



The State Bar of California

OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM MAY 2024 AUDIT COMMITTEE III.B

DATE: May 10, 2024

TO: Members, Audit Committee

FROM: Elizabeth Nolan, Lead Program Analyst, Office of Compliance

SUBJECT: Update on State Bar DEI Leadership Seal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Bar's pursuit of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Leadership Seal was initiated as part of the Audit Committee's 2022–2023 work plan. This agenda item is an informational update, formally reporting back to the Committee on the State Bar's attainment of the Gold tier of the DEI Leadership Seal.

BACKGROUND

The DEI Leadership Seal is an optional program that recognizes legal employers with California-licensed attorneys that commit to and implement research-driven actions that further workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2022, the State Bar announced its pursuit of the DEI Leadership Seal. Also in 2022, the Audit Committee initiated an organizational DEI audit, of which DEI Leadership Seal pursuit was one aspect.

DISCUSSION

A core component of the State Bar's mission is to promote diversity and inclusion in the legal system and legal profession. As outlined on the State Bar's [website](https://www.calbar.ca.gov), having a diverse legal profession positively impacts the administration of justice, ensures fairness, and promotes the rule of law.

Legal employers can participate in the DEI Leadership Seal program by submitting an application. Experts evaluate application materials to determine whether an organization is recognized as a "committed participating employer," that has committed to implementing at

least five of ten action items, or a “seal recipient,” that has demonstrated evidence of action item implementation. At a minimum, organizations must commit to or have implemented demographic data collection and maintenance, and commit to or have implemented a DEI strategic plan. A list of all action items may be found in Attachment A.

The DEI Leadership Seal has three levels of recognition for seal recipients: Gold, Silver, and Bronze. In December 2023, the State Bar achieved the Gold tier of the DEI Leadership Seal, after evaluation of its application by outside experts. Attainment of the Gold DEI Leadership Seal requires implementation of nine action items.

The State Bar’s 2023 application addressed how the organization has implemented the following nine action items:

- Collection and maintenance of demographic data on attorneys, non-attorney legal staff, management, and the Board of Trustees;
- Creation of a strategic DEI plan with specific objectives, metrics, and benchmarks over short-, medium-, and long-term timeframes;
- At least annual calculation of staff turnover and promotions by position, tenure, and demographics;
- Annual comparison of demographics of attorney hires to those of all California attorneys;
- Creation of a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement;
- Conduct stay and exit interviews with staff, which include questions on organizational culture, sense of inclusion and belonging, and where the employer can improve;
- Biennially surveying staff on organization-wide DEI;
- Annual required employee training on recognizing and reducing implicit bias in the workplace; and
- Incorporation of substantive DEI work into performance evaluations.

Annually, all DEI Leadership Seal recipients must submit an attestation confirming that at least five of ten action items, to which the organizations previously committed, remain implemented.

FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT

None

AMENDMENTS TO RULES

None

AMENDMENTS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY MANUAL

None

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Goal 2. Protect the Public by Enhancing Access to and Inclusion in the Legal System

Engage DEI leaders and other stakeholders to encourage legal employers to set and publicly commit to measurable diversity, equity, and inclusion goals through the State Bar DEI Leadership Seal Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None

ATTACHMENT LIST

A. DEI Leadership Seal Action Items

DEI Leadership Seal Program Action Items

Action Items



	Collect and maintain demographic data	Required
	Create a strategic DEI plan	Required
	Calculate staff turnover and promotions	
	Compare California attorney hire demographics to California attorney population	
	Create and share publicly a DEI statement	
	Conduct staff stay and exit interviews	
	Survey staff to gather feedback on DEI efforts	
	Require annual employee implicit bias training	
	Incorporate DEI work into performance, advancement, and compensation decisions	
	Integrate DEI responsibilities into leadership team members' job duties. Larger organizations, maintain a DEI professional position	



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