

NOTICE TO THE BAR

SUPREME COURT ACTION ON THE 2019-2021 REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Supreme Court has acted on the 2019-2021 report and recommendations of its Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (“Committee”) as previously published for public comment. This notice memorializes in particular the Court’s authorization as to implementation of several of the Committee’s recommendations, including those related to voluntary disclosure and collection of attorney demographic data; expanded training and resources for judicial law clerks and interns; and amendments to the Rules of Court.

Demographic Data Collection

The Court has approved enhancements to the annual attorney registration process so as to enable attorneys to voluntarily self-report race, ethnicity, and other demographic data, which will enable development of a Bar diversity profile. Information security protocols will be established to maintain the security of attorney demographic information. The plan is to begin the collection of voluntarily disclosed demographic data as part of the 2023 attorney registration process.

Training and Professional Development

The Court has approved efforts to expand professional development opportunities for law clerks, including as related to (1) diversity, inclusion, and elimination of bias; (2) principles of access and fairness; and (3) LGBTQ+ inclusive courtroom practices. The Court has also authorized development of resources to enhance the quality and consistency of Judiciary legal internships, which enable law students from all backgrounds to learn about the operations of the courts and courtroom practices.

Court Rule Amendments

As reflected in the 2021 Omnibus Rule Amendment Order, the Court has adopted amendments to Rule 1:38-3(f)(10) so as to exclude from public access “All records in actions for change of name pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:52-1 and R.

4:72-1 et seq.” Further details on implementation will be provided as soon as practicable. As also recommended by the Committee, the Court has amended Rule 4:72-4 so that the Judgment of Name Change is made effective with the entry of judgment. Building on the November 2020 elimination of the requirement of newspaper publication, the rule amendments address the safety and privacy concerns of transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary people seeking name changes through the courts.

Questions regarding this Notice may be directed to Lisa R. Burke, Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Program Coordinator, at Lisa.Burke@njcourts.gov.



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Dated: October 4, 2021