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## **DENVER LAW FIRM COALITION CREATES BLUEPRINT TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY**

DENVER, CO (date)—IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, in partnership with the Denver Law Firm Coalition for Racial Equity (the Coalition), have published a report detailing best practices and recommendations to recruit, retain, and advance racially diverse attorneys.

The *Denver Law Firm Coalition for Racial Equity Convening Summary Report* is the outcome of leaders across Denver’s legal community coming together to explore and identify sustainable, long-term DEI solutions, and the Coalition’s commitment to advance these shared goals across member firms. Participants included management representatives from the five largest Denver-based law firms, which make up the Coalition; federal and state court judges; leading government lawyers and in-house counsel; law school representatives; and DEI leaders.

“Advancing racial equity cannot be done on an individual basis—it has to be a top-down effort,” said Logan Cornett, director of research at IAALS. “Law firms must be willing to change things structurally. The work of the Coalition to implement these best practices and share successes will help these firms to overcome the shared challenges and barriers for attorneys of color—and reshape the Colorado bar.”

The lack of diversity in the legal profession is an intractable problem—in fact, the legal profession is one of the least diverse in the United States. Not only does this lack of diversity hinder innovation, creativity, and problem-solving, it also undermines the public’s trust and confidence in the justice system. As America reckons with racial inequity in both our criminal and civil justice systems, it is imperative that law firms take the responsibility and initiative to promote diversity in the legal profession—which is what the Coalition has committed to doing.

In 2020, the five largest Denver-based law firms—Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, Davis Graham & Stubbs, Holland & Hart, Sherman & Howard, and Wheeler Trigg O’Donnell—joined forces to form the Coalition to advance racial equity within its member firms and the greater Denver legal community through knowledge-sharing, joint initiatives, and accountability measures. IAALS partnered with the Coalition to help ensure accountability toward the Coalition’s mission and to serve as an honest broker of these conversations. Together, the group collaborates to take informed, targeted action to increase racial equity for diverse lawyers in Denver.

By emphasizing the importance of organizational leadership and restructuring, as well as the necessity of metrics and accountability, the Coalition report outlines how law firms can open pathways for new talent at the recruitment level, as well as foster a culture of inclusivity after hiring. The report provides specific guidance for law firms across the country that want to make lasting, meaningful change when it comes to DEI.

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**About IAALS**

*IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System at the University of Denver, is a national, independent research center dedicated to facilitating continuous improvement and advancing excellence in the American legal system. Our mission is to forge innovative and practical solutions to problems within the American legal system.*

**About the Coalition**

*The Denver Law Firm Coalition for Racial Equity is working to advance racial equity within its member firms and the greater Denver legal community through knowledge-sharing, joint initiatives, and accountability measures. Learn more here: <https://iaals.du.edu/denver-law-firm-coalition-racial-equity>*