

American Bar Association

Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession

MINORITY COUNSEL PROGRAM



INTRODUCTION, MISSION, VISION AND SUCCESS

INTRODUCTION

In May 1988, the American Bar Association Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession sponsored the development of a program designed to encourage corporations to retain lawyers of color for legal services. Originally called the Minority Counsel Demonstration Program and later renamed the Minority Counsel Program, it achieved and maintained a high level of success for a number of years. In October 1998, the Minority Counsel Program leadership redefined and revised the course of the program and its objectives. The result is the Minority Counsel Program with a renewed sense of purpose to assist corporations and racially and ethnically diverse lawyers to develop mutually rewarding business relationships through structured networking and opportunities for professional interaction.

MISSION

The American Bar Association Minority Counsel Program promotes diversity in the legal profession through education and by building relationships between corporations and lawyers who are racially and ethnically diverse.

VISION

Our vision is guided by the needs of our members, marketplace dynamics, and strong leadership with an eye toward full and equal participation in the legal profession by all.

SUCCESS

Our success is determined by the strength of the commitment of corporations and law firms to the goal of diversity. Through their commitment, our members will demonstrate the value of diversity in the marketplace.

FULFILLING OUR MISSION

1. Facilitate contacts between corporate in-house counsel and racially and ethnically diverse lawyers for the specific purpose of developing mutually beneficial business relationships.
2. Provide opportunities for racially and ethnically diverse lawyers to establish and increase their representation in corporate and governmental entities.
3. Encourage majority firms to hire racially and ethnically diverse lawyers and assign significant legal projects to those lawyers.
4. Promote and enhance co-counsel arrangements and joint ventures between majority-owned and minority-owned firms.
5. Increase the visibility of minority counsel in public and private litigation.
6. Foster business opportunities for future generations of minority attorneys.

GOALS

1. To promote the development of strong, long-term business relationships between corporations and racially and ethnically diverse lawyers.
2. To provide lawyers the opportunity to demonstrate their substantive knowledge and skills through speaking engagements, panel discussions, continuing legal education programs and publications.
3. To serve as a leader in the mentoring of prospective and new lawyers.
4. To support pro bono activities by Minority Counsel Program members.
5. To promote the hiring and retention of racially and ethnically diverse lawyers.
6. To assist corporations and law firms to realize their diversity goals.
7. To review and assess the commitment of corporations and law firms to diversity.

CORPORATE PARTICIPATION

All corporations are invited to participate in the Minority Counsel Program. Corporate participation is vital to the success of the program.

How do corporations participate?

- Send one or more corporate representatives to each of the Minority Counsel Program meetings. Representatives should have the authority to make business decisions in the corporation, especially hiring decisions.
- Agree to participate in one or more meetings each year.
- Contribute an annual membership fee of \$1,500.
- Complete the confidential Minority Counsel Program Annual Survey. The Minority Counsel Program Annual Survey is used to measure and recognize progress in the employment of racially and ethnically diverse lawyers.
- Assist in identifying other corporations willing to join and work with the Minority Counsel Program.

How does my corporation join?

- Complete the membership application and return it with a check for \$1,500, payable to the American Bar Association.
- Make a commitment to participate for a minimum of three years.

Why should my corporation join?

- Participation in the Minority Counsel Program will assist you in meeting your diversity goals in the area of legal services.

LAWYER AND LAW FIRM PARTICIPATION

All individual lawyers and law firms, whether from minority-owned or majority-owned firms, are invited to participate.

How do law firms participate?

- Members of the firm who participate must be members in good standing with the American Bar Association.
- Contribute an annual membership fee of \$1,500.
- Participate, if interested, as a guest speaker at one of the meetings.
- Complete the Minority Counsel Program annual survey.

How does my law firm join?

- Complete the membership application and return it with a check for \$1,500, payable to the American Bar Association.

Why should my law firm join?

- Participation in the Minority Counsel Program promotes business development opportunities.
- Participation provides opportunities to enhance your knowledge about cutting edge strategies that will enable you to take advantage of the diversity in your firm.
- Participation raises your firm's profile among corporations and other firms that have expressed a commitment to racial and ethnic diversity.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES/OTHER AGENCIES

How do governmental bodies or other agencies participate?

- Pay the registration fee for the meeting you plan to attend.
- Prepare and submit in advance an informational report about your agency and its use of outside counsel.
- Designate a meeting representative who has authority to retain outside counsel.

How do governmental bodies or other agencies join?

- Complete the membership form and return it to the American Bar Association Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession.

Why should governmental bodies or other agencies join?

- Participation in the Minority Counsel Program will assist you in meeting your diversity goals.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Corporate

Law Firm

Size of Law Firm: _____

Provide a list names of all lawyers in the firm who are ABA members (in good standing) under separate cover.

Minority owned: yes no

If the answer is yes, please provide a list of minority owners.

Governmental Bodies/Other Agencies

Name

Title

Corporate/Law Firm/Governmental Bodies/Other Agencies Name

Address

City State Zip code

Telephone Fax Email

Contact Person Title

Telephone Fax Email

YES, we have reviewed the criteria for membership and would like to participate in the ABA Minority Counsel Program.

Enclosed is our check (\$1,500 payable to the American Bar Association) for membership beginning September 1, 200__ to August 31, 200__.

Signature of General Counsel, Senior Officer or Partner

Date

Mail (membership application and check):

ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession
Attn: ABA Minority Counsel Program
321 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60610

American Bar Association

Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession

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Website: <http://www.abanet.org/minorities>