

NCAJ DIVERSITY PLAN

I. NCAJ Commitment to Diversity and Equity

Goal: Reduce bias and enhance diversity through implementation of our Diversity Statement

Objectives:

- Promote full and equal participation in NCAJ, our profession, and the justice system by all persons.
- Reduce bias in the legal profession and the justice system.

In the last few decades, NCAJ has undertaken a wide range of diversity efforts. Those efforts have included the work of the North Carolina Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice System (NCCCRED), NCAJ's Task Force on Mass Incarceration, the Hispanic/Latino Division, and NCAJ Women's Caucus. In addition to these efforts, many of NCAJ's Sections, Divisions, and Committees have made diversity a priority.

On April 7, 2017, the Board of Governors approved the **NCAJ Diversity Statement** which states,

Today, as before in history, there is a widespread sense of sweeping local, national and global change. While there is a range of opinions about the nature and meaning of these changes, there is no question that we are collectively experiencing a heightened sense of uncertainty and anxiety. At such a time, it is important to publicly reiterate the unwavering mission of the North Carolina Advocates for Justice and the constant that defines who we are, what we do, and who we represent.

We stand for the rights of all, regardless of race, age, gender, religion, nationality, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other quality that defines us. Who we are makes each of us unique. Though different from one another in many ways, we share a commitment to the rights granted to us by our constitutions and statutes. NCAJ remains committed to protecting those rights through our members' representation of their clients, and our legislative, executive and judicial advocacy efforts. NCAJ is resolute in its dedication to liberty and justice for



all, and to a diverse and inclusive community that extends those rights to -- and recognizes the humanity of -- everyone.

The Diversity + Inclusion Task Force (DITF) and the Board of Governors have decided to establish an NCAJ-wide diversity plan.

II. Purposes of the Diversity Plan

This Diversity Plan is intended to guide NCAJ in the intentional pursuit of diversity within NCAJ itself, and thereby to promote full and equal participation in NCAJ by all eligible members and the reduction of bias in NCAJ. When implemented effectively, the Diversity Plan will foster the recruitment and retention of diverse members in NCAJ, and their advancement through its leadership; enhance opportunities for diverse individuals to participate in NCAJ activities and programs, including the provision of accommodations to persons with disabilities; promote a culture of inclusion that attracts diverse members of the profession to NCAJ; educate NCAJ members and leaders about the benefits and importance of diversity; and, by building diversity within NCAJ, support NCAJ's efforts to protect the rights granted to us by our constitutions and statutes through our members' representation of their clients, and our legislative, executive and judicial advocacy efforts.

For the purposes of this Diversity Plan, the term "diversity" generally represents diversity, inclusion, and equity. Diversity often pertains to the numbers – ensuring sufficient numbers of targeted populations are represented. Diversity includes race, age, gender, religion, nationality, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Inclusion addresses how well the diverse individuals are included and participating in all aspects of the organization. Equity focuses on creating opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to participation. In summary, this Diversity Plan is designed to achieve not just diversity – the presence of legal professionals from all backgrounds – but inclusion as well – their full and equal participation in NCAJ.

III. Objectives of the Diversity Plan

The Diversity Plan sets forth numerous objectives and broad goals aimed at implementing the NCAJ Diversity Statement. Certain implementation

recommendations are set forth as specific actions NCAJ is urged to undertake in the immediate future.

- A. Widely disseminate the Diversity Statement and Plan within the NCAJ and publicly, including:**
1. Membership-wide dissemination of the Diversity Statement and Plan after adoption, with a cover letter or email from the NCAJ President to existing and new members.
 2. Continuous availability of the Diversity Statement and Plan through pertinent pages on the NCAJ website and the www.ncaj.com/diversity website.
 3. Reference to the Diversity Statement and Plan in member solicitation materials.
- B. Promote and track diversity within NCAJ's leadership, including:**
1. Executive Committee.
 2. Board of Governors.
 3. Sections, Divisions, and other committees.
- C. Promote and track diversity in NCAJ's leadership nominations and development processes.**
1. Require diversity as an emphasis in all leadership nominations processes, including diversity among the nominations of decision-makers.
 2. Urge Sections to emphasize diversity in leadership and activities.
 3. Build diversity-related sessions and training into Board of Governors meetings.
 4. Designate two DITF members per Section who will report to Section Chair about implementation of the Diversity Plan.
- D. Promote diversity in NCAJ membership.**
1. Marketing and membership solicitation materials should be welcoming to diverse populations.
 2. NCAJ entities are urged to engage in active marketing, recruitment, and outreach efforts to affinity bars and other professional organizations, legal communities, and law schools to promote diversity.

- E. Promote diversity in CLE and other programming, both live and virtual.**
1. Implement strategic actions to improve diversity among speakers, moderators, and attendees.
 2. Ensure program content appeals to diverse communities.
 3. Urge NCAJ entities to explore partnering or co-sponsoring opportunities with affinity bars and other organizations that can contribute to diversity.
 4. Ensure program venues and materials are accessible to participants with disabilities.
 5. Urge NCAJ entities to use program locations and venues, as well as social media, to enhance opportunities for participation by diverse lawyers and law students (e.g., locations that may minimize cost barriers; venues that may increase diverse community participation, like HBCU law schools and affinity bar association locations; and social networking sites that may increase marketing efforts to diverse communities).
 6. Promote diversity in NCAJ publications (hard copy and electronic) by recruiting diverse contributors and ensuring that publication content appeals to diverse communities.
 7. Promote diversity in NCAJ events (e.g., annual awards dinners, luncheons, receptions, Convention, and Mountain Magic), including:
 - a. Diversity of speakers.
 - b. Diversity of award recipients.
 - c. Diversity of planning and award nominations committees.
- F. Enhance the current tracking and reporting of progress in diversity efforts, including:**
1. Track race and gender of CLE speakers and Section leadership.
 2. Prepare an annual report on diversity of membership and leadership of NCAJ.
- G. Promote NCAJ's diversity accomplishments, including the following:**
1. Develop and prominently post on NCAJ website information about successful diversity programs and activities of NCAJ and its Sections, Divisions, Committees, and other entities.
 2. Invest in a regular presence in pertinent legal and diversity publications to showcase NCAJ diversity accomplishments.



3. Urge NCAJ members and staff with an expertise in diversity areas to regularly write and speak on behalf of NCAJ.
4. Have the DITF liaisons communicate with Chair of each Section after each DITF meeting.

IV. Implementation Recommendations

- A. Assign the Diversity Officer to oversee the implementation of this Diversity Plan. Each year, that Officer will develop and secure approval of specific annual implementation steps (including updates to this Diversity Plan) with a corresponding timeline, budget and assessment procedure.
- B. Review the Board of Governors, Committees, and Section/Division leadership, and the manner of selecting the individuals for those positions, to ensure that the purpose of this Diversity Plan is being served in the nominating process.
- C. Consider creating an event, award, or other form of recognition to honor on an annual basis the NCAJ entity that has shown outstanding leadership in diversity-related membership initiatives and other diversity efforts.
- D. Present at least one CLE program focused on diversity annually.