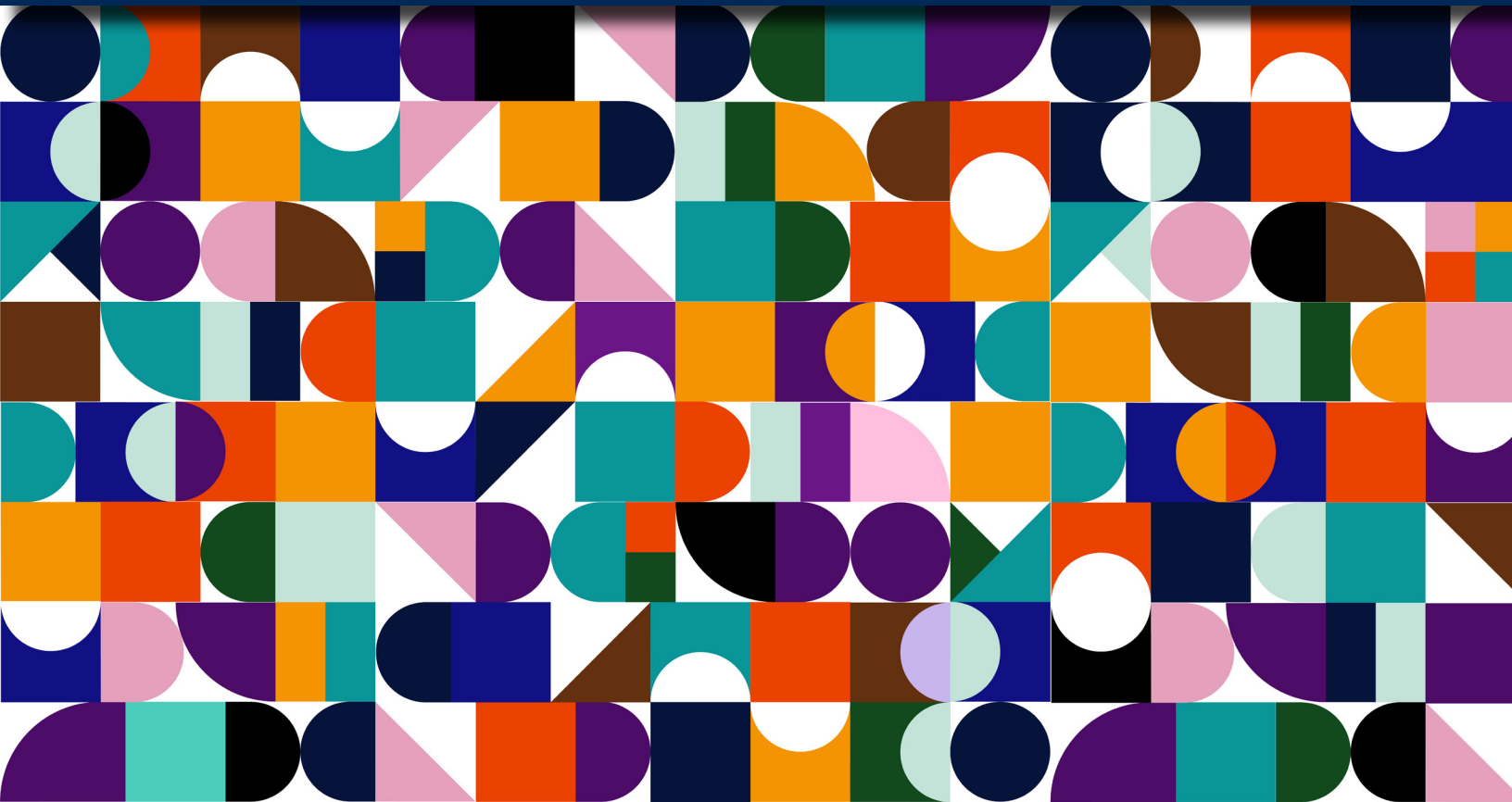


Cultivating a Culture of
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



Diversity is critically important to Benesch and our culture.

We promote and value diversity not just because it's the right thing to do—it makes our firm stronger and we provide better legal services when we have diverse attorneys and a diverse support staff serving our clients.

Our Commitment

60%

OF OUR PARTNERS-
IN-CHARGE ARE FROM
**UNDERREPRESENTED
GROUPS**

SINCE JANUARY 2021,

51%

OF OUR LATERAL
HIRES HAVE BEEN
WOMEN AND/OR FROM
**UNDERREPRESENTED
GROUPS**

13 OF OUR 17 2024
FIRST-YEAR ASSOCIATES

76%

ARE FROM
**UNDERREPRESENTED
GROUPS**

27 OF OUR 39 2024
SUMMER ASSOCIATES

69%

ARE FROM
**UNDERREPRESENTED
GROUPS**

Dedication to diversity helps the firm attract and retain talented employees, create a better work environment, and enhance our relationships with our clients. Creating a workplace where all individuals can develop professionally in a supportive, growth-oriented environment is paramount to our success and something on which we focus every day.

Benesch is committed to realizing and maintaining an environment that welcomes and embraces diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, and religious beliefs.

We welcome various viewpoints, religious practices and philosophies, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, races, and physical gifts that make us all unique in the most positive of ways and meanings. Our team works together to create a culture of togetherness and openness to ideas, beliefs, gifts, and talents that are brought to bear on behalf of our clients and the communities in which we live, work, and play.



“We’re committed to giving great people incredible opportunities to grow and thrive.”

— **Juan Morado, Jr.**
Co-Chair of Benesch’s Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion Committee



Our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
(DEI) Committee is composed of 15 attorneys and senior staff members, receives the full support of our Executive Committee, and provides diversity and inclusion training to all members of our firm.

A critical component of Benesch's formal strategic plan is our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiative, which contains specific action items aimed at both increasing the firm's diversity and ensuring that our diverse attorneys and staff have wide-ranging opportunities to take on leadership roles and advance in their careers.

Specific Action Items Initiated by our DEI Committee



whether law firms have affirmatively considered women, attorneys of color, LGBTQ+ attorneys, and attorneys with disabilities for recruitment, governance roles, promotions, and inclusion in formal pitches to clients. The goal of the Mansfield Rule is to boost the representation of diverse lawyers in firm leadership by broadening the pool of candidates considered for these opportunities. While being an equitable and inclusive workplace has long been a central part of our firm culture, achieving this certification reflects an important validation of our efforts. Benesch is currently Mansfield 6.0 certified.

Launching a diversity-focused **mentoring program.**



Expanding the DEI and **Women's Initiative Committees** to include working subcommittees that focus on recruiting and retaining diverse attorneys, educating current attorneys, and working with our clients to foster diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Holding our **Benesch Women's Retreat** for all women lawyers in the spring of 2024. The theme was Advocacy 2024: Advocating for Yourself & Your Clients and included programming on networking, confidence-building, work/life balance, leadership, business development, effective self-advocacy and more. The retreat also included a celebratory dinner and plenty of downtime for the women to get to know one another. Benesch held the firm's first Women's Retreat in 2020.

Benesch Creating B-Sharp, an initiative focused on supporting women corporate counsel at our clients and beyond. The goal is to promote **career development and advancement for women attorneys.** The firm hosts B-Sharp events throughout the year across our locations.

Developing our **1L Diversity Fellowship Program** (in Cleveland, Columbus, Chicago and San Francisco), where we hire diverse law students to join us for their 1L summer associate experience. As part of this experience, the law students have the opportunity to participate in LCLD's 1L Scholars Program.

Implementing an industry-leading **gender-neutral parental leave policy.**

Doubling our pro bono billable hours credit program for associates to encourage pro bono work focused on achieving racial justice, eradicating systemic racism, addressing police brutality, and improving police-community relations.



Specific Action Items Initiated by our DEI Committee (cont'd)

Holding **firmwide training** for all attorneys on implicit bias.

Hosting a **firmwide program** on the emotional and mental impact felt in response to the social injustice events in our communities.

Hosting a **virtual town hall** with a group of our Black associates who asked to have their voices heard and who shared their experiences around anti-Black racism and systemic race-based bias.

Starting a dialogue with the **Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio** to partner with them on providing self-education opportunities to our team regarding Allyship.

Participating in the **BARBRI Law Preview Scholarship program** and supporting five students who are starting at Northwestern Law School in the fall by providing them a Benesch mentor and sponsoring pre-law courses to prepare them for success in law school.

Supporting the **Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio** through sponsorship and participation in the organization's annual Walk, Rock, Roll and Run event.

Hosting the American Bar Association's **21-Day Racial Equality Habit-Building Challenge**. We had 120 employees participate in this guided self-education experience.

Practicing inclusivity. To enhance inclusivity for members of the LGBTQ+ community and to demonstrate that team members are inclusive and welcoming, regardless of someone's gender identity, Benesch team members now have the **ability to identify their personal pronouns within communication tools**, such as email signatures and website bios. Since being made available, nearly 40% of the Benesch team have already selected to participate in this effort.

Hosting a **three-part mentor training series** with the firm's DEI consultant for all Benesch partners.

Hosting a panel on the **intersections of race, sports and the law** featuring notable Cleveland Browns alumni.

Leading from the top. Gregg Eisenberg, Managing Partner at Benesch, has made a pledge as part of the **LCLD Leaders at the Front movement**. In his pledge, Gregg has committed to:

- Increase the visibility of Benesch's DEI efforts by including DEI updates at firmwide meetings throughout the year.
- Set regular meetings with the firm's DEI Chairs to check in on progress of our DEI Strategic Plan, and to offer support and additional resources.
- Reach out to each of our LCLD Pathfinder and Fellow participants twice throughout the year to brainstorm how we can further our DEI initiatives at the firm and specifically how we can better support our lawyers from underrepresented communities.
- Work with our Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Talent Officer to review our performance management program and partnership promotion process to remove bias in these processes.

Hosting an **Asian ERG roundtable** discussion and a panel in collaboration with the South Asian Bar Association of Northern California at our San Francisco office.

Hosting a reception for the **South Asian Bar Association National Conference**.

Supporting the **Hispanic National Bar Association** Annual Conference and Corporate Counsel Conference.

Hosting a reception for the **National Lavendar Law Conference** in Chicago in support of the LGBTQ+ community.

Sponsoring the **Norman S. Minor Bar Association Trailblazer Gala** in support of NSMBA's mission to administer justice and increase diversity in the legal profession.

Hosting a reception for the **National Asian Pacific American Bar Association Conference**.

Being named **Law Firm of the Year** by the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiative: An Internal and External Focus



We're always tracking the composition of client teams and client pitch teams to ensure diverse representation for our clients.

In order to provide ongoing visibility and a focus on continued growth of diversity across the firm, management and each practice group chair is provided with a monthly report regarding diversity numbers across the firm and each practice area.

Making these metrics more visible and regularly distributing them keeps our initiative top of mind and moving forward. These monthly reports also help with accountability when it comes to hiring, distribution opportunities, and advancement decisions.

Racial Justice Donation Match Update

In mid-2020, Benesch made a commitment to **"Be Part of the Change"** and seek out ways in which we can make a meaningful difference in our communities related to racial equality. As part of this commitment, Benesch implemented a donation matching gift program, agreeing to match up to \$2,500 per employee for donations made to approved 501(c)(3) organizations that promote racial justice, human rights and equality, and those that work to eradicate systemic racism and improve police-community relations. Since the program's inception in 2020, we are pleased to share that more than \$180,000 has been donated to such organizations.

Organizations donated to recently:

- 2nd Story
- ACLU Foundation
- Advantage Cleveland
- Akron Urban League
- Alvis, Inc.
- American Friends of Magen David Adom
- 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
- Chicago Learning Exchange
- Cleveland Peacemakers
- Cleveland Public Library Foundation
- 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
- 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 has a number of employee-led resource groups (ERGs). These groups have been created to provide all Benesch team members with an opportunity to enhance connections, provide support, and raise awareness around issues facing people of a specific demographic, race, religion, or sexual identity.


The Benesch ERGs are instrumental in helping to further cultivate a culture of diversity and inclusion at all levels of the firm. Our ERGs have been very active so far this year in planning and executing firmwide events and providing information around their respective focuses.

Asian ERG | Black ERG | Latino ERG | LGBTQ+ ERG | Parents ERG | Veterans ERG

Our Current ERGs and their Respective Leads

<p>Asian ERG</p>  <p>Aslam Rawoof Partner, Corporate & Securities</p>  <p>Ruby Kazi Of Counsel, Litigation</p>	<p>Black ERG</p>  <p>Rachel Chatman Practice Attorney, Litigation</p>  <p>Marisa Darden Chair, White Collar</p>	<p>Latino ERG</p>  <p>Cristina Almendarez Associate, 3iP</p>
<p>LGBTQ+ ERG</p>  <p>Kelly Mulrane Partner, Litigation</p>  <p>Holly Gross Associate, Government Relations</p>	<p>Parents ERG</p>  <p>Deana Stein Partner, Litigation</p>  <p>Nate Sargent Associate, Benesch Healthcare+</p>	<p>Veterans ERG</p>  <p>Craig Sanders Associate, Litigation</p>

In addition to these new ERGs, we are actively looking to support other groups in the near future. Benesch team members with additional ideas for an ERG are encouraged to contact the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee.



“Diverse viewpoints and beliefs make us a stronger organization.”

— **Charanjit Brahma**
Co-Chair of Benesch’s Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee



2024 DEI Subcommittee Chairs

At the start of 2021, our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee made some structural changes to better reflect the goals and priorities of the committee. As part of these changes, we combined oversight of the DEI Committee and WIN, our Women's Initiative Network, so we were better positioned to capitalize on shared goals and resources. With this, we also combined subcommittees and determined new leads for each of these areas as follows:



**Margo Wolf
O'Donnell**

B-Sharp

Led by **Margo Wolf O'Donnell** (Partner and Co-Chair, Labor & Employment), this subcommittee is responsible for developing programming and professional development opportunities for women in-house attorneys.



Cheryl Donohue



Michael Meuti

Education

Co-chaired by **Cheryl Donahue** (Associate, Corporate) and **Michael Meuti** (Partner, Litigation), this subcommittee partners with professional development to create programming that ensures the Benesch team is provided with opportunities to better understand the richness of our attorney and staff diversity.



Charan Brahma

Outreach and Community Partnerships

Led by **Charan Brahma** (Partner, Litigation), this subcommittee is responsible for building relationships with affinity bar associations in the cities where Benesch has offices, outreach to community and not-for-profit organizations in each city, and developing partnerships with business entities for the purpose of business development.



**Maura Levine-
Patton**



Brittany Vozar

Recruitment

Co-chaired by **Maura Levine-Patton** (Associate, Litigation) and **Brittany Vozar** (Legal Recruiting Manager), this subcommittee works with the various office hiring committees to identify law students for recruitment and works on initiatives to increase diverse lateral hires.



Jennifer Hoover

Retention

Led by **Jennifer Hoover** (Partner, Litigation), this subcommittee develops programming and social interactions in order to foster a better sense of community within the firm.

Events Beyond Our Walls We're Honored to Support

LCLD, an organization of more than 320 diverse members who serve as either general counsel of major corporations or managing partners of the nation's leading law firms. United by a spirit of activism and personal commitment, LCLD members participate widely in the programs they have created and challenge the legal profession to prepare future generations of diverse talent for the highest positions of leadership. For the past six years, Benesch has sponsored one of our diverse lawyers to be part of LCLD's professional development program and has sponsored a 1L summer associate to be part of LCLD's 1L Scholars Program.

LeadDIVERSITY, a 10-month program that approaches diversity and leadership issues from a no-fault interactive foundation with the goal of effecting positive social change. A select group of up to 35 professionals are chosen through a competitive application process. Each session is designed to help participants explore the concept of diversity leadership and to analyze its personal, workplace, and community impact.

Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio, whose mission is to mobilize citizens against the forces of violence and exclusion. Benesch sponsors the annual Walk, Rock, Roll and Run event and supports a team of attorneys and staff to participate.

FDCC Ladder Down, a yearlong program dedicated to leadership empowerment, business development, and mentoring for women lawyers.

The **National Asian Pacific American Bar Association**, the **Asian American Bar Association of Chicago**, the **South Asian Bar Association of Chicago**, the **South Asian Bar Association of North America**, the **Women's Bar Association of Illinois**, the **LGBTQ+ Bar Association**, the **Cook County Bar Association**, the **Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois**, the **Hispanic National Bar Association**, the **Norman S. Minor Bar Association**, the **Coalition of Women's Initiatives in Law**, and **Various Law Student Affinity Organizations**. We often sponsor conferences and regional meetings for these various bar associations.

Additionally, our attorneys are involved in the following organizations whose missions are dedicated to equality: **Anti-Defamation League**, **Chicago NORML**, **Cleveland District Council of the Urban Land Institute**, **Equality Ohio**, **Equip for Equality**, **California Minority Counsel Program**, **Legal Aid Chicago**, **National Immigrant Justice Center**, **Vocational Guidance Services (VGS)**, **Women Lawyers of Alameda County**.

Charting Your Own Course Career Conference, an annual conference that empowers attorneys of color with practical career and life strategies for short- and long-term success. Benesch was proud to sponsor our associates' participation in the conference.

To find out more about our commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, please visit www.beneschlaw.com/diversity-inclusion.html.



“We are a stronger business because we strive to have our employees reflect the world in which we live.”

— **Margo Wolf O'Donnell**
Co-Chair of Benesch's Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion Committee

