

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

We have always found strength in differences, assembling a talented team of people with varied backgrounds and perspectives. It makes us more creative and contributes significantly to maintaining our standard of excellence.

At Groom, we find strength in differences. A cornerstone of our firm's culture, diversity makes us more dynamic and significantly contributes to our ability to be the best version of ourselves.

We prioritize partnerships that advocate diversity, we champion an inclusive workplace that supports a range of experiences and perspectives, and we are intentional in the steps we take to amplify diversity, equity, and inclusion within our own recruiting, retainment, professional development, client service, supplier, and awareness needs. Toward this end, Groom is committed to elevating and strengthening the diversity and inclusiveness of, not only, our own internal community but the legal profession as a whole.



Our Commitment

[Groom's Action Plan](#)

[Diversity Update 2023](#)

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

For more than a decade now, Groom has been committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in our profession through a dedicated, attorney-led program. Now referred to as our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (“DEI”) Committee, it was created to develop firmwide strategies and protocols to ensure an inviting and inclusive firm culture for all. The structure has evolved over time and now includes a DEI Leadership Committee and DEI Advisory Board. The DEI Leadership Committee provides strategic direction and coordinates with a number of other firm committees and administrative departments with the support of firm leadership. The DEI Advisory Board, comprised of attorneys and staff, provides essential insight and feedback to the DEI Leadership Committee on ideas for programs or suggestions for policy changes related to diversity.

The DEI Committee's ultimate goal is to effect real change, both internally within Groom and as a whole within the legal profession. To reach that goal, the DEI Leadership Committee is focused on the following four pillars:

1. *Client Relations*: Ensuring client teams are diverse and exploring ways in which to partner and engage with clients to further stimulate opportunities for diverse attorneys through collaborating on DEI initiatives.
2. *Community*: Coordinating with school / community affinity groups and programs that support underrepresented individuals in the legal profession, and supporting Groom staff and attorneys who are involved in these groups.
3. *Workforce*: Ensuring that there are growth opportunities for diverse members of our firm, such as coaching, trainings, and targeted mentoring. Continuing our focus on increasing the number of diverse attorneys entering the practice of law, particularly in benefits, health, and retirement, through focused recruiting at HBCUs, and ensuring that attorney candidate interview panels are diverse.
4. *Workplace*: Conducting specific programming to educate our employees about the experiences of underrepresented groups, trainings on micro-aggressions and hidden biases, and town halls, book clubs, and webinars to facilitate discussions about these critical issues at Groom.

Affinity Groups

Groom is committed to creating spaces and opportunities for members of the firm to receive meaningful support, whether in the form of mentorship, networking, personal development, and professional development. Among Groom's formal affinity groups are:

- **The Collective**. The Collective brings together attorneys from racially diverse groups.
- **The Collective+**. The Collective+ connects attorneys from all underrepresented groups, including racially diverse and LGBTQIA+ attorneys.
- **Parent Affinity Group**. A gender inclusive community for Groom's working parents.
- **Women's Initiative**. A dedicated group for Groom's women attorneys.

Women's Initiative

Groom understands that the firm's success depends on identifying and removing barriers to success for women, particularly in the legal profession.

The Women's Initiative partners with firm management and other firm committees to promote retention, advancement, networking, and leadership opportunities for women attorneys at Groom. The Women's Initiative hosts periodic meetings, panels, and networking events—for the women of Groom and our clients – to discuss relevant issues affecting women in business.

Recruiting, Development & Pipeline Initiatives

Through collaboration with firm leadership, other committees, and administrative departments, the DEI Committee has expanded the ways we recruit and develop diverse attorneys. Groom is continually increasing recruitment efforts at HBCUs, diversity job fairs and affinity group job fairs. In addition, Groom partners with clients on 1L summer internships to diverse law students. Lawyers currently working at Groom have many opportunities to develop through our internal programs, but also have the option to learn from external organizations by attending a variety of affinity group conferences and events.

Advocating for Our Community

Our DEI Committee has programs to increase diversity not only at Groom, but among benefits attorneys and the legal profession generally by:

- continuing partnerships with a variety of diverse bar associations, local law schools, and student organizations to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the broader legal industry,
- continuing and expanding pro bono opportunities with organizations to help defend and protect the rights of individuals,

- reaching out to law schools in order to recruit diverse candidates through our participation in job fairs and other recruiting events,
- encouraging prospective law students and new attorneys to pursue benefits law through our employee benefits career panels at local law schools,
- supporting diverse suppliers, and
- funding diversity-based scholarships.

Ingrained in Our Culture

The interpersonal relationships that make up Groom’s distinct collegial and collaborative nature are critical to developing and maintaining the firm’s legal expertise and technical knowledge. For over 45 years, Groom’s collective voices and diverse viewpoints have driven its enviable success in benefits, health, and retirement law.

At Groom, we celebrate differences and actively seek opportunities to raise the cultural competency of every member of the firm.



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