

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN**

The National Association of Women Judges (hereinafter NAWJ) is committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion with a goal to eliminate bias and enhance diversity. The Judiciary is unique within the legal system. Judges are charged to comply with standards that look to their actions both professionally and within their personal lives. Judges have a responsibility to “maintain the dignity of judicial office at all times and avoid both impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in their professional and personal lives. They should aspire at all times to conduct that ensures the greatest possible public confidence in their independence, impartiality, integrity, and competence” as embodied in the Model Code of Judicial Conduct.

Members of the Judiciary are governed by a Code of Judicial Conduct that provides: A judge’s public manifestation of approval of invidious discrimination on any basis gives rise to the appearance of impropriety and diminishes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary. Thus, recruiting and developing a diverse membership across the spectrum of race, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability status will be an important part of all NAWJ activities and functions.

NAWJ, and each of its 14 Districts, enthusiastically embrace the concept of diversity and inclusion. Its diversity goals are not temporary or static goals. These concerns are vital to the future success of the NAWJ and a manifestation of those who are appointed and elected as Judges.

A diverse membership ensures that NAWJ will continue to grow and be an integral contributor to the legal profession and a partner in promoting public confidence in the independence, integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.

To make great strides in achieving diversity and inclusion, we must focus on our leadership as well as our membership. The support and participation of NAWJ’s leadership and that of each respective District, as well as with the individual commitment of each active member is a must to achieve the level of diversity and inclusion NAWJ desires and deserves.

To achieve these goals, it is necessary for NAWJ to create a Standing Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (hereinafter SCDI) to build diversity and inclusion within NAWJ, its Districts, Resource Board, and the judicial community. The SCDI objective and commitment, will be to encourage NAWJ leadership, its Districts, and active members to promote diversity and inclusion within the organization and its programming by requiring full and equal participation of lawyers and judges across the spectrum of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliations and disability status.

It is with these goals in mind that NAWJ has adopted this Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. The Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is a road map to assist and encourage the members and

leaders of NAWJ to ensure full and equal participation for judges and lawyers of color, women judges and lawyers, judges and lawyers of various religious affiliations, LGBTQ+ judges and lawyers, judges and lawyers with disabilities and young lawyers as we move forward.

## **I. MAINTAIN AND INCREASE DIVERSITY IN NAWJ LEADERSHIP AND EACH DISTRICT**

A. NAWJ requires each of its 14 Districts to adopt and use this Diversity Action Plan as a tool to achieve diversity and inclusion in its leadership, membership and programming.

B. NAWJ requires the support and participation of its leadership in implementing the Diversity Action Plan.

1. Provide a copy of the Diversity Action Plan to each existing and incoming NAWJ leadership member and District leadership members.
2. Encourage each District to pursue diversity and inclusion in selecting their leadership.
3. All NAWJ and the Districts Nominating Committees should reflect such diversity in addition to geographical diversity in their membership.
4. All NAWJ and Districts Nominating Committees should be guided by the principles of excellence, commitment, diversity, and inclusion when nominating persons for elective office. Geographical diversity should also be considered.
5. The goal of each District shall be to fill leadership vacancies from a pool of nominees that include a diverse group of candidates.
6. All NAWJ and Districts Committees should be proactive in seeking to draw from a candidate base that includes highly qualified diverse persons.
7. While NAWJ's Resource Board consists of representatives from major sponsors who provide monetary and professional services, the goal of diversity and inclusion within NAWJ applies to this group as well. NAWJ leadership, staff and members of the Resource Board should endeavor to recruit sponsors who exhibit diversity and inclusion by sending diverse members as representatives of their organization on the Board and/or supplying diverse members of their organization as speakers or panelists in NAWJ educational programming.

C. Provide Diversity Training to National Association of Women Judges leadership, membership and NAWJ District and Committee Directors, and Chairs and Chairs-Elect regarding diversity, its importance to the NAWJ and its necessity to the legal profession.

1. Each Committee should conduct a transition meeting to include a discussion of diversity and inclusion and resource materials, to include a progress report on the Districts and Committees' activities on diversity and inclusion for the preceding year.

D. Provide diversity and inclusion training for NAWJ leadership, District members, Resource Board members, Committee Chairs and Chairs-Elect at its Midyear or Annual Meeting.

E. Ensure NAWJ and its Committees are accountable to diversity through the use of Activity Reports.

F. Evaluate annually the National Association of Women Judges Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

1. Assess which initiatives are successful and which ones are not working and incorporate new ideas and resources.
2. Circulate the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan to NAWJ Districts.
  - A. Annually assess diversity plans of other Bar and Judicial Associations to obtain new ideas, information, resources and contacts.
  - B. Report recommended changes to the SCDI and seek and obtain approval from NAWJ leadership and members each year at the Annual Meeting.

## **II. MAINTAIN AND INCREASE DIVERSITY IN NAWJ LEADERSHIP AND ITS COMMITTEES AND NAWJ DISTRICTS LEADERSHIP AND COMMITTEES**

A. NAWJ leadership will demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion, including geographical location, when appointing Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

B. NAWJ's President will ensure that all District leaders are familiar with and committed to the Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

C. The SCDI will provide guidance to the committee chairs with respect to diversity and inclusion issues.

D. NAWJ's Officers will ensure implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan by assigning responsibility for monitoring each of its goals and initiatives to the SCDI.

1. Committee activities should include matters of concern to diverse members.
2. Committee chairs should actively seek out diverse members ( and consider geographical diversity) to serve on the committees.

### **III. FOSTER DIVERSITY WITHIN NAWJ'S MEMBERSHIP**

A. NAWJ recognizes the value of diversity in its membership and will utilize the Annual and Midyear Meetings and Conferences as a means of fostering diversity within NAWJ, its Districts, and Committees.

1. NAWJ and its membership committee should be proactive in its efforts to attract and retain diverse members.
2. The Membership Outreach and Retention Committee (hereafter Membership) should annually request and receive reports identifying diverse judges who are NAWJ members.
3. The Membership Committee should biannually request the District Directors to receive reports from their State Court Administrations or such like entities that are responsible for maintaining reports that identify diverse judges.
4. The Membership Committee should strive to have one or more diverse committee members capable of serving as role models for new and potential members not only at annual and midyear meetings but throughout the year.
5. The Membership Committee should strive to facilitate a mentoring program for new members.

### **IV. UTILIZE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY**

A. NAWJ recognizes the value of diversity in its educational programs and will stress the importance of diversity in all its educational programs.

1. NAWJ's Leadership will assure that educational program chairs are mindful of the value of having diverse speakers and presenters from varying geographical areas to promote public confidence in the judiciary and to demonstrate the importance of avoiding the appearance of partiality and impropriety.
2. NAWJ Leadership should assure that educational program chairs are mindful of the value of diversifying program content to interest a wide audience and to avoid the appearance of partiality and impropriety.
3. The Judicial Educational and Academic Network Committee (hereafter Education Committee) should consider other legal organization resources such as: the American Bar Association Judicial Division Standing Committee on Diversity in the Judiciary, Tribal Courts Council, Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, Commission On Women in the Profession, Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and the Commission on Disability Rights, to identify diverse presenters capable of addressing diversity related issues.
4. The Education Committee Chair(s) shall seek racial and ethnically diverse women judges, and senior and retired judges from their respective bar associations located in the host cities to speak at and/or participate in committee meetings and CLE Programs.

5. The Education Committee Chair(s) should personally invite members and leaders of specialty bar associations in the host city to programs and social events, consider waiving fees for the leaders of the invited associations, and appoint Committee members to serve as hosts to such attendees.
6. The Education Committee Chair(s) shall encourage joint programming with specialty bar associations.
7. The Education Committee Chair(s) will arrange to have a report summarizing each program and the committee's efforts to address diversity in its programming consistent with the NAWJ's diversity goals at the Mid-Year and Annual Meetings and present a written or oral report during the Board Meetings.

## **V. NAWJ PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE**

A. NAWJ will stress the importance of diversity through its publications.

1. The Vice-President of Publication which publishes NAWJ Counterbalance should assure that articles selected for publication reflect NAWJ's commitment to diversity; artwork and images used should reflect a cross-section of a diverse community; and language in articles should be neutral (in terms of race, ethnicity color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability) unless the subject matter requires otherwise.
2. The Vice-President of Publication should encourage the publication of newsworthy articles on diversity issues and programs.

## **VI. NAWJ'S COMMITMENT TO A DIVERSE JUDICIARY**

A. NAWJ recognizes that diversity and inclusion in the judiciary in racial, ethnic, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disabilities and religion is essential to maintaining public trust and confidence in the legal system.

1. NAWJ affirmatively supports the appointment and election of highly qualified women judges in a manner that reflects the diversity of the community.
2. NAWJ affirmatively supports the availability of effective judicial education programs for all judges; but in particular, programs of interest to women judges and ones that engage and support judges of diverse identities and backgrounds.

## **VII. NAWJ SHOULD UTILIZE OUTREACH EFFORTS AS MEANS OF FOSTERING DIVERSITY**

A. Create and strengthen its ties with persons and groups of diverse origin.

1. NAWJ encourages member participation in activities of other bar associations and organizations that support law students and lawyers of diverse origin in their legal and judicial careers.
2. NAWJ encourages its members to identify and participate in outreach activities both in their own community and in diverse communities where our programs and meetings are held.
3. NAWJ will reach out to other bar associations and organizations to offer our members as speakers for their programs and meetings.

## **VIII. MONITOR NAWJ'S DIVERSITY ACTIONS AND GOALS**

A. Publish an annual Diversity Report to monitor activities covered by the Diversity Plan.

1. NAWJ staff will collect and report on diversity in its leadership, programming and publications in an Annual Diversity Report.
2. Diversity initiatives in NAWJ should be continuously monitored by staff and Executive Committee leadership by reviewing and reaffirming the Diversity Plan at every Midyear and Annual Meeting. District Directors should also monitor programs and initiatives in their District to assure compliance with the goals and objectives of the Diversity Plan and report, as required, at the Midyear and Annual Meetings.

