

# A diverse workplace makes a powerful workforce

of the firm's  
**Attorneys** are  
women or  
minorities

At Banner Witcoff we believe that diversity encompasses both acceptance and respect. We recognize and celebrate our individual differences and understand that it is our uniqueness as individuals that brings us success as a team in the practice of intellectual property law. It sparks our creative thinking, gives our perspectives dimension, and results in innovative problem-solving techniques.

While we value these benefits, we also acknowledge the challenges of building and maintaining a diverse workforce. That is why we have adopted recruiting programming to attract diverse candidates as well as career mentoring and business development programming to support and retain them. We are also consistently adapting our policies and programming to our ever-changing world and are committed to continually evaluating and improving our approach to diversity and inclusion.

Our continued efforts are outlined in three categories set forth below: Internal Actions, Client & Industry Engagement and Social Action Efforts.

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## INTERNAL ACTIONS

Our **Diversity & Inclusion Committee** is responsible for the administration of the firm's diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives. The D&I Committee partners with our clients to help fuel a diverse summer associate recruiting pipeline and works with law schools and undergraduate institutions to develop and participate in pre-law scholar programs for diverse students. Our D&I Committee also partners with the firm's Mentoring Committee to integrate D&I programming into the firm's attorney mentoring program and produces firm-wide D&I educational and training programs.

The D&I Committee established the **Banner Witcoff Women's Alliance (BWVA)** to support the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women attorneys at the firm. The BWVA provides a space where the firm's women attorneys and professionals can come together to partake in business development and networking opportunities, participate in professional and personal development activities, benefit from targeted mentoring programs, engage with communities via outreach and volunteering opportunities, and much more.

We also created the **Donald W. Banner Diversity Fellowship** in 2008 to strengthen diversity in the field of intellectual property law. To date, the fellowship has awarded more than \$150,000 to law students for law school tuition and other school-related expenses. The fellowship is offered to 1L and 2L students who identify as members of a historically underrepresented group in intellectual property law or possess a demonstrated commitment to strengthening diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. Many recipients of our Diversity Fellowship have joined Banner Witcoff as full-time attorneys following law school.

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## CLIENT & INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Banner Witcoff supports diversity and inclusion outside of our team by providing support to organizations dedicated to increasing diversity and inclusion in IP law and in the legal industry.

Representative examples of these organizations include:

- **American Bar Association (ABA)**
  - ABA Section of Litigation's Judicial Intern Opportunity Program (JIOP)
    - Banner Witcoff has sponsored JIOP for more than 10 years. JIOP's mission is to provide opportunities to students that are traditionally underrepresented in the legal profession.

- **American Bar Foundation (ABF)**
  - We host an annual half-day program where undergraduate students participating in the ABF Research Diversity Fellowship Program as ABF Summer Fellows are invited for educational and networking programming.
- **Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC)**
  - Banner Witcoff sponsors the annual ACC Chicago In-House Women Lawyers event and the ACC Chicago Diversity Summer Internship Program.
- **ChiPs Network**
  - ChiPs networks is an organization that advances and connects women in technology, law, and policy.
- **Chicago Women in Intellectual Property (ChiWIP)**
  - ChiWIP is a networking and mentoring organization committed to the connection, promotion, and success of Chicagoland area women in the intellectual property law field.
- **Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)**
  - EJI is a nonprofit organization that provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons.
- **Hispanic Bar Association of DC (HBA)**
  - The HBA-DC is dedicated to advancing and developing Latinos in the legal profession.
- **Law Firm Anti-Racism Alliance (LFFA)**
  - Recognizing the strength of a group and in hopes of making a more substantial impact, we joined with dozens of other law firms across the country to become a member of the LFFA. The purpose of the LFFA is "[t]o leverage the resources of the private bar in partnership with legal services organizations to amplify the voices of communities and individuals oppressed by racism, to better use the law as a vehicle for change that benefits communities of color and to promote racial equity in the law."
- **Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)**
  - We continue our involvement in LCLD, a national organization made up of corporate counsel and law firm managing partners dedicated to creating a more diverse and inclusive legal profession. Annually we select attorneys to participate in the LCLD Fellows and Pathfinders programs. Launched in 2011, the program promotes the development of talented attorneys from diverse backgrounds and prepares them for leadership positions.
- **National Bar Association (NBA)**
  - The National Bar Association is the nation's oldest and largest national network of predominantly African-American attorneys and judges.
- **South Asian Bar Association (SABA)**
  - SABA seeks to strengthen the rapidly growing South Asian legal community with a recognized and trusted forum for professional growth and advancement, and promotes the civil rights and access to justice for the South Asian community.
- **Women's Bar Association (WBA) of Washington DC**
  - The WBA is dedicated to maintaining the honor and integrity of the profession; promoting the administration of justice; advancing and protecting the interests of women lawyers; promoting their mutual improvement; and encouraging a spirit of friendship among our members.

We are proud to support these programs dedicated to improving diversity and inclusion in the law.

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## **SOCIAL ACTION EFFORTS**

Our D&I Committee has taken the lead role in our response to racial injustice following the senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Abery, and others. Recognizing that this critical moment in our nation's history demanded that we do more, the Committee worked with our Board of Directors to create a plan for educational programming, volunteering opportunities, and open dialogue for our team to share experiences and feedback about how the firm can do better.

As part of our initial plan, our Diversity Committee led efforts to take the following actions:

- We closed our offices in recognition of Juneteenth and provided all employees educational resources on the significance of the day that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States.
- We donated to the Equal Justice Initiative, and prioritized efforts to find more opportunities to donate to and volunteer with organizations fighting for racial equality and justice. This includes pro bono opportunities in the communities where we have offices.
- We provided all employees the opportunity to provide feedback anonymously on the state of the firm and solicited suggestions on how we can improve our diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts. We also committed to continually surveying all employees to help us learn how we can improve.

The D&I Committee will continue to lead the firm's ongoing efforts and expects the plan will evolve over time as we listen, learn, and seek out additional opportunities for meaningful ways to contribute as a law firm.