’s weekly eNews, and on social media.

Dickinson Wright’s DEI Committee members Cynthia Alexander and John Krieger see the potential of using the medallion in firm communications.

“Clients, law students, and lateral attorney hires are all looking for evidence that firms are actively engaging in DEI, and programs like the DEI Medallion through the State Bar of Nevada establish tangible metrics for firms to achieve,” they said.

In addition, the program has already given the firm ideas for expanding their own efforts. “While Dickinson Wright already engages in many of the activities indicated on the DEI Medallion list, there were some

items that DW had not yet considered,” they said.

Angela Cook from the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada agrees.

“At Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, we believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion leads to better, innovative approaches to serving our clients and ensures we are closer to the community we serve,” she said.

To learn more about the DEI resources available through the State Bar of Nevada, or apply for your firm’s Partnership in DEI medallion, visit www.nvbar.org > For Lawyers > Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Focus on diversity encourages our firm’s efforts to ensure diversity and inclusion in an industry that has historically been resistant to change.

SERVE MEGAS
LAWYER MANAGED PROCESS SERVERS
EST. 2011

Ready for quick and efficient process serving, managed by a real Nevada lawyer?

9811 W. Charleston Blvd., 2-732
Las Vegas, NV 89117

(702) 209-2140

WWW.SERVE.VEGAS

- PROCESS SERVICE
- RUSH & SAME DAY SERVICE
- STAKEOUT
- SKIP TRACING
- BACKGROUND CHECKS
- ASSET SEARCH
- INSURANCE POLICY RESEARCH