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2025 Report Shows Gains for Women but Stalled Progress on Racial Diversity in Law Firms

NALP released its annual [Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms](#) today based on demographic information from the 2025 *NALP Directory of Legal Employers* (NDLE). The findings underscore concerns highlighted in last year's report about the fragile pipeline of diverse talent within the legal industry.

The 2025 report shows women reached record-high levels among partners and associates, yet their representation among all lawyers declined slightly. For the second year, the percentage of women summer associates decreased, raising questions about the future talent pool.

There was little evidence of progress when it comes to racial diversity at U.S. law firms. Representation of partners of color was flat compared to 2024, and the proportion of people of color among summer associates, associates, and all lawyers declined.

However, this year's figures should be interpreted cautiously when making comparisons to longer-term trends due to significant shifts in the 2025 respondent pool. The data set reflects a substantial decline in the number of law offices that publicly shared demographic information through the NALP Directory, a widely used, searchable database that enables law students to research and compare prospective employers on factors such as practice areas, compensation and benefits, recruitment and hiring, and lawyer demographics.

NALP's Executive Director Nikia Gray, noted, "In this reporting cycle, 230 fewer law offices provided demographic information as part of their NDLE profiles compared to last year, representing the loss of data for roughly 47 firms and 31,000 lawyers. This new reluctance should concern all of us. Demographic data is not merely a collection of numbers. It represents real people, real experiences, and real disparities."

Gray added, “The story of this era can be one of loss, retrenchment, and diminished visibility — or one of principled leadership, courage, and renewed commitment to understanding the shifting portrait of our profession. The choice begins, though, with ensuring that the data does not vanish. NALP will continue to call on all legal employers to participate fully in demographic reporting, starting with providing demographic information as part of their NDLE listing.”

2025 Highlights

Associates

- Women comprised the majority of associates for the first time in 2023, and their representation continues to grow, reaching 52.09% of all associates in 2025 (a +0.5-percentage point year-over-year increase).
- The percentage of associates of color fell by 1.3 percentage points to 30.20%, the first decline since 2010. This decrease was observed across nearly all firm sizes, except for firms of 251-500 lawyers.
- By race/ethnicity, much of this decline can be attributed to a decrease in the representation of Asian and Black associates. The proportion of Asian associates fell by 1.6 percentage points, to 11.70%, while the share of Black associates fell by 0.2 percentage point to 6.18%. These figures represent the lowest recorded since 2018 and 2015, respectively.

Partners

- The share of women partners grew by 0.7 percentage point in 2025 to a new record high of 29.55%. Nevertheless, women and people of color remain significantly underrepresented within the partnership ranks.
- The representation of partners of color was virtually unchanged in 2025 at 12.67%, compared to 12.73% in 2024. However, representation of Black partners declined by 0.2 percentage points, to 2.42%, marking the first decrease since 2014.
- Within multi-tier law firms, white men remain disproportionately represented among equity partners. In 2025, however, women accounted for 26.5% of equity partners — a 1.7 percentage point improvement from 2024 and the largest year-over-year gain observed in NALP’s reporting dating back to 2011. The share of equity partners of color also grew, reaching 10.5%, a 0.3 percentage point increase. Both figures are all-time highs.

Summer Associates

- Although women still comprise the majority of summer associates, for the second year in a row their representation declined, this year decreasing by 0.2 percentage point to 55.26%.
- Following a record high of 43.07% in 2024, the proportion of summer associates of color fell by 5.5 percentage points to 37.53% in 2025, the lowest level recorded since 2020. Among summer associates of color, representation declined across nearly every racial/ethnic group, except for Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander and multiracial students.

Additional Demographics

- Overall, 3.06% of lawyers identified as having a disability, up from 2.54% in 2024. Associates were almost twice as likely to identify as having a disability as compared to partners (3.80% vs. 2.13%).
- The percentage of LGBTQ+ lawyers fell by 0.2 percentage point in 2025 to 4.90%. Despite this overall drop in the representation of LGBTQ+ lawyers, the proportion of LGBTQ+ associates reached a record high of 7.87%, growing by 0.1 percentage point from 2024.
- The share of military veteran lawyers increased by nearly 0.3 percentage point to 2.20% in 2025. Representation of military veterans was lower among associates (1.78%) compared to partners (2.31%).
- By geography, Miami and Silicon Valley were the locations with the highest percentage of lawyers of color, while San Francisco and Silicon Valley had the largest share of women lawyers.

The [NALP Directory of Legal Employers](#) has been a trusted resource for legal job seekers for over 40 years. NALP's comprehensive employer profiles give students detailed information to make educated decisions about their future careers, with employers controlling the content of their profiles. Law firms that would like information on how to participate in the NALP Directory can contact support@nalp.org.

Read the entire *Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms* at www.nalp.org/reportondiversity. To request an interview, contact media@nalp.org.

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. For more information, contact NALP at info@nalp.org or call (202) 835-1001.