

American Bar Association 2008 Partnership Awards Program Application

The ABA Partnership Awards Program salutes outstanding bar association projects that seek to increase the participation and advancement of lawyers of color in the organized bar and to attract students of color to the legal profession. Award-winning programs will be featured at the joint annual meeting of the National Conference of Bar Presidents, the National Association of Bar Executives and the National Conference of Bar Foundations, to be held in New York, August 8, 2008.

NOMINEE INFORMATION:

Name of Bar Association: - Delaware State Bar Association - Multicultural Judges and Lawyers Section
Address: - 301 North Market Street
City/State/Zip: - Wilmington, DE 19801
Phone #: - (302) 658-5279
Email Address: - Unknown
Number of Association Members: - 98 members in the Section, 3122 members in entire Bar Association
Program Contact Person: - Chaneta Brooks Montoban, Esq.
Title: - Vice Chair Legal Development
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PROGRAM INFORMATION:

In the narrative portion of your application, you will be required to answer the following questions about the program submission.

1. Program Title

Minority Supplemental Bar Review Program Sponsored by the Multicultural Judges and Lawyers Section of the Delaware State Bar Association

2. Description

- Describe the program and indicate the aspect of diversity it was designed to address.
- Explain the program's history, its target audience and number of participants.

The purpose of the Minority Supplemental Bar Review Program ("Program") is to increase the diversity of the Delaware Bar and to enhance the success of minority applicants. Diversity includes all minorities - African American, Asian, Latino, etc. It is designed to provide technical assistance and support through a series of lectures, discussion groups, one-on-one interactions, coaching, intensive practice essay exams and critiques, and review of questions and answers to previous Delaware bar exams. The Program does not compete or stand as a substitute for traditional commercial bar review courses. Rather, the Program is designed to supplement such courses by identifying and teaching essay test-taking skills. Additionally, the Program focuses on time and stress management, analytic skills, and essay structure. The Program meets every Thursday evening for seven consecutive weeks prior to the bar exam and culminates with a full day eight-essay timed session two weeks before the exam.

This session is an exact experience of the actual Delaware Bar Exam. Typically, the Bar Exam from the previous year is administered. Student attendance and participation is expected and required at each session. The Multicultural Judges and Lawyers Section of the Delaware State Bar Association (the "MJL Section") sponsors and administers the Program and provides two members of its Executive Committee to serve as co-chairs. The co-chairs are responsible for planning the Program, including establishing the Program schedule, circulating registration forms and choosing and copying past exams for use in the evening sessions. The co-chairs also choose and assign a mentor for each Program participant, select graders for

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the practice exams and attend each Program session. Members of the MJL Section and former Program participants volunteer to serve as guest speakers, mentors and graders.

This Program was created in response to observations by members of the MJL Section that there were not many minorities passing the Delaware State Bar Examination. Specifically, the first minority attorney was admitted in 1929. Up until 1980, there was no consistency in minorities being admitted to the Delaware Bar. Members of the Section decided to start this Program and possibly create and foster an environment in which minorities could be provided assistance and guidance on how to attack the Delaware Bar Exam. At the first, the Program consisted of MJL member offering their kitchen counters to tutor and grade essays for minorities that they knew were taking the Bar Exam. After sometime, the Program outgrew the kitchens and began being held at the Widener University School of Law campus in Wilmington, Delaware, where it still exists. Through the years, the course has had as many as 50 participants and as low as 15.

At this point, we try to keep the Program down to no more than 20-25 students. This decision was made because mentoring and grading essays for a class larger than that can become very challenging for attorneys who are volunteering their time to ensure that this Program continues. The target audience is all minorities, whether they be African-American, Asian, Latino, etc. As a practice, we do not turn anyone away from the Program, regardless of their ethnicity or race. In fact, the Program is filled on a first come-first served basis, therefore making it our mission to ensure that all minorities taking the Delaware Bar Exam are in the Program.

3. Goals and Objectives

- Describe the goals and objectives of the program.
- Explain why you decided on this course of action and what effect on diversity in the profession your program would have.

As indicated previously, the purpose of the Program is to increase the diversity of the Delaware Bar and to enhance the success of minority applicants. It is designed to provide technical assistance and support through a series of lectures, discussion groups, one-on-one interactions, coaching, intensive practice essay exams and critiques, and review of questions and answers to previous Delaware bar exams. The Program does not compete or stand as a substitute for traditional commercial bar review courses. Rather, the Program is designed to supplement such courses by identifying and teaching essay test-taking skills. Additionally, the Program focuses on time and stress management, analytic skills, and essay structure. It is our sole objective to see that every minority who takes the Delaware Bar Exam, and specifically those who take our Program, pass the Delaware Bar Exam on the first attempt. It is not uncommon for someone to have to take the Delaware Bar Exam several times before passing. The Delaware Bar Exam is known as one of the most difficult Bar Exams in the country and we want to ensure that minorities who come here to practice in Delaware only have to go through the experience

Please see the previous responses mentioned above in this application, so as to avoid duplicity.

4. New or Existing Initiative

Please indicate if this is a new or an ongoing program.

- If new, describe the issues that prompted the need for this project and indicate whether the goals you wished to accomplish were met and whether the program will continue.
- If an ongoing program, indicate its inception and goals. Also describe whether and how it differed from previous years and what, if any, new ideas were implemented this year.

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It is an ongoing program.

The Program's inception and goals have previously been discussed. However, with respect to changes through the years. An obvious change has been decreasing the number of participants we accept into the Program. This was due to the great demand a large class puts on our volunteers. Second, we are constantly changing our marketing strategies to ensure that minorities all over the East Coast (or further if we know of them) are made aware of the Program so they can register. To accomplish those means, we have changed from simply mailing out the registration form, to circulating to area law schools, to circulating to various minority student organizations at area law schools, to circulating to the Career Development departments of area law schools, etc. This year, nothing was really changed. One big occurrence is that we are being told moreso by fellow members of the Delaware Bar about minorities they know who are planning on taking the Delaware Bar. We will personally send the registration forms to those people.

5. Budget

- Provide information about the total expenses and revenues for this effort.
- Explain the source of program funds and other resources (e.g. in-kind contributions, materials, etc.)

Explain the source of program funds and other resources (e.g. in-kind contributions, materials, etc.) Our Program involves human labor versus funding. We charge a nominal fee for the Program of \$125. These funds are used to provide breakfast and lunch during the all-day session. In addition, the MJL Section holds its Annual Bar Toast to acknowledge all of those students who took the Program and passed the Bar Exam. This event is somewhat like a cocktail reception in which we invite members of the Section, Bar, and Judiciary to meet and recognize these new attorneys and honor them with a token of recognition. Typically, all copying of essays is done free of charge by the Vice Chair of Legal Development's employer. In addition the test booklets and classroom space is provided free of charge by Widener University School of Law.

6. Implementation and Execution

- Identify other "partners" who supported your effort (e.g. bar associations, agencies, high schools/colleges/universities/law schools, law firms, etc.).
- Explain how another bar association could replicate this program.
- What suggestions or recommendations would you offer to others who might do so?
- Are there materials, checklists, reports that lend themselves to a "how to" guide for other organizations?

Delaware State Bar Association, Widener University School of Law, Area Law Firms who spread the word about the Program

The Program lends itself fairly easily to duplication. Any area law school would likely be very eager to support such a Program. The unique factor in Delaware is that the regular Bar Review Course, offered typically by BARBRI, is actually given by and through the Widener University School of Law. It is believed that BARBRI may supply some of the outlines, etc. However, it is Delaware attorneys who teach the Course. If BARBRI offers the Bar Review Course in your area, approaching their staff or someone at the law school where the classes are held would provide an avenue to get a Program such as ours instituted. In addition, as long as you have members of an association who are committed to helping minorities pass the Bar Exam and increasing diversity with the Bar Association, recruiting volunteers should also be simple.

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Yes, somewhat. Although there are no formal checklists, we can provide samples of our recordkeeping and volunteer requests for anyone to review and assist in creating a Program such as ours.

7. Promotion

- Identify any recognition this program has received, e.g. media coverage, awards, etc.
- If this program has also been submitted for another ABA-related award, including NABE, NCBP or NCBF, please identify.

The Program has not received any formal award or recognition because, frankly, we had not thought of submitting it for any consideration. It has just been one of the MJL Section's programs, in which we believe is owed to the minorities coming to practice in Delaware. The Program always gets kudos from various members of the Bar and Judiciary when talking about the Delaware Bar Exam.

In addition, area law firms always spread the word about the Program.

Program has not been submitted for another ABA award

8. Results and Evaluation

- How many people participated in the program?
- Describe the short- or long-term benefits that this program provided.
- Did the program meet or exceed its goals/objectives? Explain why or why not.
- Explain any program follow-up efforts (e.g. a report on the number of participants who eventually attend law school).
- Use statistics, registration/attendance numbers or other form of documentation to support your statement.

In 2007 - 22

Short Term - The Program has provided many minorities with the tools they need to pass the Delaware Bar Exam on the first attempt. In addition, the mentoring aspect and networking that occurs after the Bar Toast lasts for years. Long Term - As indicated above, the connections and networking which is made through the Program can last forever. In addition, we encourage those successful Bar passers who took our Program to also join the Multicultural Judges and Lawyers Section volunteer for the Program in the following years. In addition, increasing diversity within the Delaware Bar, which is already small, creates an environment very appealing to employers and corporations.

Since its inception, the Program has been very successful at focusing on the skills necessary to pass the bar exam, including time and stress management, writing style and answer structure. Over the last few years, the pass rate for Program participants has been consistent with that of the overall percentage of successful candidates. In addition, as previously noted, prior to 1980, there were institutional barriers preventing law students of color from gaining membership in the Delaware Bar. Of interest only 17 minority attorneys were admitted between 1929 to 1980. The Supplemental Bar Course has played an integral role in uniting attorneys of color behind a program with a common goal and in preparing students to meet the demands of one of the most rigorous bar examinations in the country. Since the Programs origins, there has never been a year without at least one attorney of color passing the bar. Prior to the course we had gaps of 27 and 14 years between attorneys of color being admitted to the Bar. The increase in diversity of the Delaware State Bar Association can be traced directly to students who have participated in the Supplemental Bar Program and other applicants drawn to a state that shows it cares about diversity. The course has achieved its goals, because no member of the Delaware State Bar Association can stand up and say --"there were no qualified applicants this year for the Delaware Bar Examination."

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The only follow-up which has occurred is that the Section maintains a listing of all minorities who have ever been admitted to the Delaware Bar since 1929.

Although we have not tracked performance on a percentage basis or by constant documentation, we have done so in aggregate. Moreover, the Delaware State Bar Association does not track bar exam applicants or successful candidates by race or ethnicity. Since the Program's origins, there has never been a year without at least one attorney of color passing the bar. The increase in diversity of the DSBA can be traced directly to students who have participated in the Supplemental Bar Course and other applicants drawn to a state that shows its cares about diversity. Although, the Section maintains a listing of minority attorneys in Delaware, we cannot disclose that list for privacy reasons but can provide the years of minority admissions (without names and contact information), if necessary. Lastly, each year we calculate our passage number from the Program and have consistently stayed in alignment with the overall Delaware Bar passage rate. However, these numbers have not been maintained on a consistent basis.

Return by **March 28, 2008** with supporting documentation to:

Kimberly Vann
ABA Partnership Awards Program
ABA Division for Bar Services
321 North Clark Street, Fl. 20
Chicago, IL 60610-4714

Or email to: vannk2@staff.abanet.org

For further information, contact Kimberly Vann, ABA Division for Bar Services, at 312/988-5364. Thank you for your interest.