

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Since 2002, Plunkett Cooney has focused on diversity as both a moral and business imperative for our law firm. Through the efforts of our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee and our Director of DEI, the firm has made tremendous strides, but there remains much to do. The information below is provided to give you a sense of our focus and mission in this important aspect of our business.

## Recruitment

A major focus of Plunkett Cooney's ongoing diversity initiative is to increase the pool of diversity candidates being considered for employment. Competition for the best and brightest law schools students has never been fiercer, so the firm has focused its recruiting efforts on law schools and bar organizations with significant minority populations.

Through the efforts of its DEI and Hiring committees, Plunkett Cooney has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of diversity candidates it has interviewed for both summer associate and associate attorney positions. For example, in the first year of the firm's enhanced recruiting program, the diversity pool of summer associate candidates was six percent. That statistic doubled the following year and nearly doubled again in the third year to 21%. Of the 28 law school students interviewed for summer associate positions in the program's third year, 11 (or 39%) were candidates from diverse backgrounds.

As a result of these ongoing efforts, the firm routinely hires summer associates, laterals and support staff from a pool of candidates that is much more representative of the community in general. People of varying backgrounds are regularly joining the firm, bringing with them unique backgrounds, different perspectives and an infusion of new spirit.

## DEI Training

As part of its 2023 DEI Initiative, Plunkett Cooney committed to sponsoring a DEI education program for all employees. The goal of the program was to increase the ability of all firm members to communicate, resolve conflicts and solve problems in a culturally diverse environment.

Attorneys and staff were required to complete an online DEI training program that included a range of related topics. Members of Plunkett Cooney's management team, Board of Directors and others in leadership also attended mandatory in-person DEI leadership training.

As new employees are hired, the firm ensures similar training is provided. Planning for future DEI learning opportunities is ongoing.

## **Mentoring Program**

Plunkett Cooney's DEI Initiative includes programs focused on attracting and retaining a diverse group of employees. Key to the firm's retention effort has been the development of a formal attorney mentoring program in which associates are paired with partners for one year.

At the end of the program, the mentor and protégé complete an evaluation describing their experience. They then have the option to formally or informally continue their relationship. Participants have found the mentoring program to be worthwhile, particularly in developing lasting relationships on both a professional and a personal basis.

## **Women's Initiative**

Female partners, who understand the challenges women face in today's legal marketplace, created what is known today as Plunkett Cooney's Women's Initiative. What began as an informal gathering of peers quickly blossomed into a more formal program through which the firm's female partners and associate attorneys meet to discuss any number of issues, including such topics as:

- Marketing and business development
- Learning opportunities
- Practice related issues
- Community involvement
- Sponsorship opportunities
- Advancement within the firm
- General business issues

## **Community Involvement**

We recognize our responsibility to give back to the communities we serve. The men and women of Plunkett Cooney seek to make a difference by donating their time, talents and money to any number of professional organizations, community groups and nonprofit entities.

The firm supports these activities by sponsoring events and partnering with organizations, many of which assist the indigent, promote ethnic and racial diversity, provide access to the judicial system, and otherwise, improve the neighborhoods in which we work and live. We are proud of our community involvement track record and look forward to continuing our tradition of giving.

For more information about the firm's community involvement commitment, [click this link](#).