

## News & Trending

NEWS

### SMITH ANDERSON ACHIEVES MANSFIELD CERTIFICATION PLUS FOR ITS D&I INITIATIVES

Press Release | 05.23.2023

#### ***Only NC Firm to Receive 2023 Midsize Mansfield Certified Plus Status***

Smith Anderson has achieved Mansfield Certified Plus status for its actions to diversify leadership, recruit, hire and retain attorneys from underrepresented groups in the legal profession and for ensuring diverse lawyers are considered for new business efforts. The rigorous 18-month program challenges law firms to increase and sustain diversity in law firm leadership through a science-driven method that embeds accountability, transparency and knowledge sharing into talent practices.

The Mansfield Certification, facilitated by Diversity Lab, measures whether firms have considered at least 30 percent women lawyers, underrepresented racial and ethnic lawyers, LGBTQ+ lawyers, and lawyers with disabilities for leadership and governance roles, equity partner promotions, formal client pitches, lateral lawyer hiring and more. Smith Anderson is one of two North Carolina law firms that achieved the 2023 Midsize Mansfield Certification and the only firm in the state to receive 2023 Midsize Mansfield Certified Plus status.

In qualifying the firm for the "Plus" status, Smith Anderson met 100 percent of the applicable categories for base Mansfield Certification and 60 percent of the Mansfield Rule's "Diversity Milestones" category. In addition to the consideration and transparency requirements, Smith Anderson successfully achieved 30 percent diverse representation in current leadership roles and business pipeline activities. While working to achieve Mansfield Rule benchmarks, firms seeking certification embedded transparency in their tracks to advancement through written descriptions and clearly defined pathways to leadership to ensure decisions are inclusive and equitable.

"Smith Anderson and the other firms who received this certification have worked very hard to ensure that diversity and inclusion are at the forefront of our respective firm's goals and actions," said Byron Kirkland, managing partner of Smith Anderson. "We are honored to be the only North Carolina-based 2023 Midsize Mansfield Certified Plus firm, and this recognition further encourages and motivates us to increase our diversity efforts in our firm and to remain a committed leader for diversity efforts within the legal profession. We are excited to continue to build initiatives that create a workplace where everyone feels respected and valued and where a variety of advancement opportunities are available."

Smith Anderson's robust D&I program highlights include everything from internal and external diverse lawyer affinity groups to an Excellence in Diversity summer associate fellowship program. These and other initiatives have earned prominent recognition: *Triangle Business Journal* named Smith Anderson a "Leader in Diversity," and Lawyers of Color recognized the firm with its Diversity Award. The Diversity Movement, a D&I business consulting agency, named Smith Anderson one of five U.S. law firms on the East Coast who are "Doing it Right" with their D&I initiatives, and North Carolina and South Carolina *Lawyers Weekly* honored Smith Anderson with its Diversity & Inclusion award. The Wake County Bar Association also presented the firm with its inaugural

Equity Champion award.

These honors would not have been possible without the steadfast guidance of Smith Anderson's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, consisting of both partners and associates who work closely with firm management and members of the Recruiting and Lawyer Development Committees. The firm's management and these committees focus on such issues as the recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse lawyers, as well as working to maintain an environment in which differences are valued.

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#### **About Diversity Lab**

Diversity Lab is an incubator for innovative ideas and solutions that boost diversity and inclusion in law. Experimental ideas are created through Diversity Lab's Hackathons and piloted in collaboration with more than 350 top law firms and legal departments across the country. Diversity Lab leverages data, behavioral science, design thinking, and technology to further develop and test new ideas and research, measure the results, and share the lessons learned. For more details, visit [www.diversitylab.com](http://www.diversitylab.com).

