



LACBA and the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA) first joined together in 2007 to create the Joint Task Force on the Retention and Promotion of Women, which addresses the need to increase the number of women in partnership and leadership positions in major law firms. Over the past 13 years, the Joint Task Force has organized programs and promoted policies intended to encourage women lawyers to remain and lead at firms. This year, we have drawn on the insights of stakeholders across the legal field to compile a list of best practices to promote gender equity. We now invite law firms and legal departments to commit to implementing these practices by signing on to the 2021 Call to Action.

You are being called upon to act because while women have represented 40 to 50 percent of law school graduates for over 30 years, and for the last three years have even outnumbered men in law schools, the number of women in large law firms falls precipitously as they move up the ranks, down to less than a fifth of partners with a financial stake.<sup>1</sup> In fact, as of 2019, women made up only 19 percent of equity partners—and women of color only accounted for three percent with that status—and the non-equity and general counsel numbers aren't much better. A growing number of women attorneys have also filed lawsuits against major law firms, alleging that they have discriminated against female attorneys in pay, promotions, and opportunities. Moreover, since the onset of the #MeToo movement, there has been an increasing awareness of the persistence of sexual harassment in the legal field. 2020 has raised new barriers for women trying to balance work and family while working remotely.

These are not issues that solely affect women. They affect the success of entire firms and all those who work for and with them, including your clients. Firms gain by attracting the best and the brightest attorneys because they have an atmosphere that encourages women to succeed. Firms gain because clients are looking for law firms with women in leadership roles.

We are here to help. Over the course of 2021, we will provide programming about tools for diversifying your workplace, and creating an inclusive corporate culture, and

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<sup>1</sup> Law360 2019 Glass Ceiling Report ([www.law360.com/articles/1164440/the-2019-law360-glass-ceiling-report](http://www.law360.com/articles/1164440/the-2019-law360-glass-ceiling-report)).

will share the ways legal employers have already succeeded in doing so. We will broadcast your commitment to the Call to Action through our network and the media, and champion your successes.

Join us. Take the lead in championing diversity in the field of law.

To sign on to the 2021 Call to Action, please contact Kay Burt at ([kay@wlala.org](mailto:kay@wlala.org)).

*Established in 1919, WLALA's mission is to promote the full participation of women lawyers and judges in the legal profession from diverse perspectives and racial and ethnic backgrounds, maintain the integrity of our legal system by advocating principles of fairness and equality, and improve the status of women, including their exercise of equal rights and reproductive choice. Our 1000+ members actively work towards these goals through WLALA's committees, sections and activities.*

*The LACBA President's Advisory Committee on Women in the Legal Profession dedicates its time and energy to promote the full participation of women lawyers in the legal profession; supports women in both their professional and personal growth from entry-level to partnership or general counsel; advises on issues related to the careers and advancement of women in the practice of law in Los Angeles; considers matters and engages in activities related to the overall status of women in the legal professions; monitors existing conditions and trends, conducts special programs and makes recommendations that aid in the achievement of its goals, including but not limited to, gender pay equity and retention of women in the legal profession; coordinates its efforts with the committee on Diversity in the Legal Profession, and other appropriate committees and affiliated associations; and solicits and evaluates nominations for the Elizabeth Kenny LACBA Women Lawyers of Achievement Award.*