



2018 VAULT/MCCA LAW FIRM DIVERSITY SURVEY

**Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Survey
2018 Executive Summary**

Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Survey

For more than a decade, Vault and the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) have worked with law firms across the country to collect information about their diversity and inclusion initiatives, including detailed demographic breakdowns of law firm populations by race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and disability status. Responses to the annual survey are published in the Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Database (<http://mcca.vault.com>), an online resource made available at no charge to the legal community. The database also maintains an archive of demographic data collected since 2008, providing a uniquely comprehensive portrait of diversity progress in the legal profession.

The 2018 Diversity Survey Report, highlighting results from the most recent Vault/MCCA Survey will be released in the fall of 2018. A summary of the key findings is presented below. This information is based on data submitted by 232 law firms who participated in the survey in the spring of 2018, reporting demographic statistics as of December 31, 2017.

Key Findings

The latest Vault/MCCA survey results reflect a continuation of many of the trends observed over the last several years:

- Law firms are bringing in more people of color but are less successful at retaining them.¹
- Despite some gains for minority lawyers as a whole, progress remains uneven among different racial/ethnic groups.
- More women are advancing into partnership and leadership roles, but minority women enjoy fewer of these successes than their white colleagues.
- Even with the progress recorded over the last decade, especially among associates, demographic changes have been slow to trickle upward, as law firm partners remain overwhelmingly white and male.

Minority Representation Continues to Grow

- Nearly 17 percent of law firm attorneys are members of a racial or ethnic minority group. This figure, which is almost a percentage point higher than last year, continues a steady upward trend. Among new attorneys hired in 2017, 26 percent were people of color, and approximately 32 percent of the 2017 summer class were minorities.
- Minority attorneys now represent more than 9 percent of law firm partners, the highest figure to date. Nevertheless, minority lawyers remain significantly underrepresented in law firm partnerships. One in four law firm associates is a member of a racial/ethnic minority group, but only one in ten partners is a person of color.
- Racial minorities also represent a disproportionate share of the lawyers who leave their firms. While we might expect attrition to decline as firms step up efforts to foster more diverse and inclusive environments, the data reveals the opposite. Minority lawyers represented 22 percent of the attorneys who left their firms in 2017. That figure is higher than previous years, even during the peak of the recession when minorities were hit particularly hard by firm layoffs.

Advances for Women

- While the increases are not dramatic, the number of women in law firms has also grown over time. According to the latest data, close to 36 percent of law firm attorneys are female. Women represent more than 46 percent of associates, and half of summer associates at surveyed firms in 2017 were women—the highest number to date.
- Progress is also evident at the partnership level. Although women remain better represented in the non-equity ranks, for the first time since Vault and MCCA began collecting this data 14 years ago, the number of female equity partners now exceeds 20 percent. Women represented 29 percent of all new equity partners in 2017, a figure higher than any previous year. Women also serve in increasing numbers on law firm executive committees, as heads of office and practice leaders.

¹ For the purposes of this report, the terms “minority” and “person of color” refer to individuals identifying with one or more of the following racial/ethnic groups: African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American, Alaska Native/American Indian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Multiracial.

- The survey results also suggest that firms may be doing better at retention—at least among white women. Since 2010, the percentage of white women among the attorneys who leave their firms has dropped from more than 31 percent to less than 29 percent.

Less Progress for Women of Color

- Roughly one in four women at surveyed law firms is a member of a racial/ethnic minority group. Minority women are being hired in greater numbers than minority men and make up a larger share of the associate population. Women of color represent 14 percent of associates, compared to 11 percent for men.
- But as they progress up the ranks, minority women face both a gender gap and a racial divide: law firm data shows that women of color are far less likely to be partners than either minority men or their white colleagues of either gender. Retention also remains a significant concern. While the number of white women leaving firms has declined over the last several years, departures among minority women continues to climb. In 2010, 10 percent of lawyers who left their firms were minority women; in 2017, that number was closer to 12 percent.

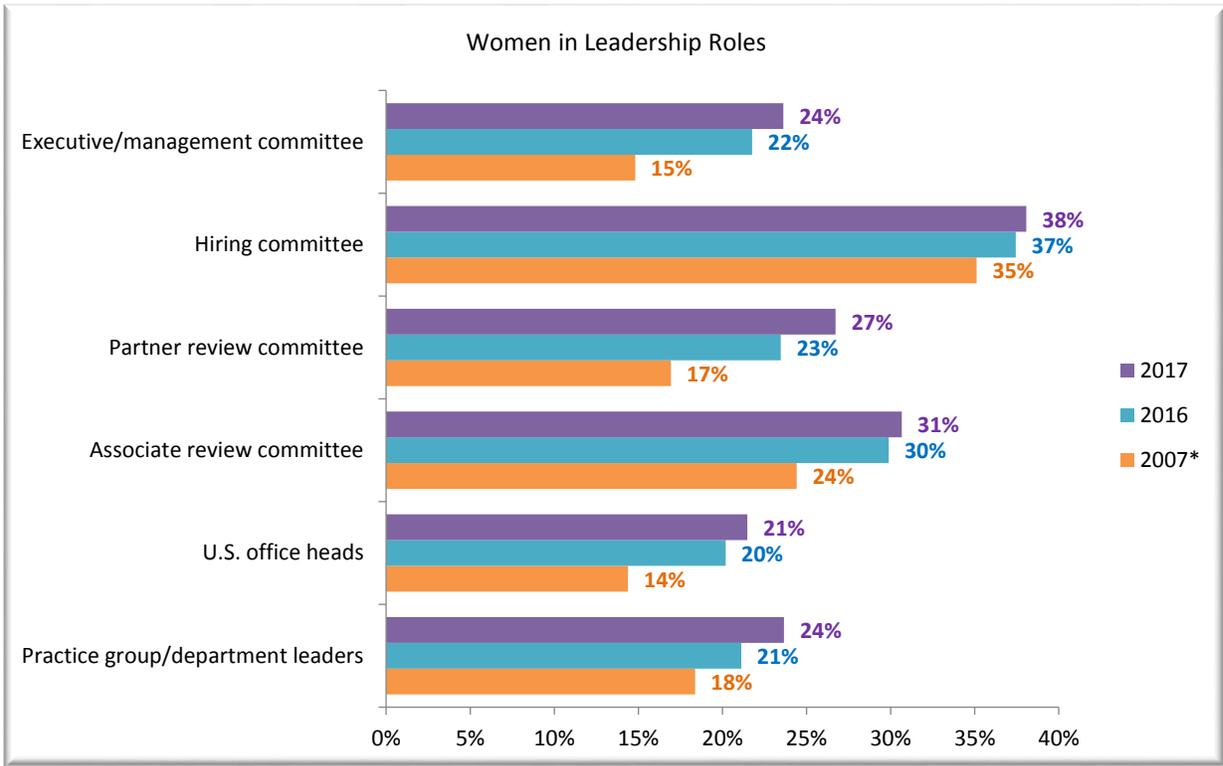
Results Vary among Minority Groups

- Last year’s report highlighted some of the differences in progress among individual racial/ethnic minority groups, trends that have largely continued in this year’s survey.
- Although Asian Americans represent the single largest racial minority group in law firms, the number of Asians serving as partners or in leadership roles remains disproportionately low. Asian attorneys represent 12 percent of associates but less than 4 percent of partners. Fewer Asians serve on management or executive committees than either African American/Black or Hispanic/Latinx attorneys, even though there are more Asian attorneys than African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx lawyers combined. That said, the number of Asians promoted or hired into law firm partnerships has steadily grown at a greater rate than other minority groups.
- The number of Hispanic/Latinx attorneys in law firms has slowly but steadily risen over the last decade, and they now represent 5 percent of law firm associates and almost 3 percent of partners. But the latest survey results also show an uptick in the number of Hispanic/Latinx lawyers leaving their firms. Hispanic/Latinx attorneys have generally represented about 4 percent of attorney departures, but in 2017 that number approached 5 percent. Among associates, the figure climbed to 6 percent.
- Progress for African American/Black lawyers has been the most elusive, as their hiring remains below pre-recession levels. African American/Black lawyers have represented about 3 percent of law firm attorneys for nearly a decade. Moreover, departures among African American/Black lawyers continue to outpace those of other minority groups. But one positive sign in the latest results is that almost 8 percent of summer associates at surveyed law firms last year were African American/Black—the highest number to date. And among new attorneys hired, the percentage of African American/Black lawyers limbed over 5 percent for the first time since 2008.
- Among other racial minority groups for which the Vault/MCCA survey collects data, Multiracial lawyers (individuals who identify as two or more races), are the largest, representing just under 2 percent of law firm attorneys. Alaska Natives and American Indians represent less than 0.2 percent of the more than 100,000 attorneys at surveyed law firms, while just 0.08 percent are Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders.

LGBTQ Attorneys and Individuals with Disabilities

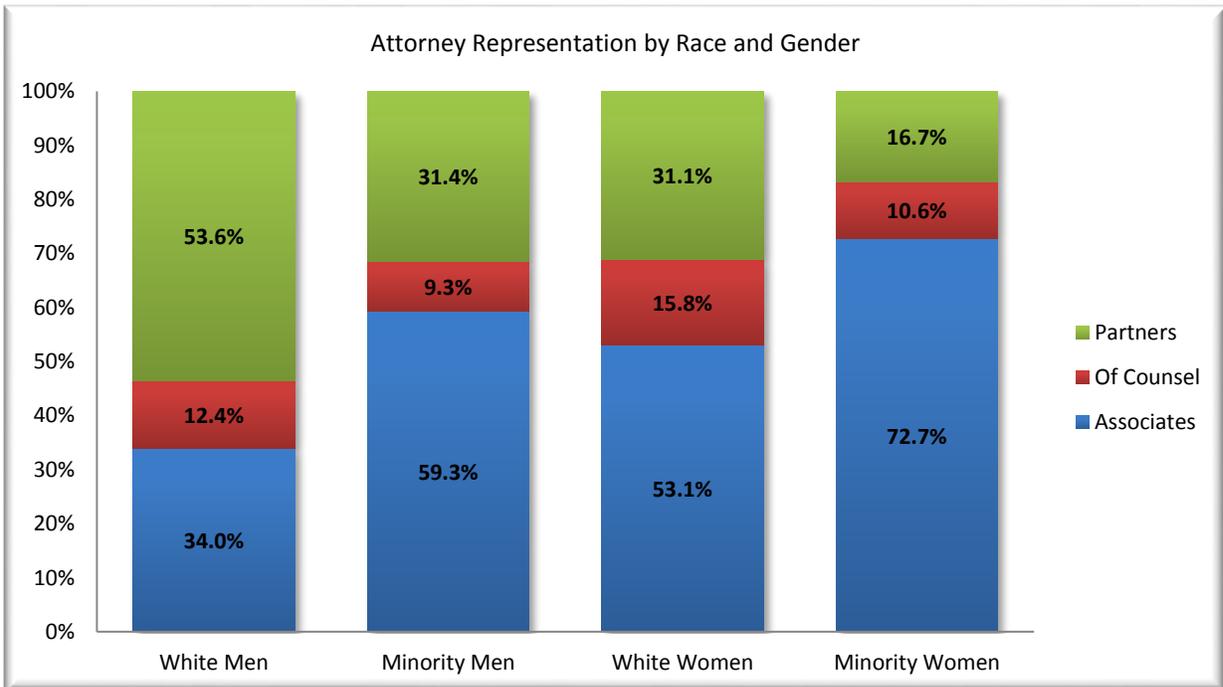
- The numbers reported for openly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender attorneys at law firms continue to grow, as do the number of firms that provide LGBTQ data. The vast majority of law firms surveyed in 2018—94 percent—reported at least some information for LGBTQ attorneys. According to the latest survey results, openly LGBTQ lawyers represent almost 3 percent of law firm attorneys, the highest figure reported to date.
- The Vault/MCCA Survey also solicits information on individuals with disabilities, although underreporting makes it difficult to draw reliable conclusions about their representation in law firms. According to the latest survey results, individuals with disabilities represent 0.4 percent of all law firm attorneys.

Female attorneys hold more positions of leadership than they have in the past.

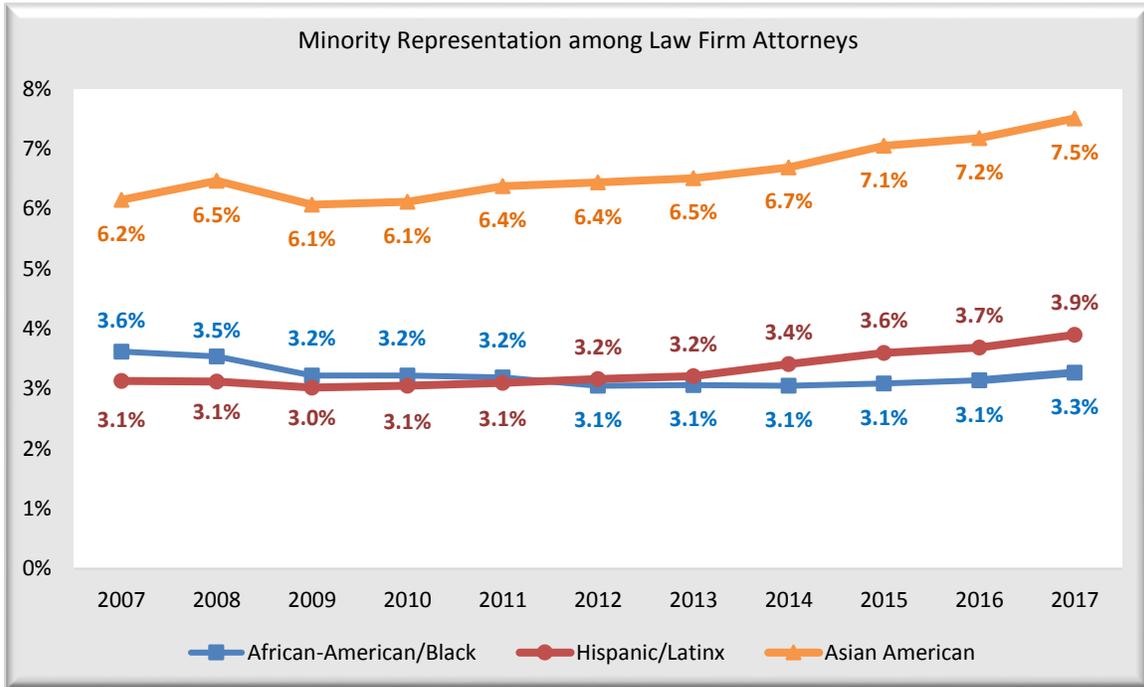


*2008 for US office heads and practice leaders

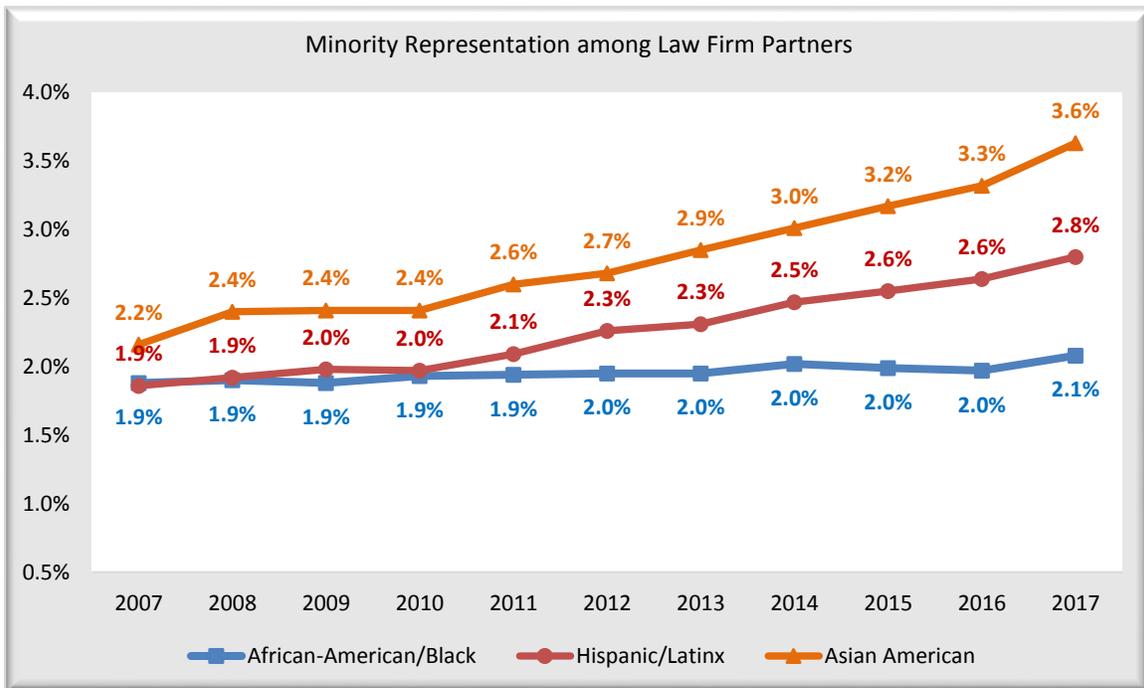
But women of color are far more likely to be associates than partners, compared to other groups.



As the population of Asian and Hispanic/Latinx lawyers has gradually increased over time, the number of African American/Black attorneys in law firms has fallen.



Representation of Hispanic/Latinx and Asian American attorneys among partners has also grown, while the number of African American/Black partners has remained nearly static.



Overall Law Firm Demographics

Demographic	2L Summer Associates	Associates	Of Counsel	Non-equity Partners	Equity Partners	All Partners	All Lawyers
White/Caucasian	67.46%	74.54%	86.69%	87.33%	90.90%	89.94%	82.64%
Asian American	13.57%	11.85%	5.25%	3.82%	3.56%	3.63%	7.51%
Hispanic/Latinx	6.78%	5.15%	3.22%	3.48%	2.54%	2.80%	3.90%
African American/Black	7.86%	4.53%	2.85%	2.65%	1.87%	2.08%	3.27%
Multiracial	3.64%	3.14%	1.41%	1.03%	0.67%	0.77%	1.91%
Alaska Native/American Indian	0.29%	0.19%	0.20%	0.18%	0.12%	0.13%	0.17%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.03%	0.09%	0.03%	0.13%	0.07%	0.08%	0.08%
Openly LGBTQ	5.16%	3.73%	2.20%	2.01%	1.92%	1.95%	2.77%
Individuals with Disabilities	0.26%	0.43%	0.64%	0.39%	0.39%	0.39%	0.44%
All Racial Minorities	32.18%	24.95%	12.97%	11.29%	8.82%	9.48%	16.84%
All Women	49.88%	46.22%	40.23%	30.36%	20.64%	23.26%	35.70%
Women of Color	18.48%	13.96%	7.03%	4.88%	2.81%	3.37%	8.57%