



DEI Hackathon

Discovering & implementing diversity, equity and inclusion solutions
in Milwaukee's legal community

September 14 • October 30 • Northwestern Mutual Campus
Kickoff Event Pitch Contest



Increasing Ethnic Diversity among Milwaukee Large Law Firm Equity Partners

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FOLEY.COM

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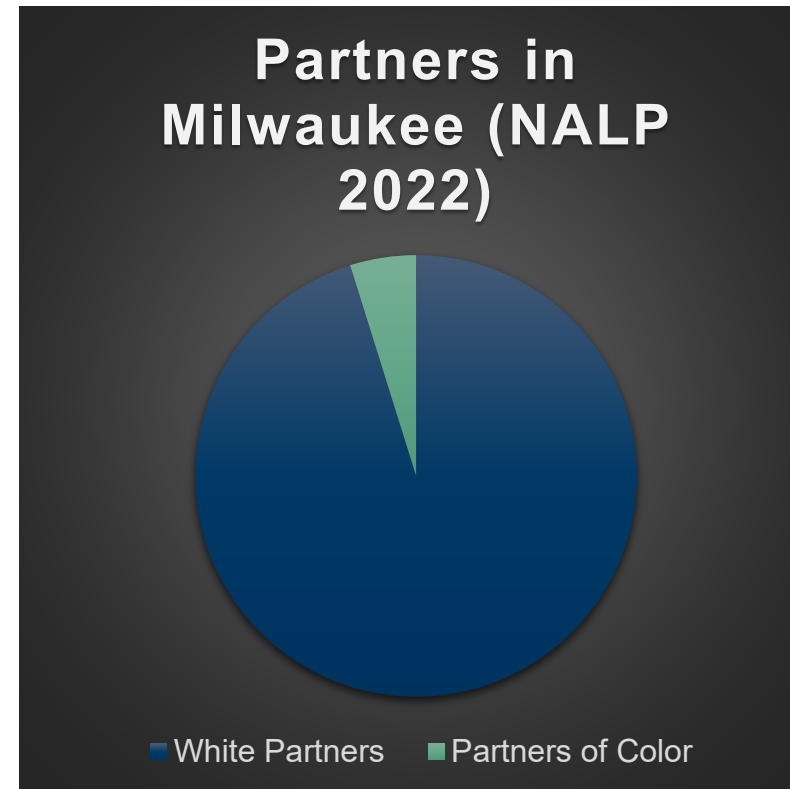


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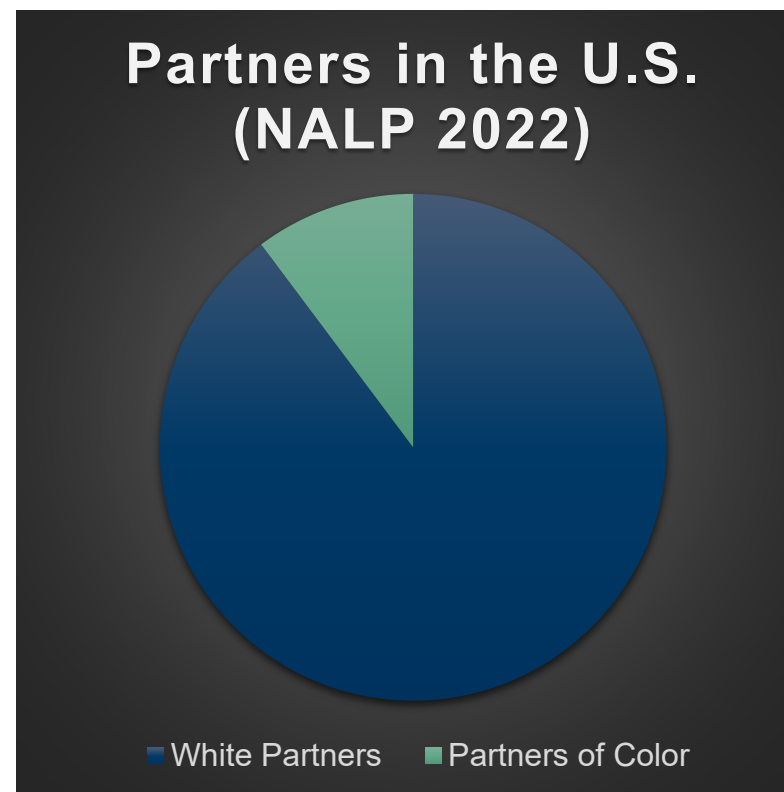
Where are we at today?

- Total lawyers in Milwaukee: 4,045
- Total lawyers in Milwaukee from 2022 NALP reporting firms - 888
- 512 total partners in 6 offices in NALP 2022
- 26 partners identifying as people of color (5.08%) in NALP 2022
- Milwaukee ranks poorly against other large US cities



Milwaukee vs. Other U.S. Cities

- 42,061 partners in NALP 2022 reporting firms
- 4,795 partners identifying as people of color (11.40%)
- Majority of cities of similar size to Milwaukee reporting to NALP performed better than Milwaukee
- Midwest in general performs very poorly



Why?

- Location, location, location
- Industry
- Hierarchical nature of law firms (associates generally rely on partners for work)
- Partners choose who work on their matters
- Partnership promotion is an opaque process
- Few objective standards of review for associates' work and promotion requirements
- All else being equal, those historically in control perpetuate the same

What Do We Think Is the Best Solution for Milwaukee and Why?

Adoption of a statewide apprenticeship model and targeted promotion in Milwaukee

- Legal apprenticeships, also known as law study programs
- Expansion of admission on proof of practice based on apprenticeship with licensed attorneys

Legal Apprenticeship Program

- Focused recruitment within the city (majority of Milwaukee citizens are people of color)
- Expands opportunities for candidates without the high cost of law school
- Allows firms to develop their own bespoke training programs to gain competitive edge but promotion by the whole bar benefits all
- Brings diversity of experience and thought with second career lawyers

Legal Apprenticeship Programs in Other States

- California, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington have adopted based on a minimum of 18 hours a week for two years under a supervising attorney
- Law firm diversity is particularly strong in California and Seattle and Northern Virginia are above the median
- Some states allow individuals to sit for the bar exam if they complete a portion of law school and a portion of study in a law office under a supervising attorney (New York, Maine)
- Other states have started exploring alternative licensing options like apprenticeship to address a shortage in attorneys (North Dakota, Oregon)

Structuring Apprenticeship Programs for Diversity

- Intentionally recruiting diverse populations
- Partner with local organizations for recruitment
- Use of broad selection criteria involving competency outside of the legal field
- Carefully select attorney supervisors and provide appropriate training for their roles
- Large firm public commitments to hiring diverse apprentice candidates

Next Steps

- Coordinated study group in the Milwaukee legal community to determine the best structure of an apprenticeship program for Milwaukee and the Wisconsin legal community as a whole
- Presentation regarding the results of the study and the recommended program structure before the Wisconsin State Legislature and Wisconsin Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rule Procedures

How Else Can Milwaukee Change the Tide?

- Support city initiatives that promote diversity generally, e.g., MMAC
- Lean into conventional ideas deployed around the country (see appendix)
- Lean into novel ideas like others presented today or below
 - Expand diploma privilege
 - Transparent and documented promotion criteria
 - Transparent and documented training and assignments
 - Clients engaged in partnership selection process
- Increase pipeline of ethnically diverse candidates
- Broadly adopt strategies known to improve retention and promotion
- Mandatory Mansfield for firms over a certain size
- Cooperation among firms

Questions?

