



American Bar Foundation

Vision for a Research Center in Diversity and Law

THE QUESTIONS

- What should law firms do to recruit diverse associates?
- How can companies retain women and attorneys of color in corporate counsel careers?
- How does diversity in courts, juries, and practice teams affect decision-making?
- How can we increase the number of law school graduates of color?
- How will diversity in the legal profession be affected by globalization, technology, new practice models?

THE PATH TO THE ANSWERS

A diverse society needs a diverse legal system. We have taken many steps toward building a more diverse legal profession, but we have a long way to go. We recognize a continuing gap between the ideal of equal opportunity and the reality of inequalities along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.

Empirical research has the power to illuminate the way forward. But today, there is no authoritative center for the study of the many profound issues at the nexus of diversity and the law.

The American Bar Foundation is leading the way. The ABF is dedicated to advancing justice through rigorous research on the law, legal practices, and the law's impact on our society. As part of this mission, the ABF has a track record of groundbreaking research on legal diversity, including studies of differences across racial and ethnic groups in the education pipeline leading to law practice, differences in the career trajectories of minority and female attorneys, and the significance of diversity on juries to jury decisions.

The ABF has a vision to establish the ABF Research Center in Diversity and Law. Through the Research Center, ABF scholars will join forces to pursue an ambitious research agenda focused on diversity in the legal profession, as well as broader questions of educational policy, criminal justice policy, and other factors that affect the "pipeline" of diverse talent for colleges, law schools and, ultimately, employers. The research will also inform courts, which regularly consider such issues.

YOUR ROLE IN THIS EFFORT

The ABF has launched a \$1.5 million fundraising campaign to endow the Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law. This is the critical first step to make the Research Center a reality. The Research Chair will establish and direct the Research Center, drawing on the ABF's exceptional scholars as well as academic and professional networks, to lead innovative and ambitious research in diversity and law.

Your support can make the vision a reality. The campaign, although just beginning, has already secured \$500,000 through the investment of every member of the ABF's Board of Directors; major gifts from Walmart, Microsoft, and Kirkland & Ellis; and contributions from the Fellows of the ABF.

Supporters of the campaign will benefit from the success of this vital undertaking. Supporters will gain early access to research, meetings with researchers and invitations to research-related events. Support for specific diversity purposes and projects is welcome. Most importantly, supporters of this campaign will help advance a diverse legal profession that promotes a more just society.