

DEIB Principles

The Boston Bar Association (BBA) is guided by our mission to advance the highest standards of excellence for the legal profession, facilitate access to justice, foster a diverse and inclusive professional community, and serve the community at large. We value excellence, justice, service, and diversity. We acknowledge the history of systematic exclusion within our profession. We strive to increase and foster diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging within the BBA and have adopted the following principles towards achieving a leadership and membership that reflects the diversity of the community in which we serve. Attaining these objectives will require meaningful, long-term commitment, measurement, and consistent targeted action.

Diversity

Diversity is an inclusive concept and encompasses, without limitation, race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, nationality, age, disability, class, veteran status, and marital and parental status. With greater diversity of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds, legal organizations are more creative, effective, just, strategic, and responsive to the needs of the community. A diverse group of talented legal professionals is vital to the success of the BBA and our member organizations.

Equity

Equity can be defined as the process of providing access, opportunity, invitation, fair treatment, respect, dignity and advancement for all people with honesty and integrity, while simultaneously prioritizing the identification and elimination of barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups. Equity is not the same as “equality” as it is not just about treating all individuals the same. Instead, to move toward true equity, we must understand the root causes of disparities within our society and within our organizations and approach all aspects of our work with this understanding in mind.

Inclusion

Inclusion means creating an environment where all members of Boston’s legal community are welcomed, valued, respected, and supported. Inclusion acknowledges and values differences in both words and measurable actions, knowing that the full participation of individuals with a diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and identities strengthens our workplaces, our community, and our profession. Inclusion requires legal organizations to actively adapt and evolve in order to achieve greater inclusion of community members on multiple axes of identity, including through embracing practices that affirmatively combat implicit bias and intentionally amplify the perspectives of marginalized or underrepresented voices, especially in positions of ownership, leadership, and mission-shaping.

Belonging

Belonging is the ultimate manifestation of our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Belonging means fostering an environment in which every person feels connected, accepted, and empowered. We acknowledge that belonging is more than mere representation. It requires effort to create affirming spaces to allow for meaningful engagement, mentorship, participation, and leadership development. We seek to establish these spaces where all individuals feel comfortable and are genuinely welcomed to be their authentic selves and where they feel willing and able to speak confidently and contribute to shaping every aspect of the legal profession.