



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Women Now the Majority of Associates in U.S. Law Firms, Make Record Gains in the Partnership Ranks

NALP today released its annual *Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms*, available at [www.nalp.org/reportondiversity](http://www.nalp.org/reportondiversity). The report, based on information from the 2023 *NALP Directory of Legal Employers* (NDLE), shows continued overall advancement in the representation of women, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals within U.S. law firms despite growth stalling in some areas within the summer associate classes. An important milestone for women was reached this year — they now constitute the majority of all associates for the first time in history.

Women also experienced record growth in representation at the partnership level, but progress continues to lag substantially behind that of associates, with women comprising just 27.76% of all partners. People of color also advanced at the partnership level but likewise still lag behind their representation among associates, with partners of color comprising 12.01% of all partners. For comparison, 50.1% of associates are women and 30.15% are people of color.

“NALP began tracking law firm diversity data in 1991, 121 years after the first woman graduated law school in the United States,” said NALP Executive Director Nikia L. Gray. “At that time, women accounted for only a little over 38% of law firm associates. It took another thirty-two years for women to achieve equal, and just slightly greater, representation among associates – 153 years in total. Real change is slow, hard, and imperceptible, but it does happen.”

### Highlights

- In 2023, women made up the majority of associates (50.31%) for the first time in the more than 30 years that NALP has been tracking law firm diversity data.
- Additionally, 2023 saw the largest year-over-year increase in the percentage of associates of color — growing by 1.8 percentage points to 30.15%.

- At the partnership level, women experienced record annual growth in their representation and now comprise 27.76% of all partners (a 1.1 percentage point increase). Nevertheless, women and people of color remain significantly underrepresented within the partnership ranks.
- For the first time, Black and Latina women each accounted for at least 1% of all partners, but overall, women of color still account for less than 5% of partners.
- Within multi-tier law firms, White men remain disproportionately represented within the equity partner ranks. In 2023, just 23.7% of equity partners were women. Additionally, only 9.6% were people of color.
- Silicon Valley and Miami had the largest percentage of lawyers of color, at 41.18% and 39.51%, respectively.
- Despite improvements within the associate and partner ranks in 2023, the share of summer associates of color declined for the first time since 2017, dropping by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a percentage point to 42.27%. However, summer associates remain more diverse by gender and race/ethnicity as compared to the demographics of recent law school graduates. This decrease in representation of summer associates of color was driven by a decline in the percentage of Black and multiracial summer associates.
- The share of LGBTQ summer associates continues to grow at an accelerated rate as compared to lawyers overall. Nearly 12% of summer associates identify as LGBTQ, while the percentage among all lawyers is less than 5%.
- Although reporting of gender non-binary lawyers remains limited since NALP first began collecting data in 2020, the figure has grown each year. In 2023, 79 non-binary lawyers and 27 non-binary summer associates were reported by law firms, compared to 42 non-binary lawyers and 17 non-binary summer associates in 2022.

Read the entire *Report on Diversity at U.S. Law Firms* at [www.nalp.org/reportondiversity](http://www.nalp.org/reportondiversity).

### **About NALP**

NALP is an association of more than 3,000 legal career professionals who advise law students, lawyers, law offices, and law schools in North America and beyond. What brings NALP members together is a common belief in three fundamental things. First, all law students and lawyers should benefit from a fair and ethical hiring process. Second, law students and lawyers are more successful when supported by professional development and legal career professionals. Third, a diverse and inclusive legal profession best serves clients and our communities. That's why NALP members work together every day to collect and publish accurate legal employment data and information, and champion education and ethical principles for recruiting, professional and career development, and diversity and inclusion. For more than 50 years, NALP has played an essential role in the success of our members and the lawyers and law students they serve. NALP maintains an online archive of press releases at [www.nalp.org/pressreleases](http://www.nalp.org/pressreleases). For more information, contact NALP at [info@nalp.org](mailto:info@nalp.org) or call (202) 835-1001.