Vault Law Firm Culture & Inclusion Questionnaire

Firm Information

- **Firm Name:** Please provide the full name of your firm.

Adams & Reese, LLP

Leadership

- **Head(s) of Firm:** Please provide the name and title of the head(s) of the firm (e.g., Chair, CEO, Managing Partner). Enter information for more than one individual, if applicable.

Chair, Executive Committee: Clarence A. Wilbon
Managing Partner: Guilford F. "Gif" Thornton, Jr.

- **Inclusion Professional(s):** Does the firm have a Chief Diversity Officer, Director of Inclusion, or other professional(s) leading the firm's inclusion initiatives? If so, please provide the name and title of the inclusion professional. Enter information for more than one individual, if applicable.

Cassandra Walsh, Partner, Co-Chair of the Diversity Committee
Roscoe Green, Partner, Co-Chair of the Diversity Committee

- **Ownership:** Is the firm women-owned, minority-owned, and/or LGBTQ+-owned? If so, please note any related certifications (e.g., NAMWOLF).

No, not majority owned.

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Culture and Community

- **Affinity Groups:** Does the firm have internal affinity groups or networks (open to all employees)? What affinity groups or networks does the firm have? What kind of support does the firm provide for these affinity groups or networks?

ARROW is led by Diana Surprenant, Partner and Elizabeth Maron, Partner. It is primarily a women's affinity group that promotes and creates education sessions for all attorneys at Adams & Reese.

- **Culture and Inclusion Events:** Does the firm host culture and inclusion retreats or conferences? If so, please describe these events.

Adams & Reese has a Diversity Summit in the Fall with education and professional development opportunities for leadership, partners, associates, special counsel, advisors, professional staff officers, directors and managers.

- **Cultural Awareness:** How does the firm commemorate important dates honoring different cultures of employees within the firm (e.g., Black History Month, Women's History Month, Pride Month, etc.)?

Adams & Reese creates thoughtful social media posts and shares on the commemorative day.

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- **Inclusiveness:** Please describe steps the firm has taken to create an inclusive environment for women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and parents/caregivers.

All of our attorneys attend education sessions and retreats throughout the year, participate in our mentor/mentee programs, attend attorney and staff events together such as holiday parties and office picnics. The attorneys and staff in each office often volunteer their time to help those in need in our communities through our HUGS program: Hope, Understanding, Giving and Support. Our attorneys are heavily involved in pro bono work within our communities and will sometimes partner with clients to help those in need.

Networking, Mentoring, and Professional Development

- **Mentoring & Sponsorship:** Does the firm offer a mentorship or sponsorship program that connects junior attorneys with senior leadership? If so, please describe.

Yes. Adams & Reese has a robust Mentoring program. Our main theme at the Diversity Summit in October of this year is "Cultivate". We will be highlighting our mentorship program throughout the event and we will have an afternoon panel of Partners and Associates discussing their experiences at the Firm and with each other.

- **Reverse Mentoring:** Does the firm pair senior attorneys with junior attorneys to help bridge generational or cultural gaps, share perspectives and skills, and foster a more inclusive culture?

Yes. Adams & Reese looks at mentoring from all sides and our speaker at the Diversity Summit will also talk about generational gaps in the workplace.

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- **Associate Committee:** Does the firm have an associate committee that consults with the partnership? If so, please describe how that committee engages with the partnership.

Adams & Reese has two Associate Liaison Partners who create monthly professional development programs for the Associates, host an annual Associate Retreat & Training Program, host a New Associate Orientation & Training program and are available to Associates 24/7 throughout the year for advice and support.

- **Professional Development:** Does the firm offer professional development programs specifically for junior attorneys? Please elaborate on the professional development programs available to junior attorneys.

Yes. Our Professional Development Program has been enhanced in the last two years. We have professional development programs targeted to years of experience,, and this has helped the Associates develop their practice skills and personal skills.

Recruitment, Promotion, and Advancement

- **Recruitment Process:** What steps has the firm taken to build a more inclusive recruitment process (e.g., interview training, behavioral interview questions, blind resume review, etc.)?

Adams & Reese interviews students and lateral attorney candidates from a large network of law schools, job fairs, and recruiters. We are looking for the best talent, and by casting the net wide and interviewing all candidates, we have organically created an inclusive workplace.

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- **Fellowship/Scholarship:** Does the firm offer any scholarships, fellowships, or internships? If so, describe those programs. How many of the law students who participated in the firm's most recent 2L summer associate program were hired through such a program?

No.

- **Advancement:** Describe any firm initiatives to create equal opportunities for all attorneys with respect to work allocation, performance reviews and upward reviews, and/or promotions.

All attorneys at Adams & Reese go through performance evaluations at the firm: Partner peer reviews, Special Counsel and Advisors, and Associates. During these processes, attorneys are reviewed for eligibility of upcoming partnership opportunities. Our practice group leaders manage the attorneys within their practice groups and provide the feedback to those attorneys during their evaluations. Merit increase adjustments follow the evaluation process.

- **Multitiered Partnership:** Does the firm offer a multitiered partnership? If so, please describe.

Yes, we offer a non-equity Partnership and an equity partnership.

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- **Alternatives to Partnership:** Does the firm offer a non-partner track alternative for attorneys? If so, please describe.

Yes, Adams & Reese offers a position called Staff Attorney (non-partnership track). Our Staff Attorney positions are attractive to attorneys who want to practice law and contribute with writing and research without the commitment to traveling to take depositions, appearing at trials, or working beyond a 9-5 day. They are very successful for the firm, and it allows the attorney to have the type of work/life balance they desire.

- **Reduced Hours and Flex-Time Options:** Does the firm offer reduced hours and/or flex-time options? If so, please describe and explain how working an alternative schedule might affect an associate's path to partnership.

Yes, on a case-by-case basis upon request. If hours are prorated for a period of time, it does not affect consideration for partnership.

- **Credit for Work Other Than Client Billable:** Does the firm provide hours credit for work not pertaining to clients, such as recruiting, business development, knowledge management, or inclusion efforts? Note that this does not include pro bono projects. If so, describe the policy for such work.

No.

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Successes and Priorities

- What are the firm's top three accomplishments or areas in which the firm has had its greatest success with respect to fostering inclusion within the firm?

Launching The A&R Way, which describes the five traits that we determined make a lawyer and staff employee successful in our Firm: Requisite Intelligence (a growth mindset/committed to life-long learning); Character (treating others as you would want to be treated/always doing the right thing); A Positive Attitude (can do attitude, we can solve problems); Team-Spirit (the sum of our parts are greater than ourselves / we can do more together); and an Engine (a self-starter, hard worker who does things that need to be done (even when not asked). When employees show up every day and bring in these characteristics, the firm's culture is strengthened and so is our client service.

Education programs: Every lawyer has opportunities to sharpen their practice skills, participate in leadership programs like MCCA and LCLD and our own internal programs.

Retreats: Networking across offices for cross-selling, collaboration and developing relationships.

- What are the firm's top three priorities for advancing inclusion within the firm?

Adams & Reese will continue to provide opportunities for our lawyers to network with one another, attend leadership programs, and explore cross-selling across offices.

Advice to Candidates

- What advice do you have for candidates who are looking for an inclusive work environment? What questions should they ask when interviewing to help them assess the extent of a firm's commitment to inclusion?

We advise that the candidates should be asking "Why do you like working at Adams & Reese?", "What is the culture like at the firm?", "Will I have opportunities to work on a variety of matters and with a variety of attorneys?"

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Additional Response Space

Please use this page for information that did not fit in the spaces provided. If this is a continuation of a prior answer, please indicate which question(s) are being addressed.

Adams & Reese is proud of its culture (we call it our DNA) and it starts with The A&R Way traits described above. We want to attract top talent that has these inherit traits (Requisite Intelligence, Character, a Positive Attitude, Team Spirit and an Engine) which paves the way for all attorneys and staff to work well together, grow professionally together and bring excellent service to our clients.

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