

The Top 50 Firms For Minority Equity Partners

By **Cristina Violante**

Law360, New York (May 15, 2016, 10:16 AM ET) -- While equity partnerships at U.S. law firms remain overwhelmingly white, 50 firms have widened the playing field for attorneys of color, according to Law360 data.

These 50 firms have the highest percentage of minority equity partners out of the 308 U.S.-based law firms that disclosed their equity partner data by race to Law360 as part of the 2016 Diversity Snapshot.

At these firms, 15.2 percent of equity partners identified as a minority, as opposed to only 7.58 percent at all firms surveyed. That number shoots up to at least 20 percent of equity partners at each of the top 10 firms on this list.

Even though minorities have comprised at least 20 percent of each graduating law school class since 2002, according to the American Bar Association, these firms remain the exception, not the rule. Notably, 35 firms surveyed by Law360 reported having no equity partners of color at all.

By far the least represented minority among those surveyed are black attorneys. For each black equity partner, there are more than 56 white equity partners. Among these 50 firms, that ratio improves — however slightly — to one to 34.

These firms also have a higher percentage of minority attorneys overall, at both the partner and nonpartner levels — 22.1 percent as opposed to 14.7 percent of all firms surveyed — indicating that retaining talent is easier when minority attorneys see that they have a pathway to partnership, and that the firm's highest ranks are not held exclusively by white men.

Leading the top are Texas boutique Ahmad Zavitsanos Anaipakos Alavi & Mensing PC, Southern California-based Atkinson Andelson Loya Ruud & Romo and D.C. intellectual property attorneys Sughrue Mion PLLC. The 50 are a blend of small and midsize firms and BigLaw alike, indicating that diversity is a reachable goal regardless of firm size.

The Top 50 Firms For Minority Equity Partners

Rank	Law Firm	Minority Equity Partners
1	Ahmad Zavitsanos	40.0%
2	Atkinson Andelson	28.0%
3	Sughrue Mion	26.7%

4	Morgan & Morgan*	26.4%
5	Michelman & Robinson	25.0%
	Osha Liang	25.0%
7	Hall Estill	23.2%
8	Fross Zelnick	20.8%
9	Archer Norris	20.0%
	VLP Law Group*	20.0%
11	Wilson Sonsini	19.8%
12	Best Best & Krieger	19.6%
13	Sterne Kessler	19.4%
	White & Case	19.4%
15	Fragomen, Del Rey	19.2%
16	Irell & Manella	18.6%
	Munger Tolles	18.6%
18	Richards Kibbe	18.5%
19	Oblon	18.4%
20	Leason Ellis	18.2%
21	Carlton Fields	17.9%
22	Shutts & Bowen	17.9%
23	Seed IP	17.6%
24	Hanson Bridgett	17.5%
25	Berry Appleman	16.7%
	Conrad O'Brien	16.7%
	Mitchell Silberberg	16.7%
28	Ropes & Gray	16.6%
29	Knobbe Martens	15.8%
30	Fenwick & West	15.5%
31	Fowler White	15.4%
	Miller Nash	15.4%
	Roig Lawyers	15.4%
34	Lewis Brisbois	15.2%
35	Brinks Gilson & Lione	15.1%
36	Morrison & Foerster	14.2%
37	Patterson & Sheridan	13.3%
38	McAndrews Held	13.0%
39	Susman Godfrey	12.7%
40	Orrick Herrington*	12.7%
41	Irwin Fritchie	12.5%
42	Foster Pepper	12.3%
43	Buchalter Nemer	12.2%
44	Brooks Kushman	12.2%
45	Paul Weiss	12.1%
46	Cooley	11.7%
47	Schiff Hardin	11.6%
48	Greenberg Traurig	11.4%
49	Beasley Allen	11.4%
	Coblentz Patch	11.4%

* Some attorneys at the firm declined to self-identify a race.
Source: Law360 survey data.

Methodology: Law360 surveyed more than 300 U.S. firms, or vereins with a U.S. component, about their overall and minority headcount numbers as of Dec. 31, 2015. Only U.S.-based attorneys were included in the survey. Firms are ranked based on the percentage of equity partners who self-identify as minorities. At firms marked with an asterisk, some attorneys declined to self-identify a race.

--Editing by Katherine Rautenberg and Catherine Sum.

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