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Categories:

[Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion & Belonging](#)
[Press Releases](#)
[Recognition](#)

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Frost Brown Todd Earns Third Mansfield Rule™ Plus Certification

Frost Brown Todd (FBT) has achieved Mansfield Rule™ Plus Certification for the third consecutive year, meeting or exceeding the recommended benchmark in more than 20 categories that assess the diversity of a law firm's applicant pool and current workforce. To receive Mansfield's "Plus" distinction—currently the highest under the program's framework—at least 30% of the candidates considered for open positions and advancement opportunities were attorneys from historically underrepresented groups. On top of this, FBT had to track and report on representative diversity among its senior leaders, equity partners (or those promoted to partner), and all client matters staffed during the evaluation period.

"Mansfield has, in many ways, become a gold standard for clients looking to gauge how serious outside-counsel firms are about their diversity initiatives," said FBT Chief Executive Officer Adam Hall. "The certification, and especially its Plus requirements, is no small feat. Frost Brown Todd has recommitted to Mansfield several times now because it holds us accountable. It challenges us to make good on our DEI commitments in meaningful and measurable ways. And based on Frost Brown Todd's scorecard this year, Mansfield's impact on our firm is undeniable."

Certification in a New Era of FBT

FBT's third consecutive "Plus" certification is also noteworthy insofar as it comes less than a year after its merger with California-based firm AlvaradoSmith, which expanded the firm's footprint to 16 offices and over 575 attorneys nationwide. The merger took place in the midst of Mansfield tracking, and despite the challenges this presented, FBT improved its 2022-2023 scores in several benchmarking categories.

Two such categories were recruiting and advancement. Nearly 60% of the candidates considered for associate positions were women, attorneys of color, and/or LGBTQ+ attorneys. Of those promoted to

equity partner, 66.7% were historically underrepresented lawyers—a 17% increase year-over-year, bringing the total percentage of diverse equity partners to 36.8%.

Another promising statistic was the percentage of historically unrepresented attorneys included in formal client pitches and RFPs (46.8% in 2023) compared with the percentage of actual client matters staffed by those attorneys (47.8%). The 1% differential is striking in its proximity, possibly intimating a connection between the diversity of pitch/pursuit teams and clients' preferences when selecting outside legal counsel.

Finally, FBT saw a statistical increase from 35.2% to 45.5% in diverse representation among its Chambers USA nominations, a new category added in 2021. The Chambers directory remains a key outlet used by law firms to elevate the national profiles of attorneys considered leaders or emerging leaders in their respective markets and practice areas.

Committed and Looking Ahead

"For Frost Brown Todd to be recertified is welcome news, indicative of our firm's enduring commitment to DEI, and a testament to the hard work of our dedicated Mansfield team," said Miles Harrison, co-chair of the firm's [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Belonging Committee](#). "But we must also remember that this is a critical moment for law firm diversity efforts, with many concerned over the future of corporate DEI. Frost Brown Todd remains committed and is working toward Mansfield recertification for 2024. We believe our firm can maintain a diverse workforce while continuing to promote equitable opportunities for those historically underrepresented in the legal industry."

Diversity Lab launched the Mansfield Rule certification program in 2017 to drive up diversity in the legal profession by broadening the pool of historically underrepresented applicants considered for employment opportunities. Though inspired by the NFL's Rooney Rule, Mansfield placed greater emphasis on outcomes with the advent of its "Plus" requirements. Mansfield has since emerged as a leading tool for tracking and advancing diversity in the legal

profession. Each new iteration of the program adds or expands on the certification requirements based on research, participant feedback, and evolving best practices.

“We know, statistically and anecdotally, how critical it is for younger professionals from historically underrepresented groups to see themselves reflected in partnership and company leadership,” said Alyse Hoffer, chair of FBT’s [Women’s Initiative Committee](#). “Because the bar is increasingly higher as Mansfield evolves and more firms sign on to participate, it continues to serve as an effective tool, helping Frost Brown Todd increase its focus on pathways to advancement for the kind of diverse talent we believe is vital for the success of our firm.”

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