

The Best Firms For Women And Minority Attorneys

By **Jacqueline Bell**

Law360 (June 22, 2018, 9:37 AM EDT) -- It's the rare law firm that is consistently ahead of the pack on hiring and promoting women and minorities, according to Law360's annual headcount survey.

As we dive into the Glass Ceiling and Diversity Snapshot reports, we see the full variety of law firm demographics.

Some firms are above average in terms of minority representation among nonpartners, yet that diversity still has not permeated their partnerships. Others have made significant strides in hiring and retaining female attorneys, but they come up short when it comes to minority representation.

Still others remain overwhelmingly male and overwhelmingly white — as does the legal profession as a whole.

Women still represent just over one-third of all attorneys in private practice, according to our latest Glass Ceiling report. Nearly 80 percent of equity partners are male.

Law360's 2018 Diversity Snapshot revealed that just over 15 percent of attorneys and just over 8 percent of equity partners at surveyed law firms identify as a minority, results that are nearly identical to last year's report. Women of color make up 8 percent of surveyed attorneys, a number that shrinks to 3 percent at the partnership tier.

Our results stand in contrast to enrollment trends at U.S. law schools; the law student population has long been far more diverse than the ranks of U.S. law firms.

Law firms, meanwhile, have consistently pledged to improve their workforce diversity, and they are increasingly launching programs to improve hiring and promotion practices. And with large corporations putting pressure on law firms to field diverse teams to handle their most pressing legal matters, diversity initiatives are for many a business imperative.

Law360 collected survey data from more than 300 U.S. law firms. The 17 firms identified here reported above-average representation of both women and minorities at every tier, from nonpartners to equity partners.

Here are the firms showing demonstrable results in building a more diverse legal profession.

Pulling Ahead On Diversity

These firms have above-average representation of both women and minorities at every level.

Firms with 600+ Lawyers

- Littler*
- WilmerHale
- Average of firms 600+

Female Attorneys	Female Nonpartners	Female Partners	Female Equity Partners
51.4%	64.5%	34.1%	30.2%
Minority Attorneys	Minority Nonpartners	Minority Partners	Minority Equity Partners
19.5%	25.5%	11.6%	9.8%

Firms with 300-599 Lawyers

- Ballard Spahr
- Davis Wright
- Fragomen*
- Average of firms 300-599

Female Attorneys	Female Nonpartners	Female Partners	Female Equity Partners
38.9%	49.1%	24.5%	24.5%
Minority Attorneys	Minority Nonpartners	Minority Partners	Minority Equity Partners
15.4%	18.8%	10.5%	10.5%

Firms with 150-299 Lawyers

- Best Best
- Bowman and Brooke*
- FordHarrison
- Greenspoon Marder
- Hanson Bridgett*
- Average of firms 150-299

Female Attorneys	Female Nonpartners	Female Partners	Female Equity Partners
43.9%	51.7%	37.0%	20.5%
Minority Attorneys	Minority Nonpartners	Minority Partners	Minority Equity Partners
21.7%	29.2%	15.0%	15.9%

Firms with 20-149 Lawyers

- Berry Appleman*
- Carothers DiSante
- Hoge Fenton
- Pearl Law Group*
- Riley Safer
- Stander Reubens
- Van Ness Feldman
- Average of firms 20-149

Female Attorneys	Female Nonpartners	Female Partners	Female Equity Partners
62.4%	63.2%	58.8%	42.9%
Minority Attorneys	Minority Nonpartners	Minority Partners	Minority Equity Partners
37.6%	39.5%	29.4%	28.6%

*Some attorneys declined to self-identify

--Editing by Jocelyn Allison, Jeremy Barker and Katherine Rautenberg.

Methodology: Law360 surveyed more than 300 U.S. firms, or vereins with a U.S. component, about their overall and minority headcount numbers as of Dec. 31, 2017. Only U.S.-based attorneys were included in the survey, and firms had to have at least 20 U.S.-based attorneys to participate.

The more than 300 firms surveyed include 88 of the 100 largest U.S.-based firms, as ranked by the Law360 400. More than 80 percent of the top 200 largest U.S. law firms by headcount participated. Law360 collects data from law firms using the race, gender and ethnicity categories used by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in its annual Employer Information EEO-1 survey.

For the list, firms were first grouped according to size: 20-149 attorneys, 150-299 attorneys, 300-599 attorneys and 600-plus attorneys. Then, firms that fell below the average in their group in any of the following categories were deemed ineligible for the list: (1) percentage of female attorneys; (2) percentage of female nonpartners; (3) percentage of female partners, both equity and nonequity; (4) percentage of female equity partners; (5) percentage of minority attorneys; (6) percentage of minority nonpartners; (7) percentage of minority partners, both equity and nonequity; and (8) percentage of minority equity partners.

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