

**LCLD Leaders at the Front**
**Press Release Template *for* Pledges**

Thank you for participating in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity’s Leaders at the Front initiative. We appreciate your commitment to promote inclusion by addressing the systemic barriers diverse lawyers face, personally creating leadership paths for diverse attorneys, and driving sustainable cultural changes within your organization. What follows is a press release template for you to use to announce your Leader’s Pledge.

[Leader Name] **Pledges Commitment to *Leaders at the Front* Diversity Initiative**

**City/Date:** [Law Firm/Company Name] is pleased to announce that [Leader Name] has pledged [his/her] personal commitment to the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity’s (LCLD) Leaders at the Front initiative. Leaders at the Frontis an initiative designed to dismantle systemic barriers preventing underrepresented attorneys from achieving the highest levels of leadership within law firms and corporate legal departments.

**Suggested Quote:** “I have created a results-oriented action plan that provides a pathway for diverse lawyers to grow in their careers and reach the upper echelons of leadership within our organization and in the wider legal profession. I also encourage my colleagues to join me in making a similar pledge so that together we can have real impact on advancing diversity,” said [Leader Name].

Through the Leaders at the Front initiative, LCLD is asking its more than 400 Members, who include corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners, to make personal commitments to DEI and implement organizational changes that are specific, meaningful and measurable. These Leaders’ Pledges are available on LCLD’s Leaders at the Front website. LCLD also provides resources to help its Members create impactful pledges and a platform for leaders to share plans and best practices so that a collective voice across the industry will create transformational change.

[Leader Name]'s pledge is available here [Insert Link] and includes a commitment to [Insert Relevant Information].

**Optional Background Information:** LCLD was founded in 2009 with the goal of building
a legal profession that looks like the nation it serves. Recent events have made it clear that there is still a long way to go in achieving that goal, making the Leaders at the Front initiative more important than ever before. In fact, according to a recent study commissioned by LCLD and conducted by Coqual (formerly Center for Talent Innovation), a nonprofit think tank that studies diversity and inclusion in the workplace, it’s not just about increasing the number of diverse attorneys within an organization, but about removing the impediments to success that diverse lawyers face. Those impediments according to the Coqual research include:

 **Limited diversity** in law firm and legal department leadership. Only **49%** of survey respondents believe that senior firm / company leadership is inclusive—creating challenges to advancement, relationship-building, and belonging.

 **Lack of access** to crucial networking and sponsorship opportunities. **85%** of respondents believe that senior leadership’s support matters most in advancement to senior roles; but, only 22% have sponsors. **59%** of respondents believe that race / ethnicity plays a role in who gets sponsorship from leaders at their firm / company, while 58% believe gender plays a role.

Survey respondents also cited disparate expectations of diverse lawyers—from women feeling they’re expected to take on “soft” (non-billable, i.e. committee) work to get promoted, while their male colleagues get promoted based on their work alone, to BIPOC lawyers feeling they must perform at a higher standard.

“This is an opportunity for leaders to choose to stop talking about change and start making
change,” said [Law Firm/Company Name Spokesperson]. “[Law Firm/Company Name]
is proud to be part of this movement.”

**The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity** is an organization of more than 400 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners—the **leadership** of the profession—who have pledged themselves, through our [Leaders at the Front](https://www.lcldnet.org/leaders-at-the-front/) initiative and other means, to creating a truly diverse U.S. legal profession. Our **action** programs are designed to attract, inspire, and nurture the talent in society and within our organizations, thereby helping a new and more diverse generation of attorneys ascend to positions of leadership. By producing tangible **results** in our institutions, we work to promote inclusiveness in our organizations, our circles of influence, and our society, with the ultimate goal of building a more equitable and diverse legal profession.

LCLD Leaders at the Front
Fact Sheet

**Leadership Council on Legal Diversity** (LCLD) is an organization of more than 400 law firm and corporate leaders taking concrete steps to make the legal profession more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

**For more than 10 years**, LCLD resources, training, and coaching programs have helped diverse attorneys become the next generation of legal leaders. As LCLD continues to focus on talent development, it is also working to create systemic change, transforming the profession from within by harnessing the collective influence of legal leadership, the perspectives of diverse lawyers, and the power of sustainable policies and actions.

**Change is needed now**. According to a recent study commissioned by LCLD and conducted by nonprofit think tank Coqual, diverse attorneys face a range of barriers:

 While inclusion is an often stated goal, it is rarely realized. Only 49% of respondents believe that their firm/company is inclusive.

 Sponsorship is the key to advancement but is not equally offered. 59% of respondents say race/ethnicity, and 58% say gender, negatively affects who wins sponsorship from leaders.

 Diverse representation in corporate and law firm leadership is one of the greatest signals of belonging. Yet only 42% of women and 33% of Black attorneys see role models in leadership (compared with 52% male and 52% White).

 In a separate study, Coqual found that in companies where leadership commits to DEI, 25% of Black professional women are more satisfied and likely stay, compared to 8% of their peers in companies where leadership does not commit.

***Leaders at the Front*** is designed to address the systemic barriers diverse lawyers face, and to build on what works to create sustainable “next practices” for DEI in the legal profession by asking its Members to make personal commitments to DEI and implement organizational changes that are specific, meaningful, and measurable.

**In partnership with Harvard Law School**, LCLD helps Members further elaborate and collaborate on their Leaders at the Front pledges as a way of seeking to scale their organizations’ efforts.

**To date, 176 leaders** have created pledges and developed plans with commitments that cascade through all levels of the organization.

**Leaders create accountability** and transparency around these commitments by setting goals, analyzing data, and tracking progress over time.

**Many of the pledges focus** on specific tactics that will move the needle on diversity, including:

 Moving from mentoring to sponsoring more diverse lawyers

 Diversifying leadership teams and including diverse lawyers in succession plans

 Assigning work equitably

 Creating processes to guide DEI efforts—and tying these efforts to evaluation and compensation

 Giving billable hour credit for DEI activities

 Creating equitable processes for assigning origination credit

 Creating diversity guidelines and requirements for outside counsel

 Finding ways for law firms and corporations to collaborate to develop diverse talent (e.g. secondments)

**In addition to *Leaders at the Front***, LCLD runs five signature programs that have supported the careers of 10,000 diverse pre-, early, and mid-career lawyers.

**LCLD is evolving** the legal profession to make DEI sustainable.

**LCLD Leaders at the Front**
**Social Media Guide**

**Key Messaging about *Leaders at the Front***

 Our national reckoning with racism underscores the urgency of developing diverse leaders and inclusive cultures.

 For more than 10 years, LCLD’s Members have been helping to shape the careers of thousands of diverse lawyers through LCLD’s programs.

 LCLD is asking the leaders of the legal profession, along with those who run practices, assign work, and hire firms, to build on this decade-long commitment by personally pledging to enact specific and measurable changes that will bring a sustainable cultural shift in diversity.

 LCLD is asking its Members to collaborate to bring transparency and accountability to this work.

**Where to Follow LCLD**

 Twitter: [@LCLD\_rgrey](https://twitter.com/LCLD_rgrey)

 Facebook: [@TheLCLD](https://www.facebook.com/TheLCLD/)

 LinkedIn: [Leadership Council on Legal Diversity](https://www.linkedin.com/company/9179407/)

**Key Terms**

 Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

 Legal diversity

 LCLD

 Transparency

 Measurable changes

 Future generation of diverse leaders

 Commitment/pledge

 Call to action

 Urgency

 Sustainable practices

 Cultural change

 Advocacy

 Accountability

**Best Practices**

When posting to social media, please tag [@LCLD\_rgrey](https://twitter.com/LCLD_rgrey) and/or utilize the hashtag #LeadersAtTheFront. We encourage you to share updates and thoughts regarding your own pledges.

You may also utilize one of the Leaders at the Front badges attached in this packet, as well as share the [link to your own pledge](https://www.lcldnet.org/leaders-at-the-front/leader-pledges/) from the LCLD site.

**Sample Twitter Posts**

 “As a proud #LCLDMember, I joined the #LeadersAtTheFront movement to drive actionable, measurable, and sustainable cultural changes within [@ your firm/company] and beyond. [Link to your pledge] @LCLD\_rgrey”

 “Let’s use our collective voice for change: I personally pledge to advocate for diverse attorneys and their success in the legal profession as part of the #LeadersAtTheFront initiative. [Link to your pledge] @LCLD\_rgrey”

**Sample Facebook or LinkedIn Posts**

 “As a proud #LCLDMember, I personally commit to building a more diverse, inclusive and equitable legal profession through the measurable and sustainable actions outlined in my #LeadersAtTheFront pledge. You can find my full pledge here: [Link to your pledge]. [Leadership Council on Legal Diversity](https://www.linkedin.com/company/leadership-council-on-legal-diversity/) [OR] [@TheLCLD](https://www.facebook.com/TheLCLD/)”

 “It’s time to use our collective voice for change. As part of the #LeadersAtTheFront initiative, I personally pledge to advocate for diverse attorneys and their success within [your firm/company] and beyond. You can find my full pledge here: [Link to your pledge]. [Leadership Council on Legal Diversity](https://www.linkedin.com/company/leadership-council-on-legal-diversity/) [OR] [@TheLCLD](https://www.facebook.com/TheLCLD/)

*If you have questions about the Leaders at the Front initiative, please email Caitlin Puffenberger, LCLD Membership and Communications Manager, at* *cpuffenberger@lcldnet.com**. If you have questions about social media coverage, please email Kat Corfman, LCLD Communications Specialist, at* *kcorfman@lcldnet.com**.*

