

**American Bar Association, Section of Family Law**  
**Fellowship Program Policy and Guidelines**

1. The Diversity Committee of the ABA Section of Family Law (FLSDC) recently instituted a Family Law Fellowship Program (FLFP) in the ABA Section of Family Law (FLS).
2. The fellowship program would allow for consistent participation in the section from the Fellows. The fellowship will consist of two (2) kinds of fellowships:
  - a. **Diversity Fellowships**, which will be awarded to:
    - i. Diverse family lawyers with a proven interest in family law who meet the diversity criteria identified in the section's Diversity Plan; and
    - ii. Based on demonstrated financial need.
  - b. **Access to Justice Fellowships**, which will be awarded to:
    - i. Family lawyers working in legal services or non-profit legal organizations whose work centers around providing free or low cost family legal services to individuals in traditionally underserved diverse communities.
    - ii. Based on demonstrated financial need.
3. The goals of the FLFP are to:
  - a. Increase active FLS participation by diverse family lawyers;
  - b. Expand active FLS participation by family lawyers providing access to justice to clients in traditionally underserved diverse communities;
  - c. Identify and mentor future FLS leaders of diverse backgrounds;
  - d. Introduce Fellows to the benefits and resources of the FLS membership and participation;
  - e. Facilitate the opportunity for the Fellows to contribute to the FLS in a way that is meaningful to themselves and their practices; and
  - f. Create an ongoing community of Family Law Fellows who continue long, rewarding relationships with the FLS.
4. There are five (5) available fellowship spots available for the 2014-2016 class of FLS fellows.
5. The targeted date to begin the Fellowship program is September 2014. The accepted fellows shall participate in every conference beginning with the Fall 2014 Conference.

6. The Fellowship will begin each year in September. In the first year of implementation, there will be five (5) first year fellows. In the second year of implementation and ongoing, there will be five (5) first year fellows and five (5) second years fellows.
7. The Fellows must be members of the ABA and of the FLS. If the potential fellows are not currently members, they must join the ABA and the Section within ten (10) days of acceptance in the fellows program.
8. The Fellowship Program requires a two (2) year commitment from the Fellows and the Section, consisting of the following components:

**a. Year 1**

i. Financial support provided to the Fellows:

1. Complimentary registration for the Fall and Spring Section Conferences;
2. Travel and expense reimbursement consistent with current FLS conference reimbursement policy for Council members (See Attachment);
3. Complimentary ticket to any newcomers dinner/event and the Friday Social event;
4. One (1) complimentary registration to a teleconference seminar.

ii. Career support and FLS involvement;

1. Provide a fellowship liaison on the Diversity Committee to be the single point of contact for all fellows;
2. Provide each fellow with a mentor from FLS Officers, Councilmembers or the Diversity Committee whose responsibilities include
  - a. Greeting the fellow at each Conference;
  - b. Introducing the fellow to conference attendees and Section leadership;
  - c. Answering ABA and Section-related questions
  - d. Sharing his or her experiences with the fellow about the Section and its benefits; and
  - e. Remaining connected with the fellow throughout the fellowship period, at a level convenient to both the mentor and fellow;
3. Connect each first year fellow with a second year fellow to share experiences (except the 2014-2016 class);
4. Connect each fellow with the Chairs/Vice Chairs of at

least two (2) Committees based on the fellow's practice and interests;

5. Fellow should actively participate in the diversity committee.
6. Fellow should actively participate in another committee of interest to the fellow (*appointed committees excluded*).

**b. Year 2**

i. Financial support

1. Complimentary registration for the Fall and Spring Section Conferences;
2. Travel and expense reimbursement consistent with current FLS conference reimbursement policy for Council members;
3. Complimentary ticket to any newcomers dinner/event and the Friday Social event;
4. One (1) complimentary registration to a teleconference seminar.

ii. Career support and FLS involvement;

1. Appointment to an appropriate FLS leadership position, including but not limited to Committee Vice Chair or Chair based on interests, experience and the needs of the Section after the fellow's service to the section's committee structure;
2. Continued involvement with the Diversity Committee fellowship liaison and mentor from prior year;
3. Assignment as a 2<sup>nd</sup> year fellowship advisor to a 1<sup>st</sup> year fellowship recipient;
4. Inclusion in the pool of candidates for consideration as a speaker or moderator by the Section's CLE committee. The Diversity Committee will provide the CLE committee with candidates of potential speakers or authors of materials of diverse backgrounds who are 2<sup>nd</sup> year Fellows. All opportunities to present are subject to the normal standards of excellence required by the CLE committee.
5. Fellow shall actively participate in the diversity committee;
6. Fellow will be introduced to the publication opportunities within the section and have the ability to engage in writing an article and/or practice tip for

inclusion in The Advocate, eNewsletter, or other section publications (print, non-print, audio, and/or electronic). The section cannot guarantee publication.

## **6. Application Process**

- a. The diversity committee will disseminate information about the fellowship program as previously done with the scholarships. Information will be sent to diverse bar associations, local bar associations, FLS ESQ. listserve, officers, council members and other FLS leaders circulating the information, and other resources identified to promote the Fellowship Program.
- b. All interested candidates must submit a detailed application and essay to the diversity committee.
- c. Deadline to submit applications for the 2014-2016 fellowship program is September 19, 2014. The Deadline for each year thereafter will be May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- d. The diversity committee chairs will assemble a selection panel to review and select the fellows for each year.
- e. The FLS staff and/or diversity committee chairs will notify the fellows of their acceptance in the program. An acceptance letter/email will be sent to the potential fellow, which must be signed and returned to the FLS office.
- f. Once the signed acceptance letter is received, a welcome packet will be forwarded to the fellows.

## **7. Mentor/Mentee Process**

- a. Section members who are interested in serving as mentors will be sought.
- b. If the potential mentor has a specialty niche in family law, the diversity committee requests that information be provided.
- c. The FLS requests a two (2) year commitment from the potential mentor.
- d. The Mentor/Mentee will be initially introduced by email, with the contact information for both the Mentor/Mentee provided. The FLSDC requests the Mentor extend a welcome and introduction upon receipt of the email.
- e. The Mentor/Mentee will be formally introduced in person at the welcome reception of the Fall conference.
- f. The FLSDC requests the Mentor remain involved and engaged with their assigned Mentees throughout the year. The goal is to have more contact than just at the conference.

## **8. Failure to Adhere to Fellowship Guidelines**

- a. Fellows who do not attend one of the conferences, without good cause, in the two (2) year fellowship period will be dismissed from the program. No further support and/or assistance will be provided to the Fellow.
- b. The fellows are encouraged to continue their participation in the FLS;
- c. The mentor/mentee connection is encouraged to continue;
- d. The fellow shall remain involved in any committees he/she is participating in.
- e. If a Fellow must miss a conference, the Diversity Committee upon approval from the FLS council may excuse the absence. Excuses will only be provided with good cause.

## **9. Recognition**

- a. The fellows will be highlighted on the diversity page of the FLS website. Each fellow shall sign a release allowing the FLS to display a bio, photograph and other information regarding the program participating. No financial information will be disclosed except to those on the selection committee.
- b. The fellows will be introduced to attendees at the FLS conferences;
- c. Upon completion of the two (2) year program, the FLS will honor and celebrate the fellows' completion of the fellowship program in a ceremony to be further developed.