



# Paragon Legal Diversity Report 2023

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Paragon Legal is pleased to present our 2023 Diversity Report. This report highlights the accomplishments of our **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council** which was founded in 2020 to deepen our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at Paragon and beyond. The work of our DEIB Council is carried out by Paragon's dedicated Corporate Team members who advance the Council's goals throughout the year through the committees they have chosen to join.

## Paragon Legal's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council Goals

Our DEIB Council has three overarching goals, which both define our purpose as well as guide our efforts and measure our progress.

1

**To support diversity within our own team** by continuing to provide equal opportunities within Paragon and for our candidate pool, and to ensure that candidate vetting and presentation are done in an unbiased manner to help support diversity within our clients' teams.

2

**To cultivate a spirit of inclusiveness** and a feeling of belonging at Paragon by encouraging frequent and candid conversations around the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

3

**To advance opportunities outside of Paragon** for individuals committed to diversity, equal opportunity, and inclusion through our Career Connect program, mentoring, and education.



## CAREER CONNECT

Launched in 2022, Paragon Legal's Career Connect program is an innovative partnership between Paragon and leading companies to enhance talent and foster diversity in corporate legal departments by enabling recent law graduates to get hands-on in-house experience directly out of law school. We have proudly kicked off the program's second year, partnering with Santa Clara University School of Law in California, William & Mary Law School in Virginia, Barracuda Networks, Inc., and an East Coast-based healthcare company - officially taking the program nationwide.



*Ashim Bhandari*

As part of the selection process, candidates for Career Connect provide statements about why Paragon's DEIB mission and goals resonate with them, and they discuss how they would bring their unique perspectives to an in-house legal team. This year, Paragon has placed law graduates [Rebeka Seleshi](#) (SCU Law) at Barracuda Networks, Inc. and [Ashim Bhandari](#) (W&M Law) at an East Coast-based healthcare company. This year's participants have begun their new roles and are already gaining meaningful experiences and mentorship from their new colleagues.

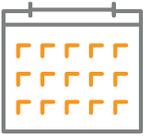
2022 Career Connect alums [Maryam Quasto](#) and [Famy Chavosh](#), both from UC Law San Francisco (formerly, University of California, Hastings), have completed their program participation with great success. Famy charted a transformative journey from immigrant roots to in-house legal success through the program. At Affirm, she learned that there is no such thing as being singularly "specialized" and sticking solely to that specialty when working in-house - everyone in Legal touches every aspect of the legal review process. During her assignment at Dropbox, Maryam learned the art of negotiation, how to serve clients well, and manage risk. As a result of her hard work during the program, Maryam received and accepted a full-time position at Dropbox!



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

To ensure we are keeping ourselves up-to-date and informed, we invited our employment counsel to give an update on DEIB best practices to our Corporate team. We walked through the recent legal rulings on DEIB initiatives, affirmative action, Black Lives Matter, and the Me Too movement. We discussed real world strategies to navigate the expanding gray areas in the law and heightened scrutiny of hiring practices. We also educated ourselves on the best ways to further our DEIB initiatives while complying with the changing legal landscape.

To further our internal education, we researched, created, and shared content to celebrate and bring awareness to DEIB celebrations throughout the year, including [Women's History Month](#), [Juneteenth](#), [Disability Pride Month](#), and [World Mental Health Day](#). With a focus on acknowledging our differences and recognizing other's experiences we hope to highlight and give a larger audience an opportunity to experience the world in other ways.



## EVENTS & OUTREACH

This year, we sponsored events hosted by [Centerforce](#), the [Asian American Bar Association \(AABA\)](#) and the [California Minority Counsel Program \(CMCP\)](#) - organizations that are making meaningful efforts to foster community, champion diversity, and amplify the impact of their members and diverse legal professionals across the industry.

In March, the AABA's 47th Annual Gala, a celebration honoring California's former Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, took place in San Francisco. The theme, "Lighting the Path to Justice," underscored AABA's dual mission of advocating for social justice and bolstering Asian Pacific American attorneys in their invaluable service to our judicial system. We were also thrilled to celebrate our esteemed Paragon alum, Kriti Rajput, who received an award for her contributions to the In-House Compensation Survey.

In April, Centerforce held its Driving Diversity in Law & Leadership Conference in Chicago. In addition to sponsoring the event, Paragon's Senior Director of Recruiting, Anna Armstrong, was a speaker on the panel "The Meritocracy Myth: Pipeline Development and Advancement for Diverse Candidates" and provided her expertise and insights on the topics of why meritocracy myth can't be relied on and why organizations should care about retaining and advancing women and people of color.

In September, CMCP held its Annual Business Conference in San Francisco. This dynamic event brought together over 500 in-house and law firm attorneys of color for two days of networking, continuing legal education sessions, and the prospect to engage with peers and leaders from across California. As a sponsor, Paragon reaffirmed our shared mission of promoting inclusivity, building community, and supporting remarkable colleagues who are making significant strides in the legal profession.



## RECRUITING PIPELINE

Our goal for our talent pipeline this year was to minimize the impact of unconscious or implicit bias - the tendency to form opinions about others without sufficient relevant information - in our attorney vetting process.

We began by reading literature on best practices from trusted human resources and hiring authorities. Once we had a grasp on best practices, we then moved into a thorough analysis of Paragon's attorney vetting process. The committee included several members outside of the recruiting team to provide a fresh perspective, and this phase entailed a detailed step-by-step outline of the process, followed by thoughtful conversation to identify points in the process that were vulnerable to unconscious bias.

We were pleased that our review showed we had already implemented many of the recommended best practices. We also had several opportunities to improve our process, and the committee made a series of recommendations that were implemented by our attorney recruiting team. These included standardizing the agenda for our candidate interviews, continuing our two-phased vetting process, and updating how we present candidates to clients.



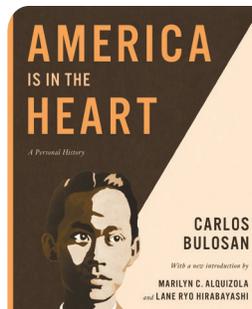
## BOOK CLUB

In 2023, our Book Club expanded into movies and podcasts and we continued with our thought provoking and meaningful discussions. Identity and inclusion were major themes covered in our selections this year:



**Writing with Fire** - "In a cluttered news landscape dominated by men, emerges India's only newspaper run by Dalit women. Chief Reporter Meera and her journalists break traditions, redefining what it means to be powerful."

**CODA** - "Gloucester, Massachusetts. As a Child of Deaf Adults and the only hearing person in her family, high school senior Ruby Rossi always has a lot on her plate. Indeed, trying to juggle back-breaking work on her father's fishing boat, schoolwork, social life, and the family's expectations can be too much for a teenager."



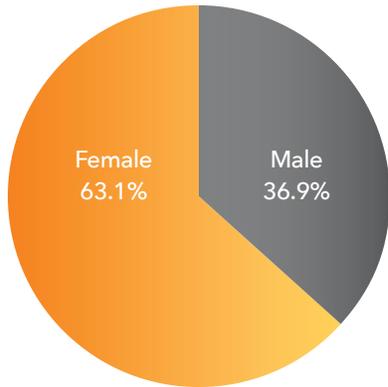
**America is in the Heart** - "First published in 1943, this classic memoir by well-known Filipino poet Carlos Bulosan describes his boyhood in the Philippines, his voyage to America, and his years of hardship and despair as an itinerant laborer following the harvest trail in the rural West."

**Pronoun Power** - "How a functional piece of grammar says so much about the fight for gender equality and better representation for non binary and trans people. We learn about pronoun best practices and how progressive linguists are fighting for better words and more creative expression."

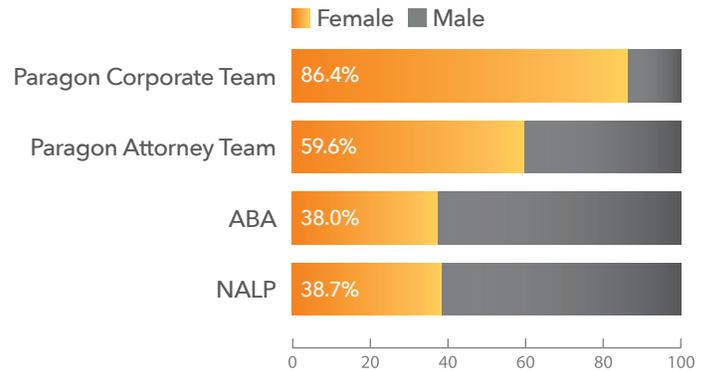


# Paragon's Diversity by The Numbers

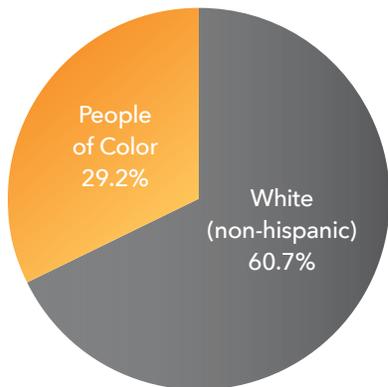
**Paragon Gender Representation:  
Corporate and Attorney Teams**



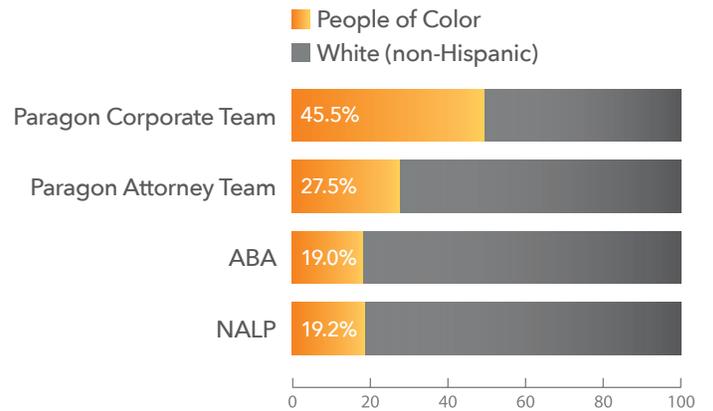
**Gender Breakdown Comparison**



**Paragon People of Color Representation:  
Corporate and Attorney Teams**



**People of Color Breakdown Comparison**



\* ABA: American Bar Association

\*\* NALP: National Association for Law Placement



I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

- Maya Angelou

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In 2023, Paragon's DEIB Council decided to add the letter B for Belonging to our name and our Diversity Statement. Belonging is often embedded in Inclusion statements as it was with ours previously. We recognize that if people do not feel like they belong at our organization, then our DEIB efforts are merely performative. Adding Belonging to our name and Diversity Statement clearly defines the end goal of our efforts.

## Paragon's Diversity Statement

At Paragon Legal, we put **people first** and cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone is **welcomed, supported, and celebrated** as individuals.

Diversity has always been a valued part of our culture. It is our heritage and our legacy. We define excellence as the continued commitment to doing right by our people. We believe that the best way to deliver the highest quality talent and service is to **embrace our differences**.

### Diversity

Diversity at its core, is not simply about race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or any other group or class of individuals. True diversity also requires embracing differences in perspectives and experiences to foster greater understanding, adaptability, and decision-making. It's about driving progress through maximizing and leveraging those unique attributes to create something that is greater than the sum of its parts.

### Equity

Equity can only exist where the playing field is level. Equity is equality of access, opportunity, and treatment, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or identity.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is about more than the presence of unique individuals. It's embracing their uniqueness, celebrating their differences, and ensuring that their unique voices are heard.

### Belonging

Belonging is the intended outcome of our DEIB efforts where people across the organization feel valued for who they are and for their contributions to the growth and success of the Organization.