

ChIPs Honor Roll

Best Practices for Diversity
Equity and Inclusion





HONOR ROLL

Excellence in Gender Inclusion

Davis Graham
Nixon Peabody
Orrick
Sheppard Mullin
Willkie

Excellence in Inclusion for All

Morgan Lewis

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DEI + Data = Change

Organizations spend billions of dollars annually to reduce biases and foster more diverse workplaces. But without data to identify issues, establish baselines, and measure progress, such initiatives too often fail.

Every other year, ChIPs Honor Roll — a collaboration between ChIPs and Diversity Lab — advances law firm inclusion and equity efforts by reporting real-world metrics and recognizing industry best practices. The seven law firms profiled in this report are the best of the best.

ChIPs Honor Roll is based on Diversity Lab’s Inclusion Blueprint, which scores law firms’ talent practices related to inclusion and the equitable distribution of opportunities at both the firmwide and practice group levels. These firms excel in key benchmarks, including inclusion by intersectional identities, equal access to succession planning, pay equity, work allocation, sponsorship and factors that impact compensation.

We are proud to honor six firms for Excellence in Gender Inclusion: Davis Graham, Nixon Peabody, Orrick, Sheppard Mullin, and Willkie. We are also proud to recognize one firm, Morgan Lewis, for Excellence in Inclusion for All.

Every law firm who participated in this year’s ChIPs Honor Roll is an inclusion champion. These firms recognize the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion to their success. They know their success depends on talent-oriented strategies and practical policies and programs.

Our Honor Roll firms recognize that DEI is centered on fairness — something that does not need to be justified but a core value to be embraced, achieved and celebrated — as we are proud to do here.

Best regards,

Joan Toth
Executive Director
ChIPs Network

Caren Ulrich Stacy
CEO
Diversity Lab



“Our entirely equity partnership is comprised of 34% women.”

Kristin Lentz
Co-Managing Partner
Davis Graham & Stubbs

What are the top 2-3 initiatives your firm has used to advance inclusion in the workplace?

One of the top initiatives at Davis Graham is the adoption of the IAALS’ “Foundations for Practice.” This move has significantly transformed our recruitment processes, making it more inclusive and equitable. We’ve replaced the traditional prestige metrics with an outcomes-based framework, creating objective, transparent and accountable practices for assessing qualified candidates. These systemic changes have effectively removed subjectivity and bias-inducing questions and replaced them with questions designed to elicit information about success factors that we have identified at Davis Graham, resulting in a more diverse pool of hires and improved retention rates.

At Davis Graham, we place the highest value on inclusion and equity. This ethos is evident from the first interactions potential new hires have with us. Our commitment to these core values shapes our attorneys’ understanding of what they can expect from practicing law at Davis Graham and what the firm expects of them as attorneys. We believe that feedback and open, honest conversations are key

to fostering engagement, demonstrating our investment in lawyer development, and ultimately interrupting biases. We have cultivated a culture of feedback, ensuring that our new hires are aware of our growth mindset approach to development. Our practices create an expectation and cultural norm that feedback is a regular part of doing business. One such program is our project-based feedback process, which includes an accountability measure requiring our partners to complete feedback questionnaires quarterly before they receive compensation payouts. I am proud to say that we have consistent participation by our partners.

Davis Graham is a founding member of the Denver Law Firm Coalition for Equity and Inclusion, whose mission is to make the Denver legal community a desirable and empowering place for all attorneys, especially those underrepresented in the law. In May 2024, Davis Graham and the other Coalition firms traveled to Chicago for the third consecutive year to host the Practice Denver event for Chicago-area law students. This event featured a panel discussion with Denver attorneys followed by a networking happy hour. This fall, Davis Graham will be welcoming a former Co-

alition law clerk as a full-time associate. Last year, we were featured in a *Law Week Colorado* article where the Coalition discussed its vision for the group’s future. The Coalition fosters a sense of belonging through collaboration among firms, partnerships with existing pipeline organizations, and community-based recruiting initiatives.

What achievements or milestones are you most proud of when it comes to inclusion for all women?

Our commitment to women at all levels has helped us retain top talent. The makeup of our partnership, entirely equity-based and comprised of 34% women, and our executive committee, which is comprised of 50% women, illustrate our success in both recruiting, retaining and promoting women into leadership roles. We provide a clear path to leadership for our women attorneys. Personally, I have benefitted from the presence of women leaders before me, and I strive to ensure that diverse perspectives are heard. Our firm prides itself on flexibility and commitment to our lawyers as whole individuals.

What is the biggest barrier to gender inclusion in the law, especially in tech and IP law?

We are proud that our percentage of women attorneys has consistently been around 50%. However, I would like to see greater retention of women in private practice, particularly in some areas such as M&A, where the percentage of women partners is lower than other practice areas. Many women leave private practice for careers as in-house counsel. Having honest, open dialogues about the path to partnership and thereafter is critical to promoting growth and empowerment, thereby advancing women in law.

What’s your long-term inclusion and equity vision?

We believe that diverse teams obtain better results for clients. Our clients are diverse and want the law firms they hire to reflect their own diversity. Our goal is to ensure that each person at our firm has an equal opportunity to grow and excel in their career at Davis Graham. We strive to create a sense of belonging so each person will feel comfortable being authentic and showing up as themselves.



“At Morgan Lewis, diversity is not just a concept we talk, it is an asset we cultivate.”

Malaika M. Lindo

Senior Director of Diversity & Inclusion
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius

What are the top 2-3 initiatives your firm has used to advance inclusion for all?

Like ChIPs, at Morgan Lewis, we know that moving the needle on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) takes purposeful effort, consistency and communication. DEI influences how we service clients, collaborate with colleagues and engage talented lawyers and professional staff, as well as how we engage the global communities where we live and work. Some examples of our noteworthy DEI initiatives include providing associates with more formalized opportunities for connection through our Enhanced Associate Mentoring Program, expanding the depth and breadth of our DEI programming, and encouraging participation in our DEI Billable Hour Credit Program.

What achievements or milestones are you most proud of when it comes to inclusion?

Morgan Lewis has several active and popular lawyer networks/affinity groups within the firm for lawyers who support and/or identify with various historically underrepresented groups. The groups provide lawyers at all levels with formal and informal support, mentoring, and fellowship focused on creating com-

munity and bringing enhanced opportunities to everyone at the firm. Asian American/Asian Lawyer Network; Black Lawyer Network; Disability Awareness Lawyer Network; First Generation Lawyer Network; Hispanic/Latino Lawyer Network; LGBTQ+ Lawyer Network; Middle Eastern North African Lawyer Network; Parent Lawyer Network; and Veterans Lawyer Network. Women lawyers at our firm are leaders. Every day, they deliver outstanding results for our clients — garnering recognition from the legal and business communities. Our ML Women initiative harnesses the strength of our women through partnership with our clients, creating opportunities for our women to come together around a shared industry or practice. Whether it is hosting a specialized roundtable for women featuring speakers from Morgan Lewis, our clients, and external experts, or leveraging our vast network of successful women alumnae to discuss topics specific to women, leadership, and the power of women consumers, we are proud to support women leaders in business and industry.

What is the biggest barrier to gender inclusion in the law, especially in tech and IP law?

We recognize that some of the barriers

to gender inclusion in the law, particularly in tech and IP law, include gender bias and stereotypes that limit women’s access to opportunities in these fields. To combat these challenges and barriers to attracting talent in STEM-related fields from secondary and undergraduate education, we focus on pipeline programs that make careers in law, technology and IP accessible for women and other underrepresented communities. As part of our ongoing efforts to diversify and grow our IP legal talent pipeline we have launched our “Pathway to IP Law.” This educational program aims to help STEM students (at both the undergraduate and graduate level) better understand how they can leverage their unique engineering and scientific backgrounds into a career in IP law, as future lawyers, patent agents, and/or technical specialists. Additionally, we partner with clients to offer pipeline programming, mentoring and fellowship opportunities to support students who seek to explore careers in STEM and law. Our lawyers and patent agents actively participate in organizations like the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and Advancing Diversity Across Patent Teams (ADAPT), encouraging careers in STEM and law.

What’s your long-term inclusion and equity vision?

Our holistic DEI framework is underpinned by four pillars that impact every aspect of our culture. We continue to build upon these pillars and work to develop our efforts in these areas: *Active Leadership*: We embed DEI principles into every aspect of our operations, starting at the top by integrating them into talent management and business strategies. *Career Development*: We’re committed to the growth and advancement of all our employees. Our mentorship programs, career workshops and leadership trainings are designed to provide equitable opportunities for professional growth and development. *Inclusive Recruiting and Outreach*. We aim to support diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility efforts in the legal profession and to attract future leaders who are committed to the same. *Client and Community Engagement*: We actively seek ways to connect with and support the communities in which we operate. This ranges from pro bono legal services for marginalized communities to supporting diversity-related initiatives and events.



“True inclusion is only possible when we assemble diverse teams and put them in an environment conducive to their success.”

Sasha Rao
Partner | Nixon Peabody

What are the top 2-3 initiatives your firm has used to advance inclusion in the workplace?

First, our Move the Needle Fund, a first-ever program designed to create positive change in the legal industry. We were proud to be one of four Big Law firms chosen as founding members of this pioneering collaboration with 25 general counsel and community leaders. Through Move the Needle, we set ambitious goals for diversifying our equity partnership, participating in groundbreaking mentoring programs, and test data-driven ways to effect durable change in our profession. Secondly, the creation of six affinity-organized resource groups to open up new pathways of communication and collaboration within the firm. We have groups for women, Black attorneys, veterans, Asian and Pacific Islander attorneys, members of the LGBT+ community, and Hispanic attorneys.

What achievements or milestones are you most proud of when it comes to inclusion for all women?

A purposeful evolution of our firm leadership team, which now includes women and other diverse people in many key roles, including chief talent officer, office managing partners, practice group leaders and Policy Committee and Management Committee members. We are also proud of our Post-Parental Leave Ramp-Up Policy — attorneys returning from a parenting leave have a reduced billable hour expectation at full pay for the first six months after return from leave.

What is the biggest barrier to gender inclusion in the law, especially in tech and IP law?

We are always searching for ways to increase representation of diverse attorneys and build teams that reflect the places we live and work. This is especially critical in the tech and IP law spaces, which have historically lacked a significant number of women in leadership roles. Though this landscape is evolving, law firms must be conscious of the impacts that emanate from male-dominated fields and work collectively to address

these barriers. Impacts range from equitable allocation of work to business development (implicit gender bias has a proven effect on the way company leaders build client teams, assign projects, and network).

Women attorneys need leaders that look like them. They need tech inventors and clients that look like them. They need mentors that can relate to their journeys as women in the law.

The historic lack of gender diversity in these spaces presents an ongoing barrier to true inclusion for our profession, but one we can commit to tackling together.

What’s your long-term inclusion and equity vision?

Our top priorities for the years ahead are informed by the same principles that have guided our success to date. One goal at the forefront of our efforts is to increase our diversity at the partner level. We have established ambitious targets that go above and beyond industry averages to position us as a Big Law leader. We pair these quantitative goals with qualitative measures because we understand that true inclusion is only

possible when we assemble diverse teams and put them in an environment conducive to their success. To this end, we are developing high-impact programming focused on how to identify and deconstruct gender bias in the workplace. Nixon Peabody is home to many dynamic and talented women attorneys. To support these women in reaching their career goals, we must improve on Big Law’s inadequate past efforts to prioritize the voices and aspirations of women attorneys. We were recently recognized by a top trade publication for our commitment to empowering women, and we believe a bias-free workplace is an essential component of those efforts. Another priority is to roll out a robust, reimagined mentoring and sponsorship program. While Nixon Peabody has always had a strong mentoring culture, we have invested time and resources to enhance and formalize our efforts. This re-energized program will be designed to encourage new, formal relationships starting on an attorney’s first day with the firm, while still preserving space for the organic, informal connections that have produced some of our most dynamic mentor-mentee pairs.



“Over the past 10 years, our U.S. partnership diversity improved from 29% to 46%.”

Sheryl Garko

Partner, Women’s Initiative Co-Leader and IP Litigation Co-Leader
Orrick

What are the top 2-3 initiatives your firm has used to advance inclusion in the workplace?

We’ve focused on several new initiatives to meet the moment and the internal feedback from our team, including: Reinventing our affinity groups as Inclusion Networks to focus on connection and community. Our Jewish Inclusion Network recently hosted antisemitism training — the most well-attended training like it in our history. Our Middle Eastern and North African Inclusion Network led a fireside chat with human rights advocate Masih Alinejad. We also reexamined our philosophy on making internal and public statements. While intended to create inclusion, feedback from our team indicated that they had the opposite effect. We’re instead focusing on more meaningful ways of engaging through pro bono work, inclusion network activities and the trainings described above.

What achievements or milestones are you most proud of when it comes to inclusion for all women?

Promoting women’s voices in leadership. Over the past 10 years, our U.S. partnership diversity improved from 29% to 46% and our leadership diversity grew from 35% to 55%, including nine women and five partners of color on our global Board and Management Committees. I’ve been honored to step into leadership for our Intellectual Property Litigation department, which I co-chair with homegrown IP partner Alyssa Caridis. We’ve continued to grow our team with high-quality lateral talent (67% of our IP partner hires have been diverse since 2023), including nationally recognized life sciences IP litigator Irena Royzman, who joined us in April.

What is the biggest barrier to gender inclusion in the law, especially in tech and IP law?

The pipeline. We’re improving, but we still need more diverse talent in STEM. And while we’re working on that, we need to make careers inspiring and sustainable to retain great talent. We’re optimistic that AI and other hyperproductivity tools will help to advance this goal. At Orrick, our U.S. first-year classes have been 80% or more diverse since 2019. We are supporting their success through the Orrick Residency, a novel approach to onboarding. For the first six months of their career with us, they have a reduced billable hours target and an intensive curriculum, including projects we don’t bill to our clients, so they can ramp-up on the skills and intensity of full-on practice. It’s been great for our first years, for our teams and our clients.

What’s your long-term inclusion and equity vision?

That diversity at the firm, in our client teams, in the partnership and in leadership is the norm. I just went to trial with an all-women team and I spoke with a colleague who did the same, but that is still exceptional. We want to get to a point where it becomes unremarkable because it is so common just like an all-male team. Realizing this vision requires innovation in programs and policies and an evolution of those programs to provide individualized support and skills training. That’s where we’re heading to support the next generation of legal talent!



“We aim to foster an environment where every individual feels valued.”

Lois Durant

Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer
Sheppard Mullin

What are the top 2-3 initiatives your firm has used to advance inclusion in the workplace?

We have launched a series of in-depth trainings and workshops focused on race, intersectionality and allyship. These programs range from micro sessions to intimate discussions aiming to normalize conversations around race and racism and engage the broadest audience possible. Topics covered include historical policies, achieving equity and justice, active allyship, and shared empathy. Moreover, we have formed various groups to foster connections and support diversity within the firm. These include attorney-led affinity groups, DE&I office working groups, and the Parent Connection Group. At Sheppard Mullin, the Diversity and Inclusion Network, Out at Sheppard, the Women Lawyers Group, and Veterans at Sheppard, provide ongoing support and networking opportunities and foster a culture of inclusion and retention. These initiatives collectively help us create a more inclusive workplace, support our broader commitment to diversity, and ensure that equity is prioritized in all aspects of hiring, retention, and promotion within the firm. Externally, we partner with clients on various DE&I programs and initiatives to support and promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the broader legal community. As a cornerstone of our DE&I efforts, we participate in recruiting

programs and events, including the LCLD 1L Scholars program. We established the Guy N. Halgren Diversity Fellowship for law school students, which supports candidates committed to diversity and who have overcome significant life challenges. Furthermore, we provide pro bono legal services to individuals who belong to minority groups and/or are women, LGBTQ+, or HIV-positive and seeking refuge, freedom and asylum in the U.S. Our firm created an “Unplug and Recharge” program that allows associates to receive up to 40 hours of billable credit each year that they can use to focus on their well-being.

What achievements or milestones are you most proud of when it comes to inclusion for all women?

Sheppard Mullin is proud of several significant enhancements in our policies and programs promoting inclusion for all women. We expanded our family-friendly benefits. Now, 89% of our employees have access to backup childcare, up from 84% in 2023. Additionally, 84% can now use childcare services for sick children, compared to 80% last year. Additionally, 90 percent of our firm now receives subsidized everyday childcare costs, aligning with the evolving needs of our diverse workforce and reinforcing our commitment to fostering work-life balance. The firm’s largest affinity

group, the Women Lawyers Group (WLG), is devoted to providing women attorneys with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to achieve their maximum professional potential, taking into account issues of intersectionality and diverse experiences.

What is the biggest barrier to gender inclusion in the law, especially in tech and IP law?

Women face persistent underrepresentation and systematic biases in the tech and IP law fields, which is a major barrier to gender inclusion. Despite consistent progress in representation and work to increase awareness and promote diversity, several key challenges remain. Gender stereotypes and biases often question women’s competence and leadership abilities, leading to being overlooked for high-profile cases, promotions or leadership roles. The demanding nature of legal careers, coupled with high-pressure environments, can disproportionately impact women who also shoulder significant caregiving responsibilities, as the lack of flexible work arrangements and support for work-life balance hinders their career progression and retention. Additionally, women in tech and IP law often have limited access to mentorship and sponsorship networks, which are crucial for career advancement. Male-dominated leadership can result in fewer mentorship opportunities,

making it harder for women to gain the guidance and advocacy needed to navigate their careers successfully. Retention challenges persist due to a lack of visible role models, gendered expectations and a perceived or real lack of inclusivity within firms and organizations.

What’s your long-term inclusion and equity vision?

Our long-term inclusion and equity vision is to create a workplace where diversity is celebrated and deeply integrated into our firm’s fabric and its business. The goal is to foster an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential, with equitable access to opportunities for growth and leadership. Efforts are focused to build a diverse talent pipeline through proactive recruitment and retention, ensuring the workforce reflects the communities served. The aim is to be a leader in the legal community, partnering with clients and organizations to drive systemic change. There is a strong commitment to promoting social justice, equity and inclusion within the legal industry and beyond, making meaningful contributions to our communities and setting a standard for an inclusive and equitable workplace.



“We are firmly committed to creating a diverse environment.”

Sarah Tonnies Horton
Co-Chair, IP Litigation Practice Group
Willkie Farr & Gallagher

What are the top 2-3 initiatives your firm has used to advance inclusion in the workplace?

The firm has several committees that focus on the recruitment, retention and promotion of attorneys, particularly, women and diverse attorneys. In particular, the Women’s Professional Development Committee mentor circles are groups of women attorneys across practice and seniority that provide mentorship, networking and career advice. The WPDC hosts networking events with women CEOs, partners and in-house lawyers, and does substantive training on topics including leadership, negotiation, and board membership. Starting in their fourth year, associates have the option to choose a partner mentor each year to add to their “board of advisors,” cultivating senior associates networks and opportunities for career development.

What achievements or milestones are you most proud of when it comes to inclusion for all women?

Willkie is committed to further developing strategies to enhance diversity and inclusion. Our Executive Committee is made up of 42% women and diverse attorneys and includes our Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Over the past five years, Willkie’s partnership classes have averaged approximately 39% women and 28% diverse attorneys in the U.S. Forty-three percent of Willkie’s managing partners are women and 38% of our practice heads are women. Recently, Willkie ranked #2 among the largest U.S. law firms for gender equity in Law360 Pulse’s 2024 Women in Law Report and received the 2023 Gold Standard Certification from the Women in Law Empowerment Forum.

What is the biggest barrier to gender inclusion in the law, especially in tech and IP law?

The biggest barriers to gender inclusion in the law are lack of inclusion in leadership positions, and lack of role models and mentors. Willkie is combating those barriers by providing opportunities for women attorneys to seek out mentors, both within and outside of the firm, and actively promoting women to leadership roles. Willkie’s IP Litigation department is co-chaired by two women and one of Willkie’s IP partners, a woman, is on the Executive Committee.

What’s your long-term inclusion and equity vision?

At Willkie, we believe everyone benefits from a diverse workplace. In keeping with such belief, we are firmly committed to creating and maintaining a diverse environment by recruiting and retaining people of all backgrounds and cultural experiences. We are committed to working with clients and law schools on focusing on the recruitment, retention and promotion of our women and diverse attorneys, ensuring that they have opportunities for mentorship and career advancement both within and outside of the firm.

The Inclusion Blueprint

Roadmap to Change

The Inclusion Blueprint by Diversity Lab provides law firm leaders with a roadmap of inclusion actions they can take to ensure all lawyers have fair and equal access to quality work, influential sponsors, business development and other opportunities. This unique diagnostic tool allows firms to track and measure inclusion practices at both the leadership and practice group levels. Nearly 240 firms completed the assessment in 2024 by submitting data on four key diversity and inclusion indicators: demographics tracking; current diversity representation; ongoing inclusion practices; and ongoing inclusion practices within practice groups.

Inclusion for All Award

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius is this year's sole recipient of ChIPs Honor Roll for Excellence in Inclusion for All. The firm exceeded the high threshold score set for both the Firmwide Assessment and the ChIPs IP Assessment, which measures inclusive talent practices in the intellectual property practice areas. They were the only firm that exceeded the rigorous scoring threshold and demonstrated a commitment across all demographic groups — gender, race, LGBTQ+ and disabilities — to ensure that their talent practices firmwide and in IP are inclusive and equitable for all.

Gender Inclusion Awards

Gender inclusion has been the heart of ChIPs since its founding 19 years ago. Six leading law firms — Nixon Peabody, Orrick, Sheppard Mullin, Willkie, and Davis Graham & Stubbs — are the recipients of ChIPs Honor Roll for Excellence in Gender Inclusion this year.

Having scored the highest in the gender categories for both the Firmwide Assessment and the ChIPs IP Assessment, these firms demonstrated their commitment to tracking and taking action to ensure their talent practices at the firmwide and practice group levels are inclusive for all genders. Special congratulations to Davis Graham, the only midsize firm recognized in this category.



About the Participants

Nearly 240 law firms participated in the 2024 Inclusion Blueprint survey. The seven ChIPs Honor Roll firms recognized by ChIPs in 2024 represent the best of the best in IP law.

Firm Leadership Assessments

131 Large firms

106 Midsize firms

237 firms total

Firm Leadership Participation by Size

1-50 lawyers: 41 firms (17%)

51-100 lawyers: 33 firms (14%)

101-150 lawyers: 32 firms (14%)

151-200 lawyers: 6 firms (3%)

201 to 500 lawyers: 47 firms (20%)

501-800 lawyers: 32 firms (14%)

More than 800 lawyers: 46 firms (19%)

IP Practice Group Assessments

IP - General: 22 (79%)

IP - Litigation: 4 (14%)

IP - Transactional: 2 (7%)

Total practice group assessments completed: 28

About Diversity Lab

Since 2014, Diversity Lab has built, piloted and measured the impact of experimental ideas to accelerate diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. Industry-wide movements — such as the OnRamp Fellowship, the Inclusion Blueprint, and the Mansfield Rule — are created through Diversity Lab’s Hackathons and piloted in collaboration with more than 200 top law firms and legal departments. Diversity Lab leverages data, behavioral science, design thinking and technology to develop, test, measure and share new ideas and research. Visit DiversityLab.com.



About ChIPs

ChIPs is a global nonprofit organization with more than 30 chapters and 7,000 members in North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Africa. ChIPs advances and connects women in technology, law and policy, provides vital learning and content, and hosts dozens of global and chapter events each year. It accelerates innovation through diversity of thought and engagement, and is open to all who support its mission.



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