



THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD
OF THE

SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Disciplinary Board Announces Diversity Data Collection

Fostering justice through the elimination of disparities in the judicial system has been a priority of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. In fact, the Court established the Committee on Racial and Gender Bias and the Interbranch Commission to study the role of bias in the judicial system and to address inequities, including those relating to attorneys.

The benefits of diversity have been studied and well-documented by corporations, universities and public institutions throughout the country. In particular, the advantages to be gained from increasing diversity within the legal profession include:

- increased public trust and confidence in the justice system;
- increased access to the profession for historically disadvantaged individuals;
- enhanced functioning and competitiveness of the legal process; and
- increased opportunities to attract highly qualified individuals to the practice of law in Pennsylvania.

Without reliable data on the state of diversity within the profession, it is difficult, if not impossible, to move forward with programs to increase diversity and inclusion.

Therefore, the Court has directed the Disciplinary Board to collect data on the gender, racial and ethnic demographic composition of the profession, by including a voluntary question requesting self-identification through the annual attorney registration process. Attorneys will see these changes when they complete the annual registration process for 2018-2019.

The collected data will establish a demographic baseline of Pennsylvania attorneys, track changes in the demographics of the profession for purposes of measuring progress, and provide useful information to the courts. The data will be shared only in its aggregate form, that is, the shared data will not include any identifying information about an applicant. The Disciplinary Board's collection of attorney demographic data extends the Court's commitment to justice by gathering foundational information to help identify and eliminate barriers to fairness within the court system and the legal profession.