



Improving Diversity in State Courts:

# **JUDICIAL DIVERSITY PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>I.</b>	<b>General Overview.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Qualifications.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Lawyers' Committee Mission .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Strategies for Achieving Judicial Diversity.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Guidelines for Mentors.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Guidelines for Mentees.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Judicial Diversity Program Materials.....</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>a. Mentor Consent Form.....</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>b. Mentee Application.....</b>	<b>11</b>
	<b>c. Mentee Surveys .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## **I. GENERAL OVERVIEW**

The need for good mentors is important when one enters the legal profession, and it becomes even more important as one seeks a judgeship. The Judicial Diversity Program pairs attorneys, who are passionate about civil rights and equal justice, with judges. Judges will mentor attorneys by helping to:

1. Demystify the judicial appointment and election process
2. Provide professional guidance and support
3. Increase awareness regarding what it is like to serve as a judge
4. Increase mentees' understanding and knowledge of the judicial system

Throughout the Judicial Diversity Program quarterly workshops and panels will be organized to:

1. Develop successful campaign strategies
2. Develop fundraising strategies
3. Network and increase professional connections
4. Provide professional development

Some of the workshops and panels may be lead by mentors but in most cases they will be lead by other leading Washington state leaders and professionals.

## **Qualifications**

### **Mentors**

All mentors must:

- Be judges, active or retired
- Agree to mentor one to two attorneys for twelve months

Judges already committed to the program have demonstrated a dedication to diversity and come from an array of backgrounds and expertise.

### **Mentees**

All mentees must:

- Have at least 2 years of experience as a licensed attorney
- Be interested in a career in the judiciary in Washington State
- Have a passionate, demonstrated commitment to civil rights and equal justice

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law seeks enthusiastic applicants of color for its Judicial Diversity Program. Applicants must show an interest in pursuing a career on the bench. The Judicial Diversity Program seeks to improve the judicial system through increased representation from people of diverse backgrounds working on the judicial bench at all levels in Washington State. The Program is geared toward promoting a bench that represents different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

This program will accomplish this goal through three steps: first, creating a formal mentorship program aimed at attorneys aspiring to be judges; second, educating the public on the benefits of increased diversity on the bench; and third, advocating for structural reforms to increase transparency and accountability in the judicial selection process.

## **III. LAWYERS' COMMITTEE MISSION**

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, was formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. The principal mission of the Lawyers' Committee is to secure, through the rule of law, equal justice under law.

The Committee's major objective is to use the skills and resources of the bar to obtain equal opportunity for minorities by addressing factors that contribute to racial justice and economic opportunity. Given our nation's history of racial discrimination, de jure segregation, and the de facto inequities that persist, the Lawyers' Committee's primary focus is to represent the interest of African Americans in particular, other racial and ethnic minorities, and other victims of discrimination, where doing so can help to secure justice for all racial and ethnic minorities.

The Lawyers' Committee implements its mission and objectives by marshaling the pro bono resources of the bar for litigation, public policy advocacy, and other forms of service by lawyers to the cause of civil rights.

## **IV. Strategies for Achieving Diversity on Washington State Bench**

### ***1. Boost Formal Recruitment of Aspiring Judges from Diverse Backgrounds through a Mentorship Program***

Through recruitment panels or other mechanisms, prospective candidates will be provided with information about how to approach the judicial selection process most effectively. Applicants will be mentored on how to navigate the selection process, particularly focused on unique challenges facing candidates of color. An explanation on the selection process and information sessions dedicated to helping applicants better understand the amount of time and effort they can expect to dedicate to a campaign will help demystify the process and lead to more diverse judicial applicants.

### ***2. Assist Aspiring Judges from Underrepresented Communities in Campaign Training and Fundraising through Workshops and Panels (Mentors may not participate)***

Successful judicial candidates are well prepared for the political aspects of the process. As part of that preparation, prospective candidates need information and advice about the political realities of the process so that they can navigate it more efficiently and effectively.

Twin obstacles to a diverse judiciary are fundraising and low salaries. Candidates of color in elective states are hampered by the difficulty in raising sufficient funds to run an effective campaign. This may be due to a lack of access to a comprehensive network of donors. In addition, candidates of color may have to raise a significant sum to run for a judicial post with comparatively lower salaries than other candidates. Moreover, other, more highly paid opportunities in the legal field may attract qualified candidates away from pursuing a career on the bench. These difficulties can be remedied by having realistic expectations and a thoughtful plan of action.

### ***3. Educate the Public About the Benefits of Judicial Diversity, and Publicize the Accomplishments of Female and Minority Judges***

In general, very little publicity surrounds most judges' selection. Although there is some media coverage of partisan judicial elections, the average citizen knows little about the state bench or the judges who serve on them. Calling attention to relative absence of minorities and women judges will help voters to understand the importance of diversity on the bench. Increased public knowledge of current diverse judges' accomplishments may increase support for a diversity of judicial backgrounds and counteract articles questioning the qualifications of female and minority judges.

## V. Guidelines for Mentors

Mentors must be active or retired judges. Mentors are selected based on their commitment to achieving diversity on the bench in Washington State and willingness to be an advisor to aspiring judges. Mentors are encouraged, though not required, to attend the various panels and workshops organized by the Judicial Diversity Program.

As a role model, mentors are expected to act professionally and with integrity. Communications between mentor judges and mentees should be kept confidential in order to promote trust and candor. Communications shall remain confidential even after the term of the Program has ended.

Communication and an ongoing open dialogue are the foundation of the mentor-mentee relationship. Thus, mentors should keep in mind the following requirements:

1. **Preparation:** Read this handbook. Identify what components are necessary in procuring a judgeship in Washington State.
2. **Time Commitment:** Mentoring will require, at minimum, a three-hour time commitment per month.
3. **Discussion:** Mentor judges' personal experiences may be the most effective way of conveying what one should or should not do in pursuing a career on the bench. An emphasis should be placed on ethics and professionalism issues, situational advice, and personal life lessons.
4. **Establish Guidelines:** At the onset, let your mentee know when the best time and method to reach you. Judges will set the tone for the mentor relationship.

## VI. Guidelines for Mentees

Mentees must have at least 2 years of experience as a licensed attorney and plan to apply for a judgeship within a year of participating in the Washington State Judicial Mentorship Program. Mentees are required to attend all the panels and workshops organized by the Judicial Mentorship Program.

Mentees are expected to act professionally and with integrity in all their interactions with their mentor judge. Communications between mentor judges and mentees should be kept confidential in order to promote trust and candor. Communications shall remain confidential even after the term of the Program has ended.

Communication and an ongoing open dialogue are the foundation of the mentor-mentee relationship. Thus, mentees should keep in mind the following requirements:

1. **Preparation:** Read the Judicial Diversity Program Materials of this handbook. Identify personal goals for the mentoring relationship and how your mentor can help you. Articulate why you want to be a judge and any questions you may have.
2. **Take the Lead:** Mentees are expected to take the lead in scheduling the first meeting and initiating questions at the beginning of the Program. In addition to asking thoughtful questions, mentees should listen carefully to mentors' answers and digest them.
3. **Time Commitment:** Regular contact with your mentor is critical in developing a strong mentor relationship. Discuss with your mentor a tentative schedule for meeting throughout the year.
4. **Be considerate:** Judges are particularly busy people. Thus, mentees should be mindful of their time. Do not be late. Give ample notice if you need to reschedule. Prepare for meetings in advance so that they will be efficient and valuable to both mentees and mentors.
5. **Establish Guidelines:** Schedule follow-up meetings with your mentor, to ensure ongoing contact throughout the Program.

## **VII. Timeline for Implementation**

### **February 18, 2013**

- ❖ Application period closes
- ❖ Selection process begins

### **February 27, 2013**

- ❖ Selections finalized, mentees announced

### **March 15, 2013**

- ❖ Orientation, launch luncheon
- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> panel/workshop
- ❖ Meeting with mentee

### **May 2013**

- ❖ Meeting with mentee

### **May 17, 2013**

- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> panel/workshop
- ❖ Meeting with mentee

### **July 2013**

- ❖ Meeting with mentee

### **August 2013**

- ❖ Coffee or lunch with mentee

### **October 4, 2012**

- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> panel/workshop
- ❖ Meeting with mentee

### **November 15, 2013**

- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> panel/workshop
- ❖ Meeting with Mentee

### **December 2013**

- ❖ Program conclusion luncheon





# **JUDICIAL MENTORING PROGRAM MATERIALS**

**Mentor for Judicial Mentorship Program: Washington State**

Personal Information: Please optionally include a résumé and photograph. (this information will assist in the matching process)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male

Preferred Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ No Preference

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ No Preference

Law School Graduated From: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Admitted to Bar: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Practice Area(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rank the following characteristics of a potential mentee according to their importance to you with #1 being the most important. Rate only those that are important to you.

\_\_\_ Similar court branch or assignment

\_\_\_ Same gender

\_\_\_ Marital status

\_\_\_ Mentee in similar practice areas

\_\_\_ LGBTQ

\_\_\_ Has children

\_\_\_ Mentee's office location

\_\_\_ Same race/ethnicity

\_\_\_ Same law school

\_\_\_ Mentor's hobbies & interests

\_\_\_ Disability rights awareness

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Optional:** I would like to share the following personal traits:

Race/ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_

LGBTQ: \_\_\_\_\_ Disability: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Children: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies:

\_\_\_\_\_

Professional Membership/Associations:

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Information/Considerations:

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**Participation**

I would like to participate in the Washington State Judicial Diversity Program as a mentor. By becoming a mentor, I understand that I am committing to have monthly contact with my mentee throughout the year. I am under no obligation to be an employment reference and may choose to recuse myself from a court case in the event of a conflict of interest. I understand all mentorship communication is confidential, even after the end of the program and in the event of death of either participant.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form via mail, fax or email to:

**Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**  
1401 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005

Fax: (202) 783-0857

JudicialDiversity@lawyerscommittee.org

**Mentee Application for Judicial Mentorship Program: Washington State**

Personal Information: Please attach your résumé, and optionally a photograph

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male

Preferred Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ No Preference

Law School Graduated From: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Admitted to Bar: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Practice Area(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Minority Bar Association Membership(s):

Rank the following characteristics of a potential mentor according to their importance to you with #1 being the most important. Rate only those that are important to you.

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Similar court branch or assignment     | <input type="checkbox"/> Same gender                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Has children                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Judge who was appointed to position    | <input type="checkbox"/> Same race/ethnicity         | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor's office location     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Judge who was elected to position      | <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQ                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Same law school              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor is a state judge                | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability rights awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor's hobbies & interests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor is a federal judge              | <input type="checkbox"/> Marital status              | Other: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Type of work performed when practicing |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor is a trial court judge          |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor is an appellate court judge     |  |   |

**Optional:** I would like to share the following personal traits: (this will assist in the matching process)

Race/ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_

LGBTQ: \_\_\_\_\_ Disability: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Children: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies:

Professional Membership/Associations:

Additional Information/Considerations:

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Short Answer Questions (please answer in no more than 300 words each on a separate page):

1. What are your goals for participating in this mentorship program?
2. What makes you a strong candidate for our program?

**Participation**

I would like to participate in the Washington State Judicial Diversity Program as a mentee. By becoming a mentee, I understand that I am committing to attend all program trainings and events, and to contact my mentor at least once a month for the next year in order to develop a mentoring relationship. I acknowledge that the judge is under no obligation to be an employment reference, contribute to subsequent campaigns or practice, and may choose to recuse themselves from a court case in the event of a conflict of interest. I understand all mentorship communication is confidential, even after the end of the mentorship and in the event of death of either participant.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form via mail, fax or email to:

**Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**  
1401 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005

Fax: (202) 783-0857

JudicialDiversity@lawyerscommittee.org

**Initial Mentee Survey (Please circle your answers)**

**Application Process**

1. How easy was the application process?

1 (Easy)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (Difficult)

2. How well-matched do you feel you are with your mentor?

1 (Poor)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (Excellent)

**Background Knowledge**

3. How confident would you feel running a judicial campaign?

1 (None)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (Complete)

4. Are you interested in expanding your professional network?

1 (None)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (Complete)

5. Are you aware of career options that will increase chances of a judgeship?

1 (None)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (Complete)

6. How confident are you in your knowledge of pitfalls to judgeships for minority candidates and what you can do to avoid them?

1 (None)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (Complete)

Please describe at least one thing the Judicial Diversity Program can do to improve:

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**Mid-Year Mentee Survey (Please circle your answers)**

**Mentor**

1. How often have you contacted your mentor each month on average?

0 times          1 to 2 times          3 to 4 times          more than 5 times

2. How helpful has your mentor been in answering questions you have and giving advice?

1 (Not at all)          2          3          4          5 (Extremely helpful)

**Events**

3. How helpful are the events, discussions, panels and/or workshops in your *professional development*?

Not helpful at all          Somewhat helpful          Very helpful

4. How helpful are the events, discussions, panels and/or workshops for *networking*?

Not helpful at all          Somewhat helpful          Very helpful

**Background Knowledge**

5. How confident would you feel running a judicial campaign?

1 (None)          2          3          4          5 (Complete)

6. Has your network increased since enrollment in our program?

1 (None)          2          3          4          5 (Complete)

7. Have you adjusted your career options to increase your chances of a judgeship since our program began?

1 (None)          2          3          4          5 (Complete)

8. How confident are you in your knowledge of pitfalls to judgeships for minority candidates and what you can do to avoid them?

1 (None)          2          3          4          5 (Complete)

Please describe at least one thing the Judicial Diversity Program can do to improve:

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**End-of-Year Mentee Survey (Please circle your answers)**

**Mentor (Please answer according to events for the second half of the program)**

1. How often have you contacted your mentor each month on average?  
0 times      1 to 2 times      3 to 4 times      more than 5 times
2. How helpful has your mentor been in answering questions you have and giving advice?  
1 (Not at all)      2      3      4      5 (Extremely helpful)

**Events (Please answer according to events for the second half of the program)**

1. How helpful were the events, discussions, panels and/or workshops in your *professional development*?  
Not helpful at all      Somewhat helpful      Very helpful
2. How helpful are the events, discussions, panels and/or workshops for *networking*?  
Not helpful at all      Somewhat helpful      Very helpful

**Background Knowledge**

1. How confident would you feel running a judicial campaign?  
1 (None)      2      3      4      5 (Complete)
2. How confident do you feel in your professional network?  
1 (None)      2      3      4      5 (Complete)
3. How confident are you in knowing career options to increase chances of a judgeship?  
1 (None)      2      3      4      5 (Complete)
4. How confident are you in your knowledge of pitfalls to judgeships for minority candidates and what you can do to avoid them?  
1 (None)      2      3      4      5 (Complete)

Please describe at least one thing the Judicial Diversity Program can do to improve:

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