



Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service
Board of Directors' Statement on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (“MVLS”) is committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and just environment at all levels of our organization, including the Board of Directors (the “Board”). As a Board, we recognize that drawing on the various identities, backgrounds, and life experiences of our members best suits us to serve MVLS’ mission in our community and fulfil our governance role with MVLS in a holistic and practical manner.

It is our belief that having Board members with a spectrum of human experiences across a variety of categories and an emphasis on historically underrepresented perspectives and identities (both visible and invisible), creates a balanced and effective Board that is well positioned to understand, empathize with, and address the needs of MVLS clients.

As a Board, inclusion is one of our core values. We are committed to maintaining an environment where all Board members feel respected, heard, and valued during Board meetings. Our work to end barriers to justice and equality carries through to our boardroom, where we ensure that all Board members have the information, training, and resources they need to pursue opportunities for advancement in Board leadership.

Critically, we recognize that ensuring justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion within our Board is an ongoing and continuous learning process. To that end, we as a Board are committed to continually holding ourselves accountable to:

- recognize and address barriers to equity and inclusion in our Board and organizational policies, procedures, and practices;
- dedicate our time and resources to expanding greater diversity, equity, and inclusion within our Board member and Board leadership roles;
- support MVLS in its anti-racism work that includes, but is not limited to, challenging the racist structures and barriers within the civil legal system that lead to inequitable outcomes for Black Marylanders and other communities of color as well as assessing internal barriers that negatively impact Black staff, job applicants, clients, volunteers, and community partners;
- review and measure both our Board and MVLS’ progress on working towards MVLS’ justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion goals; and
- commit to identifying and addressing systemic inequities that impact our work at the Board and organizational levels, consistent with MVLS’ mission.

Adopted November 4, 2023