

Beacon of Justice Award

The 2021 Beacon of Justice Award will recognize firms whose work addressed systemic racial disparities in 2020. This is a wide spectrum from civil rights and special relief motions related to COVID that have racial significance, to advocates raising their voices and committing resources, to untangling systems that are inherently unjust. Eligible law firms will have provided pro bono legal assistance to clients, which includes individuals, families, organizations, or other groups, between January 1 and December 31, 2020.

Successful applicants will outline the following considerations:

- the extent to which the law firm intentionally and positively addressed or promoted racial equity;
- utilized creative ideas, tools, and technology in this pro bono work;
- increased access to counsel or enhanced the effectiveness of representation; and,
- advanced policies and/or practices that provide pathways to justice and opportunity for these clients.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 9, 2021

Events in 2020 fueled a very public outrage about racial inequities and forced all of us to look at America for what it is and has always been – structurally devoid of equality. Throughout our history, people of color have been excluded, marginalized, and brutalized by systems they were told were there for their protection. Exacerbated by the global pandemic that continues to affect communities of color in oversized ways, many people have spoken out, demanding their stories be heard. Others, crushed by the reality of unemployment, homelessness, and hunger, found themselves at the epicenter of historically ingrained discrimination. Last year, many in the legal community responded with new or increased commitment and heroic efforts to support the movement for equality, knowing that racial equity pro bono work must be intentional and bold to make a significant difference. These are the people and firms NLADA wants to highlight at our virtual gala on June 9, 2021, with a Beacon of Justice Award.

Application Summary

1. In 800 words or less, describe how the firm's pro bono work intentionally addressed racial disparities, focusing on work impacting low-income and vulnerable individuals, families or nonprofit organizations impacted by racial inequity.
2. Attach additional articles or materials (no more than 3) that illustrate the work described in the narrative summary.
3. Provide the main contact person(s) in your organization whom we may contact should any questions about your application arise.
4. Identify the number of attorneys in your firm, the total number of pro bono hours your firm provided between January 1 and December 31, 2020, and the total number of pro bono hours that were devoted to representing racial equity work between January 1 and December 31, 2020.
5. Identify if a member of your firm serves on NLADA's Board of Directors.

*For additional information, please contact Aileen Moffatt
a.moffatt@nlada.org or 202-452-0620 x 223.*

Recipients will be notified in early April with the awards presented on June 9 during NLADA's Virtual Exemplar Award Dinner. NLADA will prepare a video presentation and a digital "print" publication highlighting the work of the winners that will be promoted to the equal justice community, on the NLADA website, and on social media. Beacon of Justice awardees also are able to share the awardees highlights video and full honors program with their associates and clients. Awardees wishing to participate in the video and digital publication will be asked to submit high resolution imagery with accompanying descriptions.

