

2024 Law360® Pulse Social Impact Leaders

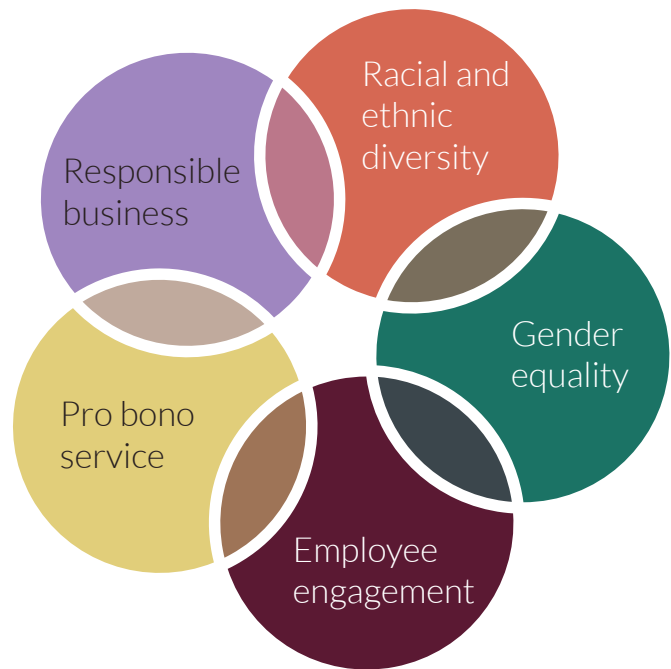
Methodology

The legal sector faces a broad push to step up its social responsibility efforts. Attorneys and clients are calling for law firms to fulfill promises to affect positive social change through diversity, philanthropy and sustainability. These expectations provide an impetus for Law360 Pulse’s annual Social Impact Leaders ranking, which seeks to measure firms’ progress and advance this conversation.

The ranking is fueled by Law360 Pulse’s annual law firm survey, which requests substantial data on firms’ social responsibility efforts. Hundreds of data points are funneled into five pillars: racial and ethnic diversity, gender equality, employee engagement, pro bono service and responsible business. The five pillar scores can range between 0 and 100, and their average represents each firm’s overall social impact score. The 100 highest overall scores qualify for the Social Impact Leaders ranking.

Each pillar has its own individual methodology, allowing readers to compare firms’ standing in each area. That said, the pillars follow a similar structure. The core measures are the primary data points, and they represent 60% of the score on each pillar. These core measures reflect other Law360 rankings and align with recognized standards across the legal industry and other sectors. The remaining 40% of each pillar score is composed of supporting measures, which create a fuller picture of law firms’ efforts.

Firms don’t always answer every survey



question, and these gaps prevent participants from obtaining full credit. Where data is entirely unavailable for a set of core or supporting measures, pillar scores are marked with an asterisk. Unless otherwise noted, omissions are evaluated as zeroes.

Law360 Pulse brings all measures onto the same scale using min-max normalization. Firms are grouped with their peers of similar size, and then each statistic is scaled from 0, the lowest value, to 100, the highest value.

To be considered for the ranking, firms must have submitted the necessary data for the core metrics of at least three pillars. A total of 290 firms qualify for this year’s edition.

Pillar Descriptions

Racial and ethnic diversity

Core measure

- Diversity Snapshot pipeline score, measuring how firms' racial and ethnic diversity across the attorney hierarchy compares to the potential marketplace of hires. Details on the pipeline score methodology can be found [in that ranking](#). This metric receives the full 60% weight.

Supporting measures

- For the heads of firm, executive management committee and practice group leaders, Law360 Pulse computes the percentage of people of color. These figures include individuals who are of Middle Eastern or North African descent. These supporting measures indicate racial and ethnic representation among firms' key decision-makers. Generally, the three measures evenly split the 40% weight. If a firm doesn't have an executive management committee or practice group leaders, weight shifts to the applicable leadership tiers.

Gender equality

Core measure

- Women in Law Report pipeline score, measuring how firms' proportion of women across the attorney hierarchy compares to the potential marketplace of hires. Details on the pipeline score methodology can be found [in that ranking](#). This metric receives the full 60% weight.

Supporting measures

- For the heads of firm, executive management committee and practice group leaders, Law360 Pulse computes the percentage of women. These supporting measures indicate the representation of women among firms' key decision-makers. Generally, the three measures evenly split the 40% weight. If a firm doesn't have an executive management committee or practice group leaders, weight shifts to the applicable leadership tiers.

Employee engagement

Core measure

- Turnover rate, calculated as the number of lawyers who left the firm in 2023 divided by the average number of attorneys at the firm at the end of 2022 and 2023. Attorneys who retired are deducted from the turnover count. Turnover is frequently cited by human resources professionals as a top indicator of employee experience. This metric receives the full 60% weight.

Supporting measures

- Firms' answers to whether they have a written policy permitting attorneys to work part-time or on a flexible schedule; whether they track attorneys who identify as LGBTQ+; whether they track attorneys who have a disability; whether they have a policy allowing attorneys to work from home; whether they have engaged attorneys with a diversity action plan whose goals are measured and tracked by management. These measures assess whether firms have modern policies in place to support their workforce. Answers of 'yes' receive full credit, while a status of 'in progress' (where applicable) receives half credit. These components evenly split the 40% weight.

Pro bono service

Core measure

- Firms' percentage of attorneys who performed at least 50 hours of pro bono work. This is in accordance with the American Bar Association's Model Rule 6.1, which establishes a professional responsibility to provide pro bono service and advocates for lawyers to work at least 50 hours pro bono each year. This metric receives the full 60% weight.

Supporting measures

- Firms' percentage of attorneys who participated in pro bono work and average pro bono hours per attorney. These metrics provide additional ways to assess firms' output in performing legal services free of charge. Each of the two supporting measures receives half of the 40% weight. Additional details about the methodology can be found in the [2024 Pro Bono Ranking](#).

Responsible business

Core measures

- Indicators of whether the firm has a U.S. practice focusing on sustainability and environmental, social and corporate governance concerns, and whether the firm advised clients on making their operations compliant with environmental regulations. Answers of 'yes' receive full credit, while firms that are preparing to offer these services receive half credit. Each of these two components is worth 10%.
- Indicators of whether the firm's U.S. attorneys completed pro bono work in the following areas: Child and family programs; civil rights, civil liberties and human rights; criminal justice and prisoners' rights; domestic violence and abuse; education; employment; healthcare and medical issues; housing and homelessness; human trafficking; immigration and deportation; military and veterans' affairs; nonprofit operations; physical and developmental disabilities; racial, ethnic, gender and LGBTQ+ discrimination; religious freedoms; reproductive rights; sustainability and environmental matters; and voter protection. These components are worth a total of 20%, and credit is split evenly among the 18 areas.
- The ratio of a firm's charitable contributions to its total number of attorneys. This component is worth 20%.

Supporting measures

- Indicators of whether firms require suppliers to sign a code of conduct affirming that they will adhere to responsible business requirements for environmental practices, labor rights and human rights; additionally, whether firms have established an emissions target. Answers of ‘yes’ receive full credit, while a status of ‘in progress’ receives half credit. Each of these two indicators is worth 10%.
- Indicators of whether firms underwent a materiality assessment within the past five years. Firms that answer ‘yes,’ as well as firms that underwent this assessment more than five years ago and plan to do so again in the future, receive full credit. Firms that underwent a materiality assessment more than five years ago and have no plans to repeat receive half credit, as do firms that are planning an assessment but have yet to undertake one. This indicator is worth 10%.
- Indicators of whether firms participate in the United Nations Global Compact, Science-Based Target initiative and CDP (formerly known as the Carbon Disclosure Project). Answers of ‘yes’ receive full credit, while firms that plan to participate in the future receive half credit. These indicators evenly split the remaining 10% weight.

Scoring Model



Feedback

Law360 Pulse continually seeks ways to refine this ranking, and reader feedback is welcomed. Comments and suggestions can be directed to surveys@law360.com.