

Initiatives

Plunkett Cooney's diversity plan includes 10 specific goals designed to increase the size of the firm's diversity pool of employment candidates and to retain them once they have joined the firm. Below is an overview of Plunkett Cooney's formal diversity initiatives and others that were developed by interested individuals simply trying to make a difference in the workplace.

Diversity Plan

Goal #1 – Develop a comprehensive diversity plan, which outlines goals, action steps, key participants and the connection to the firm's strategic goals

Goal #2 – Identify specific measures/metrics that will be used to assess diversity performance

Goal #3 – Identify specific measures/metrics that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall diversity initiative

Goal #4 – Communicate the diversity plan to all firm employees as part of an educational session that provides a clear understanding of how the organization will benefit from the diversity program

Goal #5 – Develop a diversity recruitment policy and process to increase the diversity of employment candidate pools

Goal #6 – Complete diversity recruitment and retention training for managers, supervisors and employees

Goal #7 – Create a community outreach action plan that identifies opportunities to work with affinity groups, professional organizations and community groups to position the firm as a leader on diversity issues

Goal #8 – Develop a strategy to provide performance coaching education for managers and supervisors

Goal #9 – Implement mentoring program designed to facilitate the successful creation of a formal mentoring system within the firm

Goal #10 – Implement a diversity education series for all employees designed to increase their ability to communicate, resolve conflict and solve problems in culturally diverse settings

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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 Diversity 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 percent. 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.

Diversity Training

As part of its 2004 Diversity Initiative, Plunkett Cooney committed to sponsoring a diversity 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. As new employees are hired, the firm will make certain that such training is provided.

Attorneys and staff attended a session on effectively communicating in culturally diverse settings. At the conclusion of the meeting, attendees were asked to commit to one self-improvement exercise to build upon their communication skills. Members of Plunkett Cooney's management team attended additional leadership training. Planning for future learning opportunities is ongoing.

Mentoring Program

Plunkett Cooney's Diversity 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

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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.