Vault Law Firm Culture & Inclusion Questionnaire

Firm Information

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

Hanson Bridgett 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.

Kristina Lawson, Managing Partner

- **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.

Jennifer Martinez, Chief DEI Officer (CDEIO)

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

While our firm is owned by the equity partnership, which includes women, minorities and LGBTQ+ attorneys, we do not have any related certifications regarding firm ownership.

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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?

Diversity & Inclusion Network (DIN), Women's Impact Network (WIN), OutLaw Network, and Working Parents. All of the groups are open to all employees. DIN is our diversity committee, which encompasses all smaller affinity groups. All affinity groups have a dedicated budget and use of all firm resources. These groups lead our various efforts across the firm for heritage month programming, recruiting and outreach, social engagement, volunteer events, and marketing. Events, initiatives, and programming for each group is highlighted in the news section of our firm intranet to spread awareness and increase employee engagement across the firm.

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

We host a biennial diverse attorney summit for all diverse and other interested attorneys. The summit is meant to be both educational (for instance, it features both current and former Hanson Bridgett attorneys as speakers on a variety of relevant topics), as well as social and community-building. In addition, the firm hosts a number of events in our offices in partnership with external diversity-based organizations, such as the Leadership Council for Legal Diversity, Bar Association of San Francisco, California Minority Counsel Program, and SF La Raza Lawyers Association.

- **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.)?

The firm honors heritage months and holidays with written content, in-person events, and virtual events. We produce a monthly newsletter highlighting the month's events, historical information, external events happening in our markets, and other fun content, such as cultural recipes and community service opportunities. We also curate action cards to be shared internally and externally that include literature, films, and television shows highlighting creators and themes related to the heritage month. The action cards include the list of events happening in our markets as well. Additionally, we post written content on our intranet for holidays and days of remembrance including, but not limited to Diwali, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Transgender Day of Visibility, Farmworkers Day, Ramadan, and Veterans Day.

Our heritage month events range from educational panel discussions with judges, attorneys, authors, and professors, to social events like trivia, musical performances, museum trips, tasting and talks from POC vendors. We make a point to order food from diverse suppliers that align with the heritage month we are celebrating.

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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.

The firm supports inclusivity for all employees across identities far beyond our heritage month programming and content. We have a 24-week paid parental leave policy, which provides reduced work expectations during ramp down and ramp up periods on either side of the leave period. Parental leave is available to birth parents, adoptive parents, and domestic partner parents. Taking leave for the birth of a child or any other reason does not affect an attorney's path to partnership.

The firm has had a long-standing formal Reduced Time Policy, that allows any employee (attorneys and administrative professionals) to propose a reduced time schedule, with approval from their manager or supervising attorney. Employees are allowed to propose a reduced time arrangement for any reason, including family care, parental care, or personal reasons.

The firm offers fertility assistance as well as comprehensive health care for transgender employees. Furthermore, all benefits are offered to employees in domestic partnerships. We also offer mental health care via on-demand therapy and wellness webinars.

In support of employee mental health, the Professional Development team offers webinars and trainings to the entire firm; most recently, this included a webinar focused on time management and organization tips for employees working with ADHD. Our Working Parents affinity group also hosts learning opportunities, such as a recent webinar titled "How to Shut Down Your Work-Brain and Be Fully Present at Home" and a workshop focused on avoiding burnout in professional and personal life.

The firm includes Disability Pride Month content and engagement in its heritage month programming. In 2025, we organized a virtual panel with The Arc, in addition to our regular newsletter and action cards. The Arc, an organization that supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is a longtime partner of the firm, providing office assistants in multiple Hanson Bridgett offices over the years. Our current office assistants spoke with the firm about their experiences as program participants and we also heard from The Arc's Senior Director of Advancement.

(Response continued in additional response space)

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.

Hanson Bridgett has five formal mentoring programs. First, when a new law clerk, associate, or partner joins the firm, they are matched with a Partner Guide and Associate Guide (if applicable) whose helps onboard and integrate them into the firm.

Second, every associate has a formal mentor. After the attorney has been at the firm for approximately four months, the Director of Professional Development works with them to identify a partner with whom they have built a connection and someone they trust in their practice group. The primary interest of the mentor is the professional development of their mentee. We ask that the mentor and mentee connect at least once per month, on topics including career development, evaluation, promotion, work assignments, challenges, and anything else that arises.

Third, the DIN diverse mentoring program formally matches diverse associate and counsel mentees with diverse partner mentors. Most mentees have two formal mentors. Typically the mentors-mentees are in different sections so that the mentees can establish relationships with a broader group of attorneys.

Fourth, for our newest attorneys, we have established a First Year Academy, which is a series of meetings over approximately six months, led by the Director of Professional Development. The goal of the program is to build community within the cohort, and provide specific guidance on how to thrive (not merely survive) in a law firm. Topics include health and well-being, owning one's career, timekeeping, communication and client service, time management, assignments, pro bono, diversity and inclusion, working with one's assistant, working with multiple supervisors, mentoring, feedback/evaluations, law firm economics, law firm operations, security and more. We bring in partners, associates, secretaries, paralegals and firm administrators to meet with our First Years, as well as provide books, articles, videos, and e-learning modules on each of the topics.

(Response continued in additional response space)

- **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?

No.

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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.

Hanson Bridgett has an Associate Committee that serves as the formal bridge between the firm's associates and firm management/partnership. The Committee's two chairs act as the primary liaisons between the Committee and firm leadership, communicating Committee updates to management and relaying management updates back to the broader associate body. The chairs meet quarterly with the Managing Partner and with the Management Committee to report on associate feedback and concerns, progress toward jointly developed goals, and recommendations for programs or policies to support associate success. In addition to these quarterly meetings, the Committee provides updates to management as needed on urgent or time-sensitive matters, and individual Committee members meet on an ad hoc basis with partners across the firm. The Committee also organizes a retreat for associates every two years.

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

The firm supports first year law clerks/soon to be first-year attorneys through our First-Year Program. This includes our First-Year Academy (FYA) which introduces our first-years to the firm's culture, policies, work expectations, operational systems, departments, and leaders. In addition, FYA focuses on helping our newest attorneys develop professional skills required to be an effective attorney, including time management, collaborating with others, communicating effectively, etc.

The program also includes additional training and skill development via internal and external workshops and seminars as well as mock experiences designed to provide practice in real-life situations in a safe space, such as a mock discovery dispute for litigators and a mock deal transaction for corporate attorneys. Participants receive regular feedback throughout the program including two evaluations.

The Professional Development team provides other programs throughout the year, both to first-year associates and all junior attorneys, such as career development planning, specific hard skills training, and the previously mentioned mentorship program. Eventually, associates reach the Mid-Level Academy around their fourth or fifth year of practice.

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.)?

We include a statement in all our job postings with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We do not ask about incarceration history during our application process. We actively recruit through organizations or services that serve individuals from underrepresented populations and we conduct an analysis of our job descriptions and requirements to ensure they are inclusive and equitable. We also recruit from HBCUs and lower-ranked law schools, all of which have significantly more diverse student populations. Hanson Bridgett's Recruiting Department, Recruiting Committee, and Lateral Partner Recruiting Team are trained in behavioral interviewing, a technical strategy to reduce bias in interview processes, and are required to take unconscious bias training with our CDEIO every year. These recruiting groups are also intentionally staffed with diverse personnel.

In addition to posting employment opportunities on our website and with law schools, Hanson Bridgett regularly advertises with organizations that promote diversity including California Minority Counsel Program, Asian American Bar Association, Minority Corporate Counsel Association, Lavender Law, and San Francisco La Raza Lawyers Association.

Lastly, our CDEIO meets with every lateral candidate from an underrepresented background for a non-evaluative interview during the recruiting process. This interview is meant to provide the candidate with a safer space to ask more candid questions they may not feel comfortable raising in regular interviews.

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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?

In 2002, Hanson Bridgett launched the Gerald D. Marcus Fellowship Fund at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. The Marcus Fund was established to further our enduring commitment to promoting diversity within the legal profession. The fellowships are awarded to law students on the basis of financial need, with priority given to students who show commitment to the goals of diversity and inclusion, and who have worked to advance those goals in the legal community, the school community, or their local communities.

In 2017, we created the John J. Vlahos Endowed Scholarship Fund at UC College of the Law, San Francisco (formerly UC Hastings). The Vlahos Fund was established to provide scholarships to deserving students from diverse backgrounds who have faced significant educational, economic, or physical challenges. The fellowship honors John J. Vlahos, a 1962 graduate and once named partner of Hanson, Bridgett, Marcus, Vlahos, and Rudy LLP, to recognize his life-long contribution to the promotion of equity in the legal field. Hanson Bridgett participates in the Sacramento County Bar Association Diversity Fellowship Program each year and hosts a 1L Summer Fellow. The Diversity Fellowship Program involves a 10-week stint as a summer associate, together with an academic component that includes meetings with federal and California Superior Court judges, and panel discussions on topics from law firm economics to practical tips from diverse lawyers on how to succeed as an associate.

Hanson Bridgett participates in the Sacramento County Bar Association Diversity Fellowship Program each year and hosts a 1L Summer Fellow. The Diversity Fellowship Program involves a 10-week stint as a summer associate, together with an academic component that includes meetings with federal and California Superior Court judges, and panel discussions on topics from law firm economics to practical tips from diverse lawyers on how to succeed as an associate. We also host a 1L LCLD Scholar in our Summer Program each summer. The 1L LCLD Scholars Program is designed to give first-year law students from diverse backgrounds career development and relationship building opportunities throughout their
1L summer. Program participants are offered the unique opportunity to learn from current attorneys and experts about how to maximize their experience with LCLD Member organizations.

(Response continued in additional response space)

- **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.

Our firm has implemented several structural initiatives to ensure equal opportunities for all attorneys across work allocation, performance evaluations, and promotions. Central to our evaluation and promotion process is the active involvement of our CDEIO, who serves as a standing member of all relevant evaluation and promotion committees, including the Attorney Evaluation Committee (AEC), which oversees non-partner evaluations and promotions, the Partner Evaluation Committee (PEC), which oversees partner evaluations, and the Management Committee, which oversees the partner promotion process. During AEC and PEC proceedings, the CDEIO plays an integral role in the calibration process, working to ensure that associates are being evaluated consistently and fairly across the firm. Beyond calibration, the CDEIO actively contributes to committee discussions by identifying language in evaluations or promotion memos that may reflect unconscious bias or other equity concerns, helping to ensure that all attorneys have equal access to opportunities for advancement. The CDEIO also provides unconscious bias training to the AEC and PEC every year.

With respect to work allocation, our firm has a centralized Deployment Manager who serves as a resource for both partners and associates. Partners can engage the Deployment Manager when seeking an attorney with a particular skill set or background for a given assignment, while associates can proactively reach out when looking to pursue specific types of work or develop targeted skills.

(Response continued in additional response space)

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

Yes, the firm has a two-tier partnership structure with equity and non-equity partners. Equity partners share in the firm's profits and take part in voting on critical firm-related issues, while non-equity partners receive guaranteed compensation without the additional liability or responsibility of equity partnership.

Out of the firm's 34 income partners, 21 are diverse (62%). There are 12 women, 13 POC, and 3 LGBTQ+ attorneys in the income partner group.

Out of the firm's 76 equity partners, 46 are diverse (61%). There are 34 women, 17 POC, and 2 LGBTQ+ attorneys in the equity partner group.

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

No, the firm does not currently offer a formal non-partner track alternative, though we employ many "Counsel" attorneys who have no intention to move to partner.

- **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.

The firm has had a long-standing formal Reduced Time Policy that allows any employee (attorneys and administrative professionals) to propose a reduced time schedule, with approval from their manager or supervising attorney. Employees are allowed to propose a reduced time arrangement for any reason, including family care, parental care, or personal reasons. An attorney's part-time status does not affect their eligibility to become or remain partner at our firm in any way.

- **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.

Attorneys are allotted up to 50 billable "impact hours" credit per year. Impact hours are creditable hours for approved activities that do not necessarily require legal expertise, but which directly benefit the firm, impact the profession or the community, and are aligned with the firm's annual strategic goals. These include non-legal volunteer and community service opportunities, projects that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, outside leadership activities, practice-group-level knowledge management, and practice group- or firm-level business development activities.

Impact hours may also be used specifically for conducting trainings or leading events relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion, attending diversity-based outreach/recruiting events, or working on projects with the CDEIO.

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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?

1) The firm completely closed the partner gender pay gap and cut the POC partner pay gap in half in the past 5 years by building equity-based infrastructure into the Partner Evaluation Committee (PEC) process, requiring unconscious bias training for PEC members, standardizing information collection/reporting, and diversifying the PEC itself. The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) reports 34% of income partners and 25% of equity partners in the United States are women. At Hanson Bridgett our representation surpasses the national numbers with women representing 35% of our income partnership and 45% of our equity partnership.

2) 38% of our partners are homegrown, meaning they joined the firm as summer associates or first-year attorneys. Just under half of that 38% joined the firm as summer associates, including our former Managing Partner. This longterm retention points to job satisfaction, transparent and equitable paths to advancement and partnership, inclusive culture, and effective training and mentorship that prepare our attorneys for success.

3) Over the past 10 years, every one of our summer associate classes has been comprised of more than 50% of students from underrepresented groups. Our 2026 summer associate class (which included five 2Ls, one 1L LCLD Scholar and one 1L SCBA Fellow) consisted of 7 students. Of these 7 students, 5 were women (71%), 5 identified as people of color (71%), and 2 identified as LGBTQ+ (29%). This provides a critical pipeline of diverse talent to the firm, reinforcing our commitment to a workforce that reflects our markets as well as our clients.

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

Moving forward, we aim to expand our support of external law student groups and pipeline organizations as part of our commitment to diversifying our workforce and the legal profession as a whole. We are actively exploring opportunities for new connections with organizations in our local markets through sponsorship, volunteering our space for events, and in-office programming for law students.

Retention is a top priority as our diverse attorney numbers continue to grow. By prioritizing mentorship, equitable work allocation, flexible work policies, and transparent career progression we hope to further reinforce our commitment to our underrepresented lawyers and their success with the firm.

Lastly, we continue to work with our employees on our affinity group restructuring. We are working to add additional groups while reorganizing existing groups to reflect the needs of our attorneys and professional staff. We hope to strengthen the membership and support of our Working Parents group and launch our groups for working caregivers, employees with disabilities, veterans, and first generation employees.

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?

Ask the tough questions in the interviews. If a firm is truly committed to its DEI efforts, then any attorney at the firm should be able to at least give an overview response. The second piece of advice is to ask to be connected with a diverse attorney at the firm—both junior and senior; ideally, that space allows for a more candid conversation. Candidates should ask about diverse and female representation among partners and firm leaders; if the numbers are not good, candidates should ask why that is and what specifically is being done to address promotion and retention. Candidates should ask about the existence of formal evaluation criteria for associates and partners, and whether consideration of DEI efforts and mentoring is part of the evaluation process. Candidates should also ask about the existence of specific policies to guard against unconscious bias, such as a leadership policy, mandatory training requirements, and a credit sharing policy. While not related to diversity on their surface, the transparency of these practice-related policies and initiatives is often a key sign for how well attorneys from underrepresented groups fare at the firm.

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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.

Inclusiveness (continued): The firm includes Disability Pride Month content and engagement in its heritage month programming. In 2025, we organized a virtual panel with The Arc, in addition to our regular newsletter and action cards. The Arc, an organization that supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is a longtime partner of the firm, providing office assistants in multiple Hanson Bridgett offices over the years. Our current office assistants spoke with the firm about their experiences as program participants and we also heard from The Arc's Senior Director of Advancement.

The DIN and WIN are committed to uplifting our underrepresented employees and making sure they see themselves reflected in our firm culture. In addition to guiding our cultural programming, the groups assist with mentoring and professional development as well as providing a space for members' voices to be heard and considered. The firm's charitable giving program further reflects our commitment to the interests and concerns of our diverse employees. We regularly sponsor events for organizations dedicated to diversifying the legal profession, diverse law student groups, and community-focused organizations. These organizations include, but are not limited to The Arc San Francisco; Marin LGBT Center; Hispanic National Bar Association; Rising Sun Center for Opportunity; Asian Pacific American Bar Association; Community Forward SF; Brady United Against Gun Violence; National Council for Lesbian Rights; UC Berkeley Law Students of African Descent; Iranian American Bar Association and many more.

Finally, our CDEIO is intricately involved with firm decisions regarding recruiting, career advancement, and attorney mentorship. She serves as an advisor for the firm on equitable recruiting practices and leads employee unconscious bias training. She fosters the firm's relationships with external diversity-focused organizations, encouraging our diverse attorneys to attend conferences, show up for events, and take on leadership roles when possible. Her work is tied directly to the firm's success with attracting and keeping diverse talent.

Mentoring & Sponsorship (continued): Finally, in connection with the firm's revamping of our Paid Parental Leave Policy, we have created a specialized mentor program to connect parental leave-takers with attorneys who have previously taken parental leave. Often times, taking extensive leave can cause career trajectory disruptions, delays in skill development and access to opportunities, and changed feelings about practice and work in general. Ramping down and ramping up on either sides of the leave, and learning to balance work and new or increased parental burdens, also create practical day-to-day challenges for parental leave-takers. This leave mentor program is designed to provide specialized guidance and connection for these issues unique to the effects leave have on legal professionals.

Fellowship/Scholarship (continued): Hanson Bridgett participates in the Sacramento County Bar Association Diversity Fellowship Program each year and hosts a 1L Summer Fellow. The Diversity Fellowship Program involves a 10-week stint as a summer associate, together with an academic component that includes meetings with federal and California Superior Court judges, and panel discussions on topics from law firm economics to practical tips from diverse lawyers on how to succeed as an associate. We also host a 1L LCLD Scholar in our Summer Program each summer. The 1L LCLD Scholars Program is designed to give first-year law students from diverse backgrounds career development and relationship building opportunities throughout their 1L summer. Program participants are offered the unique opportunity to learn from current attorneys and experts about how to maximize their experience with LCLD Member organizations.

Advancement (continued): The Deployment Manager works in close coordination with our Professional Development team to confirm that associates are receiving developmentally appropriate assignments that will meaningfully contribute to their growth and progression as attorneys. Together, the Deployment Manager and Professional Development team conduct regular reviews of work assignments to assess whether associates across the firm are being treated as equitably as possible within each practice section. By combining proactive outreach, intentional assignment-matching, and ongoing oversight, this system is designed to ensure that no attorney is overlooked for meaningful work opportunities due to factors unrelated to their skills, interests, or professional development needs. The Director of Professional Development and the CDEIO also meet monthly to discuss specific associates, trends across demographics or practice groups, and other relevant issues, to ensure that associates are reviewed equitably.

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