



## Diversity & Inclusion Section Group Mentoring Program

Handbook 2013-2014



**Co-Chairs of the Diversity & Inclusion Section's  
Mentoring Committee:**

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## **Mentoring Program Overview:**

The Boston Bar Association's Diversity Leadership Task Force concluded that a clear indicator of career success for lawyers in general -- and minority lawyers in particular -- is having a supportive mentoring environment to encourage the creation of long lasting relationships within the legal community. To that end, the BBA established a group mentoring program to promote the development of a new generation of diverse leaders at the BBA, in the Boston legal profession, and throughout the community.

The goals of the program are to:

- Help diverse groups of lawyers connect with groups and organizations that can foster professional development
- Encourage the leadership and success of new and diverse lawyers
- Expose lawyers to the Boston community
- Create an environment where young, diverse lawyers can learn from and support each other
- Talk through career challenges
- Develop strategies for career advancement and career satisfaction

# **Who is involved with the Mentoring Program?**

## **The Diversity & Inclusion Section:**

The Diversity & Inclusion Section is one of the 24 Sections of the Boston Bar Association. The Sections programs and initiatives addresses race, ethnicity, gender, and GBLT issues. All mentees are automatically enrolled in the Section and are encouraged to attend programs sponsored by the Section.

The Section is overseen by a Steering Committee which organizes of activities and programs pursuant to the diversity initiatives of the BBA in addition to providing oversight for the Mentoring Program.

## **The Mentoring Program Committee:**

The Mentoring Program Committee is a committee of the Diversity & Inclusion Section that oversees the group mentoring program. Consisting of two co-chairs and the mentors, the committee meets regularly with the mentors to discuss the progress of the individual groups. The Mentoring Committee co-chairs report to and receive feedback from the Diversity & Inclusion Section.

## **Structure:**

Each Mentoring group has two mentors and 8-10 mentees. After the year long program, the mentees are automatically enrolled in a mentee alumni group and are encouraged to stay involved in the Diversity & Inclusion Section or other Section of the BBA.

# What are the benefits and limitations of the Mentoring Program?

## Benefits of Mentoring Groups include:

- Access to a neutral platform on which to discuss professional challenges
- Opportunities to explore new ideas
- Introductions to new individuals, groups, organizations and events
- Information about networking and building professional relationships
- Ability to share own knowledge to succeed

## Limitations:

The Mentoring Program is a way to foster group dynamics, build connections and encourage success. The BBA Mentoring Program is not to be used as a:

- job search tool
- client recruitment tool
- client exchange program
- way to seek legal advice
- way to supervise or provide training

As a participant, you are still obligated to comply with all rules of professional conduct, including maintaining your clients' confidentiality.

*\*\*Please note that the mentors are volunteering their time for this valuable program; mentees may have the desire to express their appreciation to their mentors. Because our mentors come from different backgrounds, some work for the government, and are prohibited from receiving any gift of monetary value for ethical reasons. In order to avoid any uncomfortable or questionable situations, please restrict your appreciation to your mentors to a kind thank you note. Our mentors participate in this program because they value this experience and find the mentoring relationship rewarding.*

## **Expectations of Mentors:**

Each mentor is committed to his/her group for 12 months. To be eligible as a mentor, one must have had significant leadership at a Bar Association and/or at least 8 years of practice experience.

- The co-mentors must arrange for a group meeting each month. Although it is ideal if both mentors can attend, one co-mentor can run the group if there is a schedule conflict. The BBA will also arrange program-wide events and seminars for all participants. These events can take the place of individual group meetings.
- Communicate with the BBA staff person about meeting times and dates and the progress of the group.
- Encourage leadership and provide ways in which mentees can demonstrate leadership abilities.
- Facilitate group discussion.
- Schedule and inform group of meetings date/time/topic.
- Serve as an advisor by listening, guiding and providing necessary feedback to mentees.
- Provide mentees with networking opportunities.
- Maintain ethics and professionalism.
- Serve as role model on how mentees should conduct themselves in the legal community.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure the group is doing this as well.
- Communicate with mentees.
- Address their concerns/questions to the best of your ability.
- Exchange ideas with mentees.
- Inform mentees about bar association other appropriate organizational events.

# Expectations of Mentees

A mentee must have 5 years or fewer of legal experience, commit to regularly attend monthly group meetings and respect the goals of the program. The mentees must actively participate in this group as it is expected that each mentee will benefit from discussing the experiences and challenges that their group members bring to the table.

- Mentees should be willing to accept advice from mentors and mentees.
- Provide feedback to the BBA about the mentoring program.
- Respect the time of the mentors.
- Attend mentoring related programs and events.
- Candidly discuss career goals, abilities and concerns.
- Maintain professionalism and ethics.
- Regularly attend and arrive on time for meetings.
- Take initiative and give feedback.
- Discuss other issues pertinent to succeeding in the mentee's career.
- Inform mentor/groups about events at firm, bar associations or other organizational events.
- Maintain group/individual confidentiality.
- Be aware of the group's time constraints when asking questions.

# Suggestions and Advice:

## For Mentors:

- Ensure that discussions are open, secure and comfortable for everyone.
- Encourage mentees to attend different networking opportunities put on by the BBA and other organizations.
- Tell a career story. Share the highs and the lows of your career path.
- Help establish an action plan for the mentee.
- Discuss courtroom decorum
- Talk about what you do such as:
  - Personal qualities needed for this type of work;
  - How you acquired the specific skills for this job;
  - Your recommendations to others for acquiring these skills
  - Suggestions you would give someone applying for your job;
  - What you like most and least about your job;
  - Interpersonal skills most important in your work;
  - Attitudes and values that are important to you and how they are reflected in your work; and
  - Obstacles or barriers you had to overcome to get where you are now.



## **For Mentees:**

- Identify professional goals for the year and discuss them with your mentor.
- Share successes with your mentor/group; a case you recently won, or a strategy that worked well in closing a deal.
- Discuss about career planning and goals.
- Discuss a legal issue you are exploring.
- Discuss your networking skills.
- Discuss the issue of integrating personal/family life with career objectives

## **Activities:**

- Attend court
- Participate in professional development activities
- Participate in networking events put on by the BBA or other Bar Associations
- Attend Group Mentoring related brown bags
- Bar educational programs
- Collaborate on educational programs
- Work together on a public service program
- Share ideas

## **POINTS OF CONTACT:**

**For any questions, comments and concerns regarding the Mentoring Program:**

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## ***Bar Associations & Affinity Bars***

**Asian American Lawyers Association**

<http://www.aalam.org>

**Boston Lawyers Group (BLG)**

<http://www.thebostonlawyersgroup.com/>

**Massachusetts Association of  
Hispanic Attorneys (MAHA)**

<http://www.mahaweb.org/>

**Massachusetts Black Lawyers  
Association (MBLA)**

<http://www.massblacklawyers.org/>

**Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association**

<http://www.masslgbtqbar.org>

**Mass Black Women Attorneys**

<http://www.massblackwomenattys.org/>

**South Asian Bar Association of  
Greater Boston (SABA GB)**

<http://www.sabagb.org/>