

Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association Strategic Plan for Diversity & Inclusion 2020 and Beyond

Adopted by Board November 2020

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Minnesota Chapter of the FBA Tagline:

“Building Community Through Action.”

Minnesota Chapter of the FBA Value Proposition:

The Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association is committed to maintaining a culture that respects, values, and includes all individuals in the Association, the legal profession, and the justice system, regardless of their various unique differences. The Chapter believes that our diversity enriches us, and our inclusion empowers us. Diverse membership generates diverse ideas. Diverse ideas inspire targeted action for the betterment of our judicial system. The commitment to diversity and inclusion is part of our collective duty as lawyers to uphold the Rule of Law and ensure that our justice system considers and reflects the diverse nature of our society. Through thoughtful programming, events, networking opportunities, outreach initiatives, and collaboration with other diverse groups, the Chapter not only connects people through action, but builds community, both inside and outside the Association.

Five Goals of Strategic Plan for Increasing Diversity and Inclusion:

- **Goal 1:** Engage in ongoing and effective **communication** with diverse legal communities about what the Minnesota FBA does (mission, activities and programs, opportunities) and why it is important (value proposition)
- **Goal 2:** Increase diversity of **membership** in the Minnesota FBA
- **Goal 3:** Increase diversity of **leadership** in the Minnesota FBA
- **Goal 4:** Integrate commitment to diversity and inclusion throughout **infrastructure** of the Chapter
- **Goal 5:** Leverage and build **external partnerships** to advance diversity and inclusion in the FBA

Goal 1: Communication

Engage in ongoing and effective communication with diverse legal communities about what the Minnesota FBA does (mission, activities and programs, opportunities) and why it is important (value proposition).

Goal 1 Growth Action Items (to be implemented over defined period)

- 1. Develop process for identifying and selecting diverse candidates to be featured in *Bar Talk* and the *Federal Lawyer*.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: *Bar Talk* Chairs and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: Fall 2020 Board Meeting: *Bar Talk* Chairs, in collaboration with Diversity Chairs, to develop a process for selecting candidates.

- 2. Develop process for publishing testimonials.** Identify newsletters, editors, and editorial calendars of Affinity Bars and identify opportunities to publish mini-testimonials highlighting the D&I Value Proposition.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: *Bar Talk* Chairs and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: Fall 2020 Board Meeting: *Bar Talk* Chairs, in collaboration with Diversity Chairs, to develop a process for identifying and selecting authors and a general guide to subject matter (e.g., list of questions, key topic, etc.).

- 3. Further development of D&I Web Page.** Continue to update and develop content for D&I page on Chapter web site.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Digital Communications Chairs and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: Fall 2020 Board Meeting: Communications Chairs and Diversity Chairs present plan for further development of the Chapter D&I web page.

- 4. Evaluate inclusivity of Web Page to determine whether it meets the needs of users, including users with visual disabilities.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Digital Communications Chairs and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: Fall 2020 Board Meeting: Communications Chairs and Diversity Chairs to present update on analysis and any steps taken to foster inclusivity.

- 5. Develop D&I History Project.** Collect, organize, and house historical information on Chapter's D&I programming, and draft history for publication in *Bar Talk*, *Federal Lawyer*, and on the Chapter web site. Consult with Chief Judge Tunheim and committee that is writing history of Minnesota District Court and Courthouses.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Diversity Chairs and Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, in consultation with past leaders of that Committee, and with assistance from the *Bar Talk* Chairs and Digital Communications Chairs for publication.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. Fall 2020 Board Meeting: Diversity Chairs to present plan for execution.
 - ii. December 2020-May 2021: Publish series of articles.

Goal 1 Sustaining Tasks (to continue annually)

- 1. Review and update D&I Value Proposition.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Digital Communications Chairs, *Bar Talk* Chairs and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: Spring Board Meeting: Leaders who are responsible for this initiative will present any recommended adjustments or updates to Board.

- 2. Review and update D&I Communications Plan.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Digital Communications Chairs, *Bar Talk* Chairs and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: Fall Board Meeting: Leaders who are responsible for this initiative will present any recommended updates to Board.

- 3. Continue invitations to Affinity Bars directly and via Affinity Bar listserv.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing:
 - i. Invitations are ongoing.
 - ii. Spring Board Meeting: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator will present a report identifying successes and weaknesses with efforts, and identify proposed changes to make future contacts more effective.

- 4. Continue to develop D&I Web Page.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Digital Communications Chairs and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing:
 - i. Development and updating will be ongoing.
 - ii. Spring Board Meeting: Digital Communications Chairs and Diversity Chairs to present any recommended updates to Board.

- 5. Continue to publish mini-testimonials for publication highlighting the D&I Value Proposition.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: *Bar Talk* Chairs, in consultation with Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: Spring Board Meeting: *Bar Talk* Chairs submit a report describing testimonial(s) published in preceding year, and tentative plan for at least one to be published in the coming year.

- 6. Continue to publish about diverse Chapter members and leaders.** Actively work to feature diverse Minnesota judges and lawyers in *Bar Talk* and *Federal Lawyer*.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: *Bar Talk* Chairs, in consultation with Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: Spring Board Meeting: *Bar Talk* Chairs to submit a report describing at least two features in *Bar Talk* and/or *The Federal Lawyer* published in preceding year, and tentative plan for one to be published in the coming year.

Goal 2: Diverse Membership

Increase diversity of membership in the Minnesota FBA.

Goal 2 Growth Action Items (to be implemented over defined period)

1. **Consider diversity census or survey.** The Chapter should consider a diversity census or survey of its membership so that it may establish a benchmark for current membership and measure its efforts to increase diversity. Alternatively, the Chapter should lobby the national FBA to conduct this survey and include diversity identifiers in the membership application. Determine whether diversity census or survey will be conducted by the national FBA and, if not, how the Chapter will gather this data about its members.¹
 - a. **Leaders Responsible:** National Delegate, Membership Chairs, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, President, and President-elect.
 - b. **Timing:** Those responsible to report to Chapter Board on progress at Spring 2021 Board Meeting.

Goal 2 Sustaining Tasks (to continue annually)

1. **Continue to Support Key Affinity Bar Events.** The Chapter's sponsorship of and attendance at Affinity Bars is an important signal of our support for diversity. With the help of the Affinity Bar Liaisons, the Chapter will identify at least one event that is important to each Affinity Bar and implement a plan for attendance by Chapter Leaders (and to the extent possible, sponsorship by the Chapter).
 - a. **Leaders Responsible:** President, President-elect, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Chairs of Diversity, and Affinity Bar Liaisons to prepare the plan.
 - b. **Timing:** Fall Board Meeting: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator to present report on past year, and recommended plan to the Board for coming year.
2. **Continue to evaluate best method for collaboration with D&I efforts of non-Affinity Bar Associations.**
 - a. **Leaders Responsible:** President-elect, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, and Affinity Bar Liaisons.
 - b. **Timing:** Fall Board Meeting: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator to report on implementation of plan to collaborate with non-Affinity Bar organizations from prior year and make any appropriate updates or adjustments.
3. **Continue appointment of and reporting by Affinity Bar Liaisons.**
 - a. **Leaders Responsible:** Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Affinity Bar Liaisons.

¹ During the course of developing this updated plan, we received feedback opposed to conducting a survey. This task item – which requires *consideration of* but not necessarily adoption of, a survey – remains in the plan to foster further discussion. Leaders responsible for this task should be certain to solicit feedback before proceeding.

- b. Timing:
 - i. Fall Board Meeting: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator will submit a report identifying the affinity bar liaisons for the coming year and, in consultation with affinity bar liaisons, will make recommendations to the Board about ways Chapter can support Affinity Bars.
 - ii. Spring Board Meeting: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator will report on the outcomes of the actions recommended and agreed to at the Fall Board Meeting.

4. Continue to ensure diversity of presenters at Chapter programs.

- a. Leaders Responsible: Each Committee and Program Chair to include in their reports to Chapter Board (a) a specific plan for ensuring diversity of presenters at each upcoming Chapter programs and (b) a post-event discussion of how plan was implemented and the successes and challenges in meeting this goal.
- b. Timing: Ongoing.

5. Continue to ensure Chapter programs address diversity and inclusion.

- a. Leaders Responsible: Each Committee and Program Chair include in their reports to Chapter Board (a) specific plan for how each program will address diversity and inclusion and (b) a post-event discussion of how plan was implemented and what the successes and challenges were in meeting this goal.
- b. Timing: Ongoing.

6. Continue to make personal invitations to diverse judges and lawyers.

- a. Leaders Responsible: Program and Committee Chairs, Membership Chairs, Digital Communications Chairs, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, President.
- b. Timing:
 - i. Ongoing: Digital Communications chairs to ensure that all online registration forms include a message that all are welcome and invited to attend and ask registrant to identify whether he or she is an FBA member.
 - ii. Within 30 days of each event thereafter: Program and Committee Chair will send follow up letter to each person who registered for the event who is not an FBA member.

Goal 3: Diverse Leadership

Increase diversity of leadership in the Minnesota FBA.

Goal 3 Growth Action Items (to be implemented over defined period)

- 1. Explore avenues to cultivate diverse and inclusive leadership pipeline.** Investigate opportunities for Chapter to join efforts to build a diverse leadership pipeline, such as Collaborative Leadership Bar Academy (“CBLA”).
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Newer Lawyers Chairs with Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, President and President-elect, and Nominations Committee.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. By March 1, 2021: Newer Lawyers Chairs investigate and consult with the SIC, President and President-elect about this opportunity.
 - ii. Spring 2021 Board Meeting: The Newer Lawyers Chairs will present the recommended plan and any associated budget request to the Board.

Goal 3 Sustaining Tasks (to continue annually)

- 1. Implement plan to cultivate diverse and inclusive leadership pipeline.** Implement plan to be approved by Board at Spring 2021 Board Meeting.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Newer Lawyers Chairs.
 - b. Timing: Implement plan as set forth in plan as approved by Board.
- 2. Review and update D&I Leadership Application and Nomination process.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Nominations Committee
 - b. Timing: Fall Board Meeting: Nominations Committee will report to Board on successes and challenges and recommend any appropriate updates or adjustments.
- 3. Publish leadership application and nomination process.** Publish description of FBA nomination process and leadership opportunities on Chapter web page and in *Bar Talk*.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President-elect, Nominations Committee, *Bar Talk* Chairs and Digital Communications Chairs.
 - b. Timing: By January 15.
- 4. Publicize opportunities to get involved.**
 - a. Leaders who are responsible: *Bar Talk* Chairs, Digital Communications Chairs, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator.
 - b. Timing and implementation:
 - i. By September 1: Digital Communications Chairs will update Chapter web page with committees and contact information for new leaders.
 - ii. By September 15: article on this topic will publish in *Bar Talk*
 - iii. By September 30: President will send communication to Chapter and Strategic Initiatives Coordinator will distribute to Affinity Bars.

Goal 4: Infrastructure

Integrate commitment to diversity and inclusion throughout infrastructure of the Chapter.

Growth Action Items (to be implemented over defined period)

- 1. Establish an inclusive Chapter calendar.** Establish a calendar accessible to the FBA Executive Committee with religious and cultural observance days and affinity bar events.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, in consultation with Digital Communications Chairs
 - b. Timing: Beginning in fall of 2020: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator to develop and maintain a calendar of dates, such as religious holidays, key Affinity Bar events, etc. and provide access to the Executive Committee.

- 2. Create Mentorship Committee and include D&I in Chapter’s mentoring work.** Create a new Mentorship Committee, which will collaborate with other Committees to recruit mentors, identify mentorship opportunities and coordinate requests from various groups. Incorporate D&I by ensuring that at least one Diversity Committee member participates in the leadership and coordination of mentoring opportunities
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Mentorship Chairs, in conjunction with Law School Outreach Chairs (“LSOC”), Newer Lawyers Chairs and at least one Diversity Committee member
 - b. Timing: Fall 2020 Board Meeting: Mentorship Chairs to present specific recommendations to the Board.

- 3. Evaluate discounted/blended membership rates for members of Affinity Bars.** The Chapter must consider the financial barrier to entry and consider ways to make membership easier for traditionally underrepresented communities. Recognizing that the cost of membership is set by the national FBA, the Chapter will explore local solutions.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Treasurer, Membership Chairs, President-elect, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator and Long Range Planning Committee
 - c. Timing: Fall 2020 Board Meeting: Treasurer, Membership Chairs, President-elect will submit their report and recommendations to the Board.

- 4. Evaluate Chapter Bylaws.** Evaluate Chapter Bylaws to determine if any amendments are needed to align with the Chapter’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Long Range Planning Committee (“LRPC”) and Secretary.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. By August 1, 2020: LRPC to have analyzed Chapter Bylaws and present initial recommendations to President-elect
 - ii. Fall 2020 Board Meeting: LRPC recommend any updates to Board.
 - iii. 2020-2021: Implement any changes to the Bylaws.

5. **Evaluate Chapter Committee structure.** Over the course of the 2020-21 bar year, the Chapter will consider whether the existing committee structure best serves the needs of our diverse legal community. For example, immigration law, Indian law, and employment law are active areas of federal practice that are not aligned with current Chapter committees (but have national FBA sections). Similarly, in-house lawyers and solo practitioners are active participants in federal court and do not have a designated cohort in the Chapter committee structure. Many of these areas involve and are of interest to diverse judges and lawyers. If adjustments to committee structure are not warranted, we will offer avenues to best serve lawyers and judges who practice in these areas, such as special programming, events, or otherwise.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President-elect in consultation with Chapter Leaders
 - b. Timing:
 - i. By August 1, 2021: President-elect will determine whether further consideration of this issue is warranted and if so, next steps to be taken.
 - ii. Fall 2021: President-elect to present recommended changes to Chapter Committee structure and plan for implementation.
 - iii. Implement recommended next steps for amendments to Chapter Committee structure on schedule approved by the Board.

6. **Establish Strategic Initiatives Coordinator Role.** It became apparent during execution of the initial Strategic Plan that it is necessary to have one person designated to coordinate the affinity bar liaisons and assist the President and President-elect with overseeing execution of the D&I Plan. The position needs to be further defined.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, President, President-elect and Diversity Chairs
 - b. Timing: By May 1, 2020: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator will develop a value proposition, job description and overview of job responsibilities to be submitted to the other responsible leaders for consideration.

Sustaining Tasks (to continue annually)

1. **Construct Chapter calendar in view of dates important to diverse communities.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Secretary, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, all Committee Chairs
 - b. Timing: Ongoing.
 - i. Strategic Initiatives Coordinator will populate initial dates in the calendar and will incorporate dates from court liaison and others.
 - ii. A court liaison will provide information about court-related events.
 - iii. Each Committee Chair will consult the calendar before selecting a date for upcoming events. Tentative dates for a Committee event should be entered into the calendar so that other Committees do not double-book. Tentative dates should be updated to final when possible.
 - iv. *Bar Talk* Chairs and Digital Communications Chairs will obtain information from the calendar, and will publicize events accordingly.

2. **Continue to include D&I in Chapter’s mentoring work.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Mentorship Chairs, in conjunction with Law School Outreach Chairs (“LSOC”), Newer Lawyers Chairs and at least one Diversity Committee member.
 - b. Timing: Fall Board Meeting: Mentorship Chairs will report to Board on successes and challenges of prior year and recommend any appropriate changes.

3. **Include D&I in Chapter budgeting and financial planning.** Evaluate Chapter fund balance and policy in view of our commitment to diversity and inclusion, including continuation of ongoing work (*e.g.*, budget for Diversity Committee and Grant Committee) and new opportunities (*e.g.*, funding for Affinity Bar Liaisons, sponsorship of Affinity Bar events, adjusting cost structure for programs to account for membership in Affinity Bars, and any other initiatives that are proposed by Chapter Leaders).
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Treasurers, in consultation with President, President-elect, Affinity Bar Liaisons, Diversity Chairs, Grant Chairs, Long Range Planning Committee and other Chapter Leaders.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. Throughout the year, the Treasurers will solicit and track budget allocations, requests, and recommendations related to D&I.
 - ii. By June 1: data, requests, and recommendations sent to the Treasurers.
 - iii. By August 1: Treasurers will prepare recommended budgetary plan for diversity and inclusion for the coming year.

4. **Re-Evaluate discounted/blended membership rates for members of Affinity Bars.**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Treasurer, Membership Chairs, President-elect, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator and Long Range Planning Committee
 - b. Timing: Fall Board Meeting: Treasurer, Membership Chairs and President-elect will report to Board on successes and challenges and any recommended changes.

5. **Provide leadership on execution of the D&I Strategic Plan.** Provide guidance to Chapter Leadership on their roles in executing the Strategic Plan. Evaluate whether any Growth Action Items should be proposed for the coming year.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President and President-elect, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
 - b. Timing and implementation:
 - i. Annually: Strategic Initiatives Coordinator shall meet with Chairs for each committee at least once per year to discuss the status of their tasks under the D&I plan and any recommendations or resources needed.
 - ii. Spring Board Meeting: President to present specific recommendations for Growth Action Items to be added to the D&I Plan, if any, to the Board.

6. **Continue to ensure accessibility to all Chapter events.** Ensure event locations are welcoming and accessible to diverse speakers and attendees.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Each Committee and Program Chair
 - b. Timing:

- i. Ongoing: When planning each event, Chairs will consider and ensure that the venue is welcoming and make any appropriate accommodations.
- ii. Ongoing: Invitations to all Chapter programs shall state “*Individuals who need accommodations should contact [_____] in advance of the meeting date.*”²

7. Evaluate success of D&I Strategic Plan in meeting its five stated goals and determine whether any changes are necessary for next 4 year period.

- a. Leaders Responsible: President, President-elect, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Diversity Chairs, and LRPC.
- b. Timing: Fall Board Meeting every 4 years starting in 2020: President, President-elect, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Diversity Chairs, and LRPC will present outline for its evaluation and any proposed modifications to the Strategic Plan.

² Recommended language from Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. See also <https://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm> for guidelines for making events accessible.

Goal 5: External Partnerships

Leverage and build external partnerships to advance diversity and inclusion in the FBA.³

Growth Action Items (to be implemented over defined period)

- 1. Plan and host roundtables on diversity and inclusion “Best Practices.”** The Chapter can learn a great deal from successful diversity and inclusion policies/practices implemented by corporations in Minnesota, as well as non-profit legal organizations, law firm diversity committees, and other bar organizations. By building these partnerships, the Chapter will learn additional “best practices” concerning diversity and inclusion. The Chapter will invite leaders from these organizations to participate in roundtable discussions hosted by the FBA. By creating a space at the roundtable for other organizations that are pursuing similar goals, the FBA’s diversity and inclusion efforts are more likely to be effective.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President to appoint members of Board to chair roundtable.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. By June 1, 2021: First roundtable event to occur.
 - ii. By August 1, 2021: Chairs of roundtable event to circulate report of event and its outcome to Board.

- 2. Plan and host D&I Summit.** Plan a Diversity & Inclusion Summit involving Affinity Bars, other local bars (MSBA, HCBA, etc.), Corporate Counsel, Non-Profits, Law Firm Diversity Committees, and other members of the federal community.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President to appoint members of Board to chair summit.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. Fall 2020 Board Meeting: Leaders will present the plan to the Board.
 - ii. By August 1, 2021: Event will have taken place.

Sustaining Tasks (to continue annually)

- 1. Continued outreach by Chapter President.** The Chapter President will continue to personally reach out to presidents of the Affinity Bars to establish relationships and talk about potential ways for organizations to collaborate. The Strategic Initiatives Coordinator will help to coordinate and will attend these meetings.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: Chapter President, President-elect, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. By December 1: President will connect with each Affinity Bar President, with SIC to coordinate.

³ Affinity Bar Liaisons, as set forth under Goal 2, are also a key component of Goal 5.

- ii. Spring Board Meeting: SIC or President will report to Board on outreach.
2. **Continued invitations by Chapter President to Monthly Luncheons.** Chapter President will continue to invite each Affinity Bar leader to attend at least one monthly luncheon per year as a special guest of the Chapter.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President and Chairs of Monthly Luncheons.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. Beginning in fall: President and Chairs of Monthly Luncheons to plan invitation schedule.
 - ii. Spring Board Meeting: President and Chairs of Monthly Luncheons to report to Board on invitations and acceptances.
 3. **Continued invitations by Chapter President to Federal Judges' Dinner Dance.** Chapter President will continue to invite Affinity Bar leaders to be special guests of the Chapter at annual Federal Judges' Dinner Dance.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President and Chairs of Special Events.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. Fall Board Meeting: President and Chairs of Special Events to report to Board on invitations and acceptances for prior spring's Dinner Dance.
 - ii. February: President and Chairs of Special Events to send personal invitations to Presidents of each Affinity Bar for upcoming Dinner Dance.
 4. **Continue to host roundtables on diversity and inclusion "Best Practices."**
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President to appoint members of Board to chair roundtable.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. By June 1: Roundtable event to occur.
 - ii. By August 1: Chairs of roundtable event to circulate report of event and its outcome to Board.
 5. **Continue to host D&I Summit.** Plan a Diversity & Inclusion Summit involving Affinity Bars, other local bars (MSBA, HCBA, etc.), Corporate Counsel, Non-Profits, Law Firm Diversity Committees, and other members of the federal community.
 - a. Leaders Responsible: President to appoint members of Board to plan summit.
 - b. Timing:
 - i. Fall Board Meeting: Leaders who are responsible for this event will present the plan to the Board.
 - ii. By August 1 of following year (or every two years if biennial): Event will have taken place.