

Debevoise  
& Plimpton

# Diversity and Inclusion

“At Debevoise, diversity  
isn’t just talk...”



“Diversity must be part of the very foundation of a firm’s culture, and it’s a topic that needs to be top of mind, each and every day.”

—**Michael W. Blair, Presiding Partner**

Photo: Jay McClinton at dosojosmedia



# Diversity is a Core Value and a Critical Business Priority

Debevoise's top priority has always been to provide the best legal service to our clients, and we recognize that the inclusion, sponsorship and advancement of lawyers of color, women lawyers and LGBTQ+ lawyers within the firm are cornerstones of our continued success. We demonstrate this by:



## Recruiting Diverse Talent

Debevoise has long been committed to attracting, retaining and promoting a diverse population of lawyers. Our performance on diversity is an important business metric. Here are some of the ways we invest in attracting diverse talent:

**Sponsoring diverse student groups** at law schools across the country, including affinity groups such as the National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA), the National Asian Pacific American Law Student Association (NAPALSA), Latino Law Students Association (LaLSA) and OUTLaw for LGBTQ+ law students.

**Attracting diverse candidates** at the Northeast BLSA (NEBLSA) Job Fair, the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) Job Fair and the Lavender Law Career Fair (LGBTQ+), and recruiting from historically black universities.

**Connecting diverse candidates with Debevoise lawyers** who are members of firm affinity groups to provide guidance during the recruiting process.

**Hosting a Diversity Reception and social events for diverse offerees**, allowing them to make meaningful connections with future colleagues and prospective members of their class.

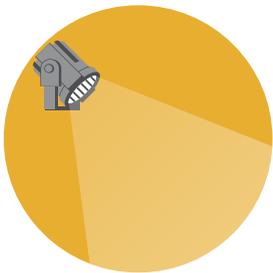
**Enriching the summer associate experience** through the involvement of **Debevoise affinity groups**, which host a variety of programs and whose members act as informal advisors for summer associates of diverse backgrounds.

**Providing diversity and inclusion training for summer associates**, including programs to help neutralize implicit bias and organizing diversity-related presentations and professional development programs.

## Investing in the Development and Retention of Diverse Lawyers

Debevoise takes the necessary steps to ensure that diverse associates are able to develop their legal skills and see a career path for themselves at the firm.

- **Mentoring programs** support the retention and promotion of diverse lawyers, increase lawyer engagement, and foster talent development.
  - › Our **Accelerated Mentoring Program (AMP)** pairs our newest associates of color with partners who actively review their associates' work assignment opportunities to ensure each associate is integrated into the workflow on client matters.
  - › Our **Sponsorship Program** pairs diverse associates who have been identified as prospective partner candidates with firm leaders to ensure access to opportunities that will maximize these associates' partnership chances.
- **Training and professional development programs** help lawyers identify and utilize practical tools they can implement in their daily practice.
- **Affinity groups and affinity group programs** strengthen the sense of community and facilitate mentorship among lawyers.
- The **Diversity Speaker Series** features senior legal executives from different fields and diverse backgrounds speaking about their professional experiences and career paths. Recent programs have featured General Counsel and other senior executives from **MetLife, Home Depot, Xerox** and **Toyota**, senior lawyers from **Lambda Legal** and the **Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund**, as well as federal judges.
- To sustain a strong pipeline of women leaders at the firm, the **Women's Task Force**—comprised of top management and representative male and female partners—was formed to review, update, formulate and implement initiatives designed to develop and retain women talent.



### Spotlight on Sponsors for Educational Opportunities

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Debevoise hosts several fellows each summer from the Sponsors for Educational Opportunities (SEO) Corporate Law Program. The SEO organizational mission is to provide superior educational and career programs to young people from underserved communities to maximize their opportunities for college and career success. These students will start as first-year law students in the fall and are fully integrated into Debevoise's New York summer associate program, receiving work assignments, attending training programs and participating in summer social events.

## Affinity Groups

- African-American Affinity Group
- Asian Affinity Group
- Latina/Latino Affinity Group
- LGBTQ+ Affinity Group
- Shiur Group
- Women's Resource Group

## Affinity Group Programs

- Monthly Affinity Groups Lunch and individual Affinity Group events
- Affinity Groups Fall Party
- Summer event hosted at a partner's home
- Mid-level panel sharing strategies for managing one's career path, internally and externally
- Junior associate panel on how to succeed as a lawyer
- Summer associate panel on getting the most out of the summer program and succeeding as a summer associate



## By the Numbers



In 2017, 54% of our U.S. associates were women and 40% of Debevoise lawyers promoted to partner since 2008 were women.



From 2012 to 2017, the representation of lawyers of color at the firm increased by 42% for U.S. associates and 86% for U.S. partners.



## Providing Effective Solutions for Our Clients

Debevoise is committed to serving its clients through excellence in lawyering, including by nurturing our diverse legal talent to work on challenging matters. This allows us to:

- Better understand the needs of our clients, deliver incomparable value and fuel the firm's growth.
- More effectively solve problems for our clients.

- Truly reflect the diverse business world that we—and our clients—live in.

Our top priority has always been to provide the best legal service to our clients, and we recognize that the inclusion, sponsorship and advancement of lawyers of color, women lawyers and LGBTQ+ lawyers within the firm are cornerstones of our continued success.

## Building an Inclusive Community of Diverse Lawyers

Our lawyers serve in leadership positions at, and the firm supports, organizations that cultivate a more diverse and inclusive legal profession and create opportunities for minority students.

### Leadership Council on Legal Diversity

Debevoise is active in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD), an organization with over 240 member organizations, which provides mentoring and training of the next generation of leaders. Presiding Partner Michael W. Blair serves on the Executive Committee of the Board and as Treasurer.

In 2017, Debevoise was named a Top Performer by the LCLD, recognizing Debevoise for going above and beyond to participate and support the LCLD's mission of creating a more inclusive legal profession.

### Catalyst

In 2017, Debevoise joined more than 40 leading global businesses to launch Catalyst CEO Champions for Change, which recognizes CEOs and industry leaders who support and drive diversity and inclusion. Partner and Co-Chair of Debevoise's Litigation Department, Mary Beth Hogan, is a member of Catalyst's Board.

### National Association of Women Lawyers

Debevoise is a member of the National Association of Women Lawyers' Challenge

Club, under which the firm designates high-potential women associates on the path to equity partner to network with in-house counsel, gain pitch experience and participate in mentorship sessions.

### Educational and Career Path Programs

Debevoise sponsors, supports and participates in programs that improve the education outcomes and career paths of minority students:

- **Law MENTOR Program** (*Charter Member*) provides high school students with exposure to law-related activities.
- **Prep for Prep** develops leaders by preparing New York City's most promising students of color for placement at independent schools in the city and boarding schools throughout the Northeast. Two Debevoise lawyers serve on the Board of Directors and as officers, including our partner Sue Meng.
- **New York High School Mock Trial Team** coaches students from the High School for Law and Public Service (HSLPS) to compete in the New York City High School Mock Trial Tournament. The vast majority of students at HSLPS and on the mock trial team are students of color.

## Experiencing Diversity and Inclusion at Debevoise

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At Debevoise, diversity and inclusion are about having an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued and comfortable—regardless of sexual orientation, gender, religion or race—so that they have the ability to develop to their full potential.



**Tigist Kassahun, Associate, Class of 2015:**

“Diversity and inclusion are an inherent part of the work environment. This includes ensuring that diverse associates see a career path for themselves at Debevoise.”



**Jennifer Chu, Partner, M&A:**

“As an Asian woman in the M&A field, where a lot of people often don’t look like me, what has been most meaningful to me is simply that I feel supported in a way that doesn’t have to do with being Asian or being a woman.”



**Cari Wint, Alumna, Senior Counsel at Bristol-Myers Squibb:**

“At Debevoise, diversity isn’t just talk. Individual lawyers were invested in my experience.”



**Margo Watson, Associate, Class of 2017:**

“When I arrived at Debevoise, I was relieved to realize that I had found a community that strives to support all of its members. Any concerns I had as a member of the LGBTQ+ community about not fitting the stereotype of a typical ‘Big Law attorney’ quickly subsided.”

## What People Say About Us

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**#1** in the 2017 *Chambers Associate Law Firm Diversity Survey*.

**#6** for Overall Diversity by Vault 2018 Best Law Firms for Diversity Survey.

In 2017, 66% of women litigation partners were among *Benchmark Litigation's* **“Top 250 Women in Litigation”** in the United States.

**Perfect Score**—For the ninth consecutive year, Debevoise received a perfect score for **“Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality”** by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s Corporate Equality Index (CEI).

Debevoise has been recognized nine times by *Working Mother Media* as one of the **“50 Best Law Firms for Women.”**

In 2017, **54%** of our U.S. associates were women. **55%** of our U.S. associate hires during 2017 were women.

“They’re a brilliant firm culturally and structurally.”  
—*Chambers Global*

## Dealmaker of the Year

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Partner **Natasha Labovitz** was named “Dealmaker of the Year” by *The American Lawyer* in 2016.

## Statement on Diversity

One of the greatest strengths of Debevoise & Plimpton LLP is its community. The “Fundamental Values of the Firm” articulate the importance of “cohesiveness and collegiality within the firm, founded in the character of those we select as partners, counsel, associates and staff and in fundamental principles of fairness and cooperation” with “an emphasis on the success of the firm as a whole.”

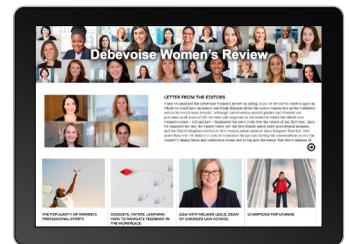
Debevoise is committed to creating a work environment that values each individual’s contributions to our community. We recognize that we must work together every day to respect the different backgrounds, perspectives and experiences of people at the firm and to support our colleagues so

they have the ability to develop to their full potential. These values are the foundation of our firm and strengthen our ability to work together as a team so that we can provide our clients with the best legal services available.

Debevoise is committed to promoting the diversity of our community. This commitment stems naturally from the values that shape our firm. To continue to flourish, our firm strives to recruit and develop the finest talent from all backgrounds and beliefs. Our ability to respond to the needs of our clients in an increasingly open and global environment requires that the members of our community have a broad range of skills and experiences. The firm’s commitment to diversity furthers these goals.

## Debevoise Women's Review

The Debevoise Women’s Review, a first-of-its-kind platform among law firms, was developed to inspire the legal and business communities to engage in discussion and collective action around gender diversity. Unlike a traditional marketing platform, the content is developed and the editorial process managed almost entirely by lawyers at the firm, most of whom are associates, allowing for an authentic, first-person perspective. Join the conversation at [women.debevoise.com](http://women.debevoise.com).



## Not Just Talk: **From Idea to Action**

At Debevoise, we ensure that associates have a voice in how the firm follows through on its commitment to diversity and inclusion. We value their ideas and we don’t just listen—we act. For example, the firm recently developed a new diversity training program aimed at mid-level and senior associates who are involved in assigning work to, and supervising, junior lawyers and staff. This new program was suggested by an associate at an affinity group meeting. Within a month, we had developed a program and added it to the firm’s regular mid-level and senior associate training curriculum.

## Inclusive Leadership

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“Diversity and inclusion are at the core of our promise of talent and service. We recruit with a lens wide open to the range of people who can make us better, we provide an environment in which they can reach their full potential, and we teach them, and at the same time ourselves, to work effectively across difference, with each other and with our clients.”

**Michael Gillespie, Partner**



“I wouldn’t be where I am today without the support, guidance, and mentorship of my Debevoise colleagues. As a firm, we remain committed to providing our diverse lawyers with the training, the opportunities, and the platform to thrive in their careers.”

**Natalie Reid, Partner**



“We have seen again and again that the quality of our work product is higher, and the firm and our clients benefit, when the voices of lawyers from diverse backgrounds contribute to solving our clients’ most difficult challenges.”

**Jonathan Lewis, Partner**

To learn more about Debevoise, our people and what makes us tick, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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