

October 2024

Benesch

DEI UPDATES

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

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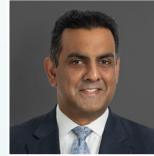
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A Message From Our Co-Chairs:



Charanjit Brahma
SAN FRANCISCO,
Partner, Intellectual
Property Practice Group



Juan Morado Jr.
CHICAGO, Partner,
Benesch Healthcare+
Practice Group



Margo Wolf O'Donnell
CHICAGO, Partner and
Co-Chair, Labor & Employment
Practice Group

Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Benesch

As we look back on this past spring and summer, we are proud to reflect on the incredible progress made in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion at Benesch. This year, we hosted our largest ever class of summer associates, with 79% of the class coming from historically underrepresented groups, including 25% from racial or ethnic minorities. The composition of this class illustrates the importance we place on diverse representation and our belief that diversity within our talent pipeline is essential not only to our growth as a firm but also to the broader legal profession.



Mansfield Rule
Certified 2023-2024
Powered by DIVERSITY.LAB

Another significant achievement recently realized is earning our Mansfield Certification for the third consecutive year. This certification reflects our dedication to ensuring equal opportunities for all qualified talent within our firm. Mansfield Certification is a rigorous, year-long process designed to ensure transparency, fairness and equality in consideration for leadership roles. As the standards for certification have grown more ambitious each year, Benesch has continued to rise to the challenge. Achieving this certification once again is a testament to our unwavering commitment to fostering an inclusive culture at every level of our firm.

In addition to these accomplishments, we proudly sponsored and participated in several diversity-related events and conferences throughout the spring and summer months in which our team members actively participated. We also remained committed to supporting our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and celebrating heritage months. These groups are important for creating awareness that further strengthens our team.

We recognize that DEI is a continuous journey. While these recent efforts are important milestones, they are part of a broader, ongoing commitment to fostering a workplace where everyone feels valued, included and able to succeed. As we move forward, we remain committed to building a more diverse and equitable future here at Benesch.

Matching Gift Program Update

Benesch team members continue to look to Be Part of the Change by participating in the firm’s Matching Gift Program. Through this program, Benesch team members are encouraged to make donations to approved 501(c)(3) organizations that promote racial and reproductive justice, human rights and equality, and work to eradicate violence, discrimination, hate speech, and systemic racism. Below is an update on total donation amounts since the program’s start and a listing of all receiving organizations.

Total Employee Contributions (as of 3Q24):.....			\$98,392.93
Total Firm and Employee Contributions:.....			\$196,785.86
Organizations Donated to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Story • ACLU Foundation • Advantage Cleveland • Akron Urban League • Alvis, Inc. • American Friends of Magen David Adom • American Jewish Joint Distribution (JDC) • Anti-Defamation League • Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple • Beech Brook—Police Assisted Referral Program • Boys & Girls Club of Chicago • Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Ohio • Boys Hope Girls Hope of Northeast Ohio • Cabrini Green • CARA Collective • Central Ohio YMCA • Chicago Appleseed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicago Learning Exchange • Cleveland Peacemakers • Cleveland Public Library Foundation • College Now Greater Cleveland • Columbus Freedom Fund • CWRU Law School Student Public Interest Law Fellowship • Delaware Combined Campaign for Justice • Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio • Edwin’s Leadership & Restaurant Institute • Equal Justice Initiative • Fields of Peace • Florida Rights Restoration Coalition • Greater Chicago Food Depository • Heart of Ohio Family Health • Hoosier Abortion Fund • Human Rights Campaign Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact for Equity • Jewish Federation of Boca Raton FL • Jewish Federation of Cleveland • Jewish Federation of North America • Jewish United Fund Chicago • La Casa Norte • Legal Aid Society of Cleveland • My Block My Hood My City (Role Model Movement Inc.) • NAACP Legal Defense Fund • National Immigrant Justice Center • National Lawyers Guild • Providence House • South Asian Bar Association of Northern California Foundation • Southern Poverty Law Center • Towards Employment • Yellowhammer Fund • Youth Guidance 	

Benesch Earns Several Diversity-Related Top Workplace Honors

Benesch is proud to share that for the second year in a row, the firm has been named one of Newsweek’s 2024 America’s Top 100 Most Loved Workplaces! In addition, we have also earned eight other awards from the Best Practice Institute, several of which have a diversity-related focus:

- Top Most Loved Workplace for Career Advancement
- Top Most Loved Workplace for LGBTQ+
- Top Most Loved Workplace for Parents and Caregivers
- Top Most Loved Workplace for Veterans
- Top Most Loved Workplace for Volunteering
- Top Most Loved Workplace for Wellness
- Top Most Loved Workplace for Women
- Top Most Loved Workplace for Young Professionals

This is confirmation that Benesch is a place where everyone can thrive! It’s a testament to the community we’ve built—a place where our team feels supported, valued and celebrated. Receiving these additional distinctions is a great honor and demonstrates that Benesch is an extraordinary place for all team members!

Employee-Led Resource Group (ERG) Updates

Benesch's Employee-led Resource Groups (ERGs) remain influential and valuable resources focused on uniting Benesch team members and further encouraging conversation around important diversity, equity and inclusion issues. Below is a recap of activities led by various Benesch ERGs over the past several months:

Asian ERG: To celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Benesch's Asian ERG hosted an informative panel discussion on recent developments in immigration law. The panel, held on May 23, was moderated by Benesch Immigration Practice Attorney Geetika Gupta-Roongta and featured Akanksha Gupta, Senior Counsel, Global Immigration at Google and Rick Hepp, Partner in Benesch's Labor & Employment Practice Group.

Jewish Support Group: In celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month, Benesch's Jewish Support Group held a panel discussion on May 29 to discuss the panelist's experiences during a recent trip to Israel. Panel participants included the following: Ira Kaplan, Partner in Benesch's Corporate Practice Group; Oren Boratz, SVP/External Affairs, Jewish Federation of Cleveland; Joe Cimperman, President and CEO, Global Cleveland; James Ratner, Partner, RMS Investment Group; and Baiju Shah, President and CEO, Greater Cleveland Partnership.

LGBTQ+ ERG: Throughout the month of June, Benesch's LGBTQ+ ERG hosted Happy Hours in all Benesch offices in celebration of Pride Month.

Latino ERG: On October 15, Benesch's Latino ERG held a panel discussion entitled "Today and Tomorrow," which centered around the pressing issues confronting in-house counsel and explored how to best partner to navigate these challenges. Moderated by Cristina Almendarez, Senior Managing Associate of Benesch's IP Practice Group, the panel featured the following distinguished Latino in-house counsel: Raquel Rodriguez, Associate General Counsel at the AES Corporation; Rene Casares, SVP and General Counsel at Academy Sports + Outdoors; Suzanne Alton de Eraso, Product & Commercial Counsel at GoodRX; and Barbara Salinas, General Counsel at BradyPLUS.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Partnerships and Sponsorships

Making meaningful contributions to the communities in which we live and work is core to Benesch. One way we do this is through partnerships and participation in diversity, equity and inclusion-related events. Below are recent activities that we've been proud to be a part of:

Benesch was pleased to serve as a Diamond sponsor of the **Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois (HLAI) Black Tie Gala and Awards Dinner** held on October 4 at the Aon Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier. Benesch had a strong delegation in attendance at the conference, with six seasoned attorneys, including Cristina Almendarez, Lizbeth Aviles, R. Cole Eastman, Juan Morado Jr., Julia Rolniak and Julius Zavala, 2024 Summer Associate Sarah Cartagena, and incoming 2025 Summer Associate Ivana Bailey Munoz, in attendance. Additionally, Cristina Almendarez and Juan Morado Jr. presented the Corporate Partner of the Year Award, Julia Rolniak presented the Benesch scholarship to a law student, and Juan Morado Jr. took home the President's Award.



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Learn more about Benesch's commitment to diversity by visiting the [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#) portion of our website.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Partnerships and Sponsorships

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Benesch Partners Marisa Darden, Rena Andoh and Shaneeda Jaffer attended the **Corporate Counsel Women of Color (CCWC) Strategies Conference** held October 2-5 in Las Vegas.



Benesch proudly sponsored the **2024 Women Influence & Power in Law (WIPL) Conference** held in Chicago September 23-25. In addition to

sponsoring the event, we were thrilled to have several of our women team members attend and to have Benesch Litigation Partner Nicole E. Wrigley participate on a panel titled "On the Frontline: Legal's Role When Crisis Strikes." Additionally, we celebrated San Francisco Partner-in-Charge Stephanie Sheridan as she took home the win for WIPL's Thought Leadership Award.

Benesch was proud to be a Diamante sponsor of the **Chicago Latino Caucus Foundation's 10th Anniversary Scholarship Gala** on September 20, attended by Benesch Partner Juan Morado Jr.



Benesch was a silver sponsor of the **2024 South Asian Bar Association of New York (SABANY) Leadership Gala**, held

September 4 at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in New York. In addition to sponsoring the event, Benesch Partners Charan Brahma and Aslam Rawoof, along with Managing Associate Loren Scolaro, attended the event.



Litigation Partner Nicole E. Wrigley participated in an important panel during the **National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) Annual Meeting** held July 24-25 in Chicago. The panel, entitled "Justice in the Age of Disinformation," was a powerful and insightful discussion on the challenges and strategies in combating disinformation in today's legal landscape.



Benesch proudly served as the Title sponsor of the **2024 South Asian Bar Association (SABA) Annual Conference** held July 11-15 in Toronto. The event marked a significant milestone as Benesch Partner Charan Brahma concluded his term as SABA President and began a new journey as the VP of Sponsorship. In addition to sponsorship, Benesch had a strong delegation in attendance at the conference, with eight seasoned attorneys, including Aan Amin, Aslam Rawoof, Ashik Shah, Charan Brahma, Manish Mehta, Rachit Parikh, Ruby Kazi and Shaneeda Jaffer, and three of our 2024 Summer Associates, Shil Mehta, Durya Nadeem-Khan and Mehek Boparai, in attendance. Partners Aslam Rawoof and Shaneeda Jaffer also led sessions at the event, with Aslam discussing the latest cybersecurity regulations in the U.S. and Canada and Shaneeda discussing practical tips for navigating regulatory investigations and understanding the ever-evolving enforcement landscape.



Benesch was proud to serve as a Diamond sponsor of the **HLAI Annual Golf Outing** held on June 28 at the Harborside International Golf Course, attended by Benesch attorneys Juan Andres Mata, Juan Morado Jr. and Julius Zavala.

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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Partnerships and Sponsorships

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Benesch was pleased to serve as a silver sponsor of the **Equal Rights Association (ERA) 50th Anniversary Gala** held in San Francisco on May 30. In addition, Benesch Retail & E-Commerce Chair Stephanie Sheridan and Partner Meegan Brooks attended the event, which celebrated 50 years of advancing equality, defending justice and building a better future.

Benesch is pleased to continue its partnership with the **Alfred A. Benesch School**, a school in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District named after one of our firm's founding partners. The latest support included sponsoring the school's 8th-grade promotion event on May 24. In addition to sponsoring the event, Benesch team members attended to celebrate the 8th graders as they embark on the next chapter of their educational journey.



Benesch was pleased to host **"Road to the Robe: A Conversation with Latina Judges"** in its Chicago office on May 14. This co-sponsored event by the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois, the Puerto Rican Bar Association, Region IX of the Hispanic National Bar Association, and the Illinois Latino Judges Association explored the Latina judges' different journeys to the bench.

Benesch proudly served as a silver sponsor of the **National Museum of Mexican Art's Gala de Arte event** on May 10.

Benesch team members participated in the **Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio's Rock, Walk, Roll & Run Event**, which took place in Cleveland on May 4. Proceeds from the event will help DCNEO fulfill its mission of supporting a new generation of students and future leaders to embrace their differences and become change agents for inclusion and diversity in the region. In addition to assembling a team to participate in the event, Benesch was also pleased to serve as a silver sponsor.

White Collar, Government Investigations & Regulatory Compliance Chair Marisa Darden and Senior Managing Associate Sydney E. Allen proudly represented Benesch at the **Corporate Counsel Women of Color Law Firm Associates 2024 Career Strategies Conference** held May 1 in New York City. At the event, Marisa spoke on a panel focused on building meaningful relationships within your practice and across the firm.



B-Sharp Programming Update

Benesch is committed to offering programming that provides a space to connect and learn. One way the firm does this is through its B-Sharp initiative, which is focused on increasing networking and professional development opportunities for women in-house counsel at all levels. Below is our most recent B-Sharp event that the firm has held:

AI in Law

Held on July 30 in our Cleveland office, this B-Sharp event featured an interdisciplinary panel that provided an insightful discussion on emerging AI trends in labor, healthcare, IP, real estate and corporate. The panel was led by Benesch Partner Alison Evans of our Intellectual Property Group and included the following panelists: Yelena Katz, Partner, Labor & Employment; Ari Lester, Managing Associate, Healthcare; Lidia Mowad, Managing Associate, Intellectual Property; Kelly Noll, Partner, Real Estate; and Jennifer Stapleton, Partner, Corporate & Securities.



Benesch Team Recognitions

In recent months, several Benesch attorneys from underrepresented groups received various appointments, honors, recognitions or mentions as outlined below:



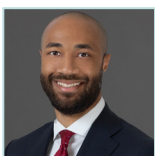
Meegan Brooks, Partner, Retail & E-Commerce, has been named to the Daily Journal's 2024 "Top 40 Under 40" List.



Hannah Conger, Partner, Litigation, has been named to Crain's Chicago Business Notable Leaders in Accounting, Consulting & Law 2024 list.



Marisa Darden, Chair, White Collar, Government Investigations & Regulatory Compliance Practice Group, has been recognized as a 2024 Crain's Cleveland Notable Black Leader.



Matthew P. Farrell, Managing Associate, Litigation, has been named to The National Black Lawyers Top 100 and Top 40 Under 40 in California for 2024.



Laura Hult, Partner, Commercial Finance & Banking, has been chosen as one of Columbus Business First's Women of Influence honorees for 2024 in the Mentor category.



Thomas Jackson, Managing Associate, Labor & Employment, has been selected for the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association's 2024-2025 Leadership Academy.



Laura Kogan, Partner, Litigation, has been selected to join the Advisory Group of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.



Megan (Meg) MacCallum, Associate, Transportation & Logistics, has been named a recipient of the 2024 Women in Supply Chain Award in the Rising Star category by *Food Logistics* and *Supply & Demand Chain Executive*.



Juan Martinez, Associate, Litigation, has been elected Vice Chair of Public Relations for the Multicultural Judges and Lawyers Section (MJL) of the Delaware State Bar Association (DSBA).



Juan Morado Jr., Partner, Healthcare, has been selected as a 2024 Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) Rising Star; has been named to Crain's Chicago Business Notable Leaders in Accounting, Consulting & Law 2024 list; and has received the HLAI's 2024 President's Award.



Robert Pleines, Managing Associate, Litigation, has been promoted to Major in the United States Marine Corps Reserve.



Stephanie Sheridan, Chair, Retail & E-Commerce, has received the 2024 Women, Influence and Power in Law Award for Law Firm Thought Leadership and has been named one of the year's 100 Most Influential Women in Bay Area Business by the San Francisco Business Times.

We are proud of these achievements and congratulate our team members on their accomplishments.
