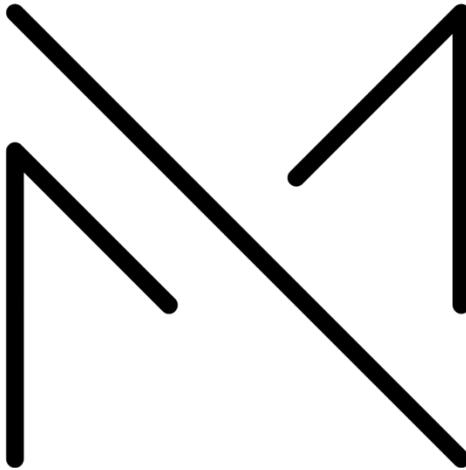


**MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYERS
REPORT TO THE MN STATE LEGISLATURE
JANUARY 30, 2024**

MABL

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYERS



P A T H W A Y S

PROGRAM

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January 21, 2025

Elizabeth Lincoln, Director
Minnesota Legislative Reference Library
645 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1050

Re: 2024 MABL Legislative Report

Dear Director Lincoln:

The Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers (MABL) submits MABL's Law School Pathways Program (Pathways Program) report (pursuant to 2023 Minnesota Law Chapter 53, Article 20, Section 2, Subdivision 3) to the Commissioner of the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and the Minnesota Legislature and its relevant legislative oversight committees.

Overview

MABL was founded as a Minnesota non-profit organization in September 1995 by Black lawyers who believed in the principles of the National Bar Association and wanted to establish a local chapter in Minnesota. MABL's mission is to:

- Promote and support the professional of Black lawyers, judges, and law students in Minnesota,
- Address legal issues affecting the Black community in Minnesota, and
- Advance education, excellence, and racial equity in the pursuit of justice.

Since its inception, MABL has made progress in achieving its mission as its membership ranks now include judges within the highest federal and state courts in Minnesota, leaders in the private and public legal departments, as well as leaders in the business, education, and non-profit sectors.

MABL hosts an annual fundraising Gala in part to support local black law students in completing their legal education. MABL has recently seen a decline in the number of black law students attending local law schools. MABL is interested in supporting more black college students considering obtaining a legal degree.

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MABL received a two-year annual \$350,000 appropriation to address underrepresentation of black individuals in the legal profession. The legislative appropriation called for MABL to create a program for ten to twenty black students attending a Minnesota postsecondary institution in which the students would:

- (1) receive an academic scholarship of \$4,000 per academic year,
- (2) attend events and programming about law school and legal careers, and
- (3) receive Law School Admission Testing (LSAT) preparation support.

Implementation

MABL received funding from DEED in August 2023. The MABL Board subsequently authorized retaining an experienced independent contractor, Rick Petry (Petry), to plan, develop, and implement the Pathways Program. Petry has several years of experience working as a law school administrator and educator. MABL also asked its current part-time Executive Director and sole employee Aisha Richardson (Richardson), to work with Petry and provide administrative support.

Some of the additional activities that MABL undertook this calendar year included:

- Develop marketing and outreach plan to Minnesota post-secondary schools,
- Identify instructors for summer program,
- Identify networking opportunities for students,
- Identify possible experiences for students, and
- Assess what additional support beyond tuition MABL could provide students.

At the end of the current 2023-2024 academic school year, MABL expects to formally launch the Pathways Program.

Conclusion

MABL is excited about the progress that has been made with the Pathways Program and looks forward to the formal launch with students next year. MABL is grateful and appreciative of the opportunity provided by the Minnesota Legislature.

Respectfully submitted,

Aisha Richardson
MABL Pathways Program Administrator

Rick Petry,
MABL Pathways Program Director