



DIVERSITY on the BENCH

C O A L I T I O N

Concept Paper

Introduction

With the impetus of Judge Gary Jackson and based on his work, the Colorado Bar Association and the Colorado Judicial Institute will lead a coalition effort to comprehensively address a lack of diversity among Colorado state court judges. Solutions should be in place within two years. A large group of coalition partners will be involved. Most work will be accomplished through working groups formed around lines of work, with a coordinating committee monitoring work. The coordinating committee and working groups will be led by “super-volunteers” with some limited administrative support from the CBA. This concept paper begins to lay out the framework for accomplishing the goal.

Goal

The goal of this project is to have the state court bench in Colorado reflect the diversity of the population in Colorado. Priority geographic areas for initial work are Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, El Paso and Pueblo Counties. Diversity is not limited but begins with traditionally underrepresented communities within gender, race/ethnicity/national origin, and LGBTQ identity. The Coordinating Committee should address what other forms of diversity will be addressed. Solutions are expected to last well into the future.

Initial Schedule

1. Initial Approval: Judge Jackson, CJI and CBA leadership approve framework and schedule (by 9/6/19).
2. Leadership Identification: Leadership, including a 7 to 11-member coordinating committee and key “super-volunteers” are identified. Coordinating committee assumes planning responsibility (by 10/31/19) and develops this framework, lines of work, process, and schedule.
3. Coalition Partners: The many organizations and entities that will be coalition partners are identified and confirmed. See initial list below.
4. Press: We anticipate a press release within 30 days of the first coordinating committee meeting.
5. Coalition Meeting: Meetings with coalition partners will be strategically scheduled once the lines of work are more solidified.
6. Coordinating Committee: The coordinating committee is charged with identifying current efforts, gaps and problems, and solutions. The coordinating committee will develop plans with goals, strategies and tactics that identify the who, what, how, when, cost, funding sources, communications and resources needed. (4-6 months). Members of the coordinating committee

will co-chair working groups, and if not chairing, will serve on a working group. The coordinating committee creates, divides, and sunsets working groups. It keeps working groups on track, addresses conflicts, approves plans, manages public communications, addresses setbacks, and monitors progress.

7. **Working Groups:** Once the coordinating committee develops action steps and strategies to be implemented, working groups or teams will form around lines of work and meet monthly. With approval from the coordinating committee, working groups are charged with implementing plans. Working groups may re-form and identify the need to divide or create sub-groups.

Resources

Most work will be accomplished by volunteers. The CBA will offer part-time administrative support (for approval in October), and its facilities. That support will be defined as strictly administrative. If working groups identify a need for additional or ongoing resources, they will need to identify and secure the source.

Coalition Partners - open to additions

CBA and CJJ will facilitate a coalition with:

- American Board of Trial Advocates (CO)
- American College of Trial Lawyers (CO)
- American Constitutional Society
- Asian Pacific American Bar Association (CO)
- Center for Legal Inclusiveness
- Colorado Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
- Colorado Criminal Defense Bar
- Colorado Defense Lawyers Association
- Colorado District Attorney's Council
- Colorado Hispanic Bar Association
- Colorado Lawyers Committee
- Colorado LGBT Bar Association
- Colorado Trial Lawyers Association
- Colorado Women's Bar Association
- Denver Bar Association
- Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the Colorado State Public Defender
- Sam Cary Bar Association
- South Asian American Bar Association
- University of Colorado School of Law
- University of Denver Alumni Council
- University of Denver Sturm College of Law

Other partners might include current and retired judges and justices, associations of judges, legislators, local bar associations, and other legal entities.

Lines of Work (for Working Groups)

The following are potential lines of work around which working groups might be formed. Again, this is an initial list of potential areas:

1. Candidates:
 - a. Notice
 - b. Pipeline
 - c. Development (Coaching & Mentoring)
2. Nominating Commissions:
 - a. Composition
 - b. Training and Procedures
 - c. Mandates
 - d. Tracking
3. Deciding Officials
4. Accountability & Tracking
5. Messaging and Promoting

Super Volunteers

The working groups need to be led by “super-volunteers.” The Coordinating Committee needs to consist of the same and be led by one or two “super-duper volunteers.” The qualities of these super volunteers are that they are respected within the diversity and inclusivity community, they have a track record of getting things done within coalition, they are skilled at bringing people together, they can work with CBA and CJI, and they are willing and available.

Administrative Support Provided by CBA

- Track coalition, working group, and coordinating committee membership
- Schedule meetings, draft and send notices
- Choose and reserve meeting locations
- Craft agendas (with chairs)
- Set up A/V
- Send and copy materials
- Clean up
- Facilitate communication between Working Groups and Coordinating Committee