**About Our Organization**

*The principal purposes of Washington Women Lawyers are to further the full integration of women in the legal profession, and to promote equal rights and opportunities for women and to prevent discrimination against them.*

**Top Three Recommendations/Best Practices for
Recruiting and Retaining Women Attorneys**

**1. Representative Leadership.**

A modeled commitment by managing partners and department heads to promoting and advancing women attorneys within the organization is key to both recruitment and retention, and also plays a vital role in the training process ensuring that women attorneys have the key skills they need to advance. One of the best ways to model commitment to best practices for diversity and inclusion is by having representative leadership that includes women attorneys in visible leadership roles. Representative leadership is also one of the fastest ways that outside third parties can gauge the diversity of an organization and draw conclusions regarding its values.

**2. Workplace Flexibility.**

One of the strongest factors driving women attorneys out of the legal profession is a failure in work-life balance. Attorneys should be given all available opportunities to pursue flexible schedules that fit both the needs of the organization and the individual. The office is often no longer the only place where legal work can be done effectively and efficiently, and flexible schedules, reduced work hours, and telecommuting options, even if only temporary, are often the difference between retaining a valuable employee or seeing her move on to another position that is willing to embrace these needs and find creative solutions for them.

**3. Accountability.**

Creating a system that monitors and rewards or, if necessary, penalizes partners/managers for the extent of their implementation of best practices for diversity and inclusion is important to effect real change. This includes challenging partners and managers who fail to assign key projects to women attorneys, or who fail to allow their subordinates or partners to take on visible leadership roles, or whose conduct in general does not promote successful relationships with women attorneys.

**Resources**

**Washington Women Lawyers**

<http://wwl.org/> - the largest Minority Bar Association in Washington state, founded to promote women in the legal profession in Washington. The website showcases updates on news and events relevant to the legal community, resources, and opportunities for networking and training.

**NYC Bar**

<http://www.nycbar.org/pdf/report/BestPractices4WomenAttorneys.pdf> - a free manual created by the Committee on Women in the Profession of the New York City Bar to study and address issues faced by women in the legal profession and develop best practices for the hiring, training, retention, and advancement of women attorneys.

**Diversity and Flexibility Alliance**

[http://dfalliance.com](http://dfalliance.com/resources/) - provides some free and also members-only best practices resources and information.

**Minority Corporate Counsel Association**

[http://www.mcca.com/](http://www.mcca.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageId=485) - MCCA was founded to advocate for the expanded hiring, retention, and promotion of minority attorneys in corporate law departments and the law firms that serve them. In addition to providing membership to in-house law departments, MCCA created the Law Firm Affiliate Network (FAN) to assist and acknowledge law firms that are committed to advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

**American Bar Association**

<http://www.americanbar.org/groups/women.html> - provides a wealth of resources for women attorneys. Particularly of note regarding the leaky pipeline phenomenon is the Commission’s annual compilation of statistics, “A Current Glance at Women in the Law,” available at <http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/marketing/women/current_glance_statistics_feb2013.authcheckdam.pdf>

**National Association of Women Lawyers**

<http://www.nawl.org/> - NAWL is another national organization working to advance the interest of women attorneys. In 2012, NAWL released its seventh annual “National Survey on Retention and Promotion of Women in Law Firms.” available at <http://nawl.timberlakepublishing.com/files/NAWL%202012%20Survey%20Report%20final.pdf>

**Washington State Gender and Justice Commission**

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/programs_orgs/gjc/> - works to eliminate gender bias in Washington State’s legal community and justice system. Particularly relevant to the leaky pipeline phenomenon are its 2001 Glass Ceiling Survey, which evaluated the status of women and minority lawyers in private law firms in Washington.