

New England Legal Awards 2024

Social Impact Finalist: Charles Sanders

By ALM Staff

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Charles Sanders is a partner with Latham & Watkins.

What are your proudest accomplishments in the area of diversity and inclusion?

My work with Project Citizenship has been among the most important work of my career. Helping people secure citizenship strengthens our democracy and increases a culture of inclusion within the greater Boston community. As a lawyer, I believe we have a responsibility to use our legal skills in the service of others, including those most affected by systemic inequities—which is why I make time for pro bono, both as an individual contributor and as a supervisor. I am so proud and honored to give back in this way, and to promote and encourage pro bono participation among my colleagues at Latham.

But we also have a responsibility to increase diversity and inclusion in our profession, which to me has meant being a mentor and an ally. I initiated Latham's relationship with the Women's Bar Association (WBA) in Boston, and I mentor many junior associates, including those from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in the law.

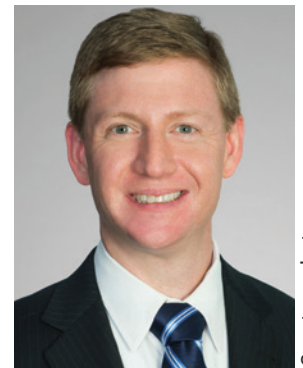
What diversity and inclusion challenges lie ahead for New England firms?

Perhaps the biggest DEI challenge for firms in New England is combatting the stereotype that Boston lacks diversity. The legal industry must work especially hard to battle this stigma, and to support individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups as they seek to enter the profession.

Latham does this in a number of ways, including its annual Diversity Leadership Academy. This substantive professional development and training program provides law students with the information and skills needed to position themselves for success in law school and beyond. Participants attend interactive seminars on a variety of topics, including resume writing, interview skills, and effective communication, with sessions led by Latham lawyers, many of whom serve in leadership positions at the firm (including members of our Executive, Recruiting, and Diversity Leadership Committees), as well as expert external speakers.

How have D&I initiatives impacted New England's legal industry?

Overall the profession has become far more welcoming and inclusive, which is fantastic. I am thrilled with the Boston Bar Association's ongoing partnerships with the Affinity Bar Associations in Massachusetts, such as the Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association and the Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts, for example. Our clients benefit when we excel, when we are able to bring our authentic selves to work, when we feel included and heard, and when we are celebrated for our individuality. Associations and groups like these support diversity and increase inclusion.



Charles Sanders,
with Latham & Watkins.

Courtesy photo