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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Black Lawyers and Students Drive Diversity in Associate Ranks at U.S. Law Firms; Gains at the Partnership Level Continue to Lag Behind

WASHINGTON, D.C. — NALP today released its annual *Report on Diversity at U.S. Law Firms*, available at www.nalp.org/reportondiversity. The report, based on information from the 2022-2023 NALP Directory of Legal Employers (NDLE), shows that overall gains continued to be made in the representation of women, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals in the associate and summer associate ranks at major U.S. law firms in 2022 as compared to 2021. Of particular note, the percentage of Black associates grew by nearly 0.6 percentage points to 5.77%, and the percentage of Black summer associates increased by 0.7 percentage points to 11.85%.

While improvements were also made at the partnership level in 2022, progress continues to lag far behind that of associates and summer associates, with people of color and women comprising just 11.40% and 26.65% of all partners, respectively, in 2022. For comparison, 28.32% of associates are people of color and 49.42% are women. The percentage of Black and Latinx partners each increased by just 0.1 percentage points to 2.32% and 2.97%, respectively as compared to 2021.

“While the legal industry continues to make measurable gains in the representation of women, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals in the associate and summer associate ranks, it is equally clear that law firm leaders have failed to do the work necessary to break down the systemic barriers that prevent these individuals from joining them in the hallowed halls of partnership,” said NALP Executive Director Nikia L. Gray. “The data demonstrates that we are nowhere near achieving the progress one would expect from an industry that has been focused on the issue of diversity for over three decades.”



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Highlights:

- By race/ethnicity, Black associates saw the biggest year-over-year rise in representation, increasing by nearly 0.6 percentage points to 5.77% of all associates in 2022.
- The percentage of summer associates who are people of color grew by 1.7 percentage points, increasing from 41.34% in 2021 to 43.03% in 2022. Most of this growth can be attributed to the rise in the percentage of Black and multiracial summer associates, both increasing by approximately 0.7 percentage points to 11.85% and 5.48% of all summer associates, respectively.
- The percentage of women summer associates was essentially flat at 55.11%. However, women accounted for more than half of all summer associates for the fifth year in a row.
- In 2022, people of color accounted for only 11.40% of all partners (equity and non-equity), while women comprised only 26.65%. Over the more than 30-year span in which NALP has been reporting these data, the representation of people of color and women in the partnership ranks has increased by less than 10 and 16 percentage points, respectively.
- Despite small gains in 2022, just over 4% of all partners are women of color, and Black and Latinx women each continued to represent less than 1% of all partners in U.S. law firms.
- The percentage of Black partners overall increased by just 0.1 percentage points, from 2.22% of all partners in 2021 to 2.32% in 2022. Latinx partners experienced a similar increase, growing from 2.86% of all partners in 2021 to 2.97% in 2022.
- San Diego and Miami had the largest share of partners of color, at 33.33% and 29.66% respectively, primarily due to a high percentage of Latinx partners in those cities.
- Within multi-tier law firms, white men remain disproportionately represented in the equity partner ranks. In 2022, just 22.6% of equity partners were women. Additionally, only 9.0% were people of color — a figure that is unchanged from 2021.



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- While the percentage of LGBTQ lawyers overall grew by half of a percentage point from 2021 to 2022 (the largest year-over-year increase since NALP began tracking these data) the proportion of LGBTQ summer associates continued to grow at a more accelerated pace, climbing by nearing 1 percentage point to 9.37% in 2022. Overall, 4.17% of all lawyers identified as LGBTQ.
- Although reporting of gender non-binary lawyers remains limited since NALP first began collecting these data in 2020, the figure has grown each year. In 2022, 42 non-binary lawyers and 17 non-binary summer associates were reported by law firms, compared to 20 non-binary lawyers and 11 non-binary summer associates in 2021.

Read the *Report on Diversity at U.S. Law Firms* at www.nalp.org/reportondiversity.

About NALP

NALP is an association of more than 2,500 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 additional information, contact NALP at info@nalp.org or call (202) 835-1001.