

May 22, 2026

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: *2026 MABL Legislative Report*

Dear Director Lincoln:

The Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers (MABL) Board 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.

MABL has made progress in achieving its mission with members now including 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 to support local Black law students. MABL has recently seen a decline in the number of Black law students attending local law schools. MABL wants to support more Black college students considering obtaining a legal degree.

During the last legislative session, MABL received a two-year annual \$250,000 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 receive:

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

Implementation

We launched our outreach efforts to local Minnesota postsecondary institutions in the spring of 2025. Applicants were asked to provide a writing sample and fill out an application identifying their past educational success, interest in obtaining a legal degree, and career aspirations.

- Consistent with preceding years, the Pathways Program had the following components:
- Classes to improve writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills,
- Overview and workshops regarding law school student experience,
- Meetings with legal professionals to learn about their careers, and
- One-on-one mentoring with legal professionals to provide guidance and support.

We provided a summer stipend to each of the students to allow them to focus on the information, education, and experiences provided to them through the Pathways Program. Several, but not all, students also took advantage of wraparound supports such as transportation, food, and housing assistance.

Conclusion

MABL's Pathways Program was recognized with the 2026 Alexander Award, promoting diversity in the legal profession, by the American Bar Association. During MABL's Annual Gala, featuring Honorable Eric Holder former United States Attorney General, Pathways students were interviewed, acknowledged, and celebrated for their leadership and educational achievement.

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MABL is excited about the progress that has been made with the Pathways Program and its expansion in the future. We extend our gratitude to all mentors, educators, lawyers, judges, and supporters who contributed to the success of the Pathways Program.

Respectfully submitted,



Alia M. Abdi

Treasurer