



Mansfield Rule
Certified *Plus* 2023-2024
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Frost Brown Todd Recertified Mansfield Rule Plus for 2023–2024

Following a year of tracking and reporting on demographic diversity in over 20 categories, Frost Brown Todd (FBT) successfully earned its fourth Mansfield Rule Plus Certification for 2023–2024 and recommitted to Mansfield for the next yearlong review period. An initiative to boost inclusivity, access, and leadership diversity in the legal industry, the Mansfield Rule calls on participating law firms to commit to greater transparency and intentionality around their talent practices, particularly as it pertains to attorneys from historically underrepresented groups.

Mansfield is a structured, data-intensive certification process designed to help law firms and other legal employers “ensure that all talent has an equal, fair, and equitable opportunity to advance to leadership through an intentional decision-making process informed by behavioral science.” To achieve the “Plus” certification, Mansfield’s highest designation, FBT reported data that went beyond demonstrating affirmative consideration of diverse candidate pools for its senior leadership positions and governance roles, to focus on specific progress and outcomes.

“Mansfield’s requirements for transparency around hiring, advancement and compensation practices, which have traditionally been opaque or gone under the radar, help to keep us vigilant and provide support for our efforts, ensuring that we hold ourselves accountable to our core values as a firm,” said FBT Chief Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Belonging Officer [Nirvana Dove](#). “We continue to closely monitor our demographic data and not just for Mansfield, but because of what it reveals about retention at our firm, which is a more critical piece to the DEIB puzzle than recruiting alone.”

“By looking at the totality of the data,” Dove continued, “we can identify blind spots and areas for improvement. With this data, we determine how to deploy firm resources as inclusively and impactfully as possible. It enables us, moreover, to make informed decisions that support and empower our talent, provide the best service to our clients and community partners, and drive our firm

forward.”

Mansfield Tracking & Outcomes

Diversity Lab, the organization that oversees the Mansfield Rule certification process, annually introduces new or more expansive categories for law firms to track and report on. Among these categories are stats connected to lateral recruiting, practice group leaders, equity partners, *Chambers* submissions, and C-suite composition. With respect to the latter, FBT saw a 36.5% increase during the 2023–2024 review period in candidates considered for C-suite staff positions who were women, people of color, and/or LGBTQ+. Currently, 75% of those C-suite staff positions are occupied by women, people of color, and/or LGBTQ+ employees.

In several other Mansfield categories, FBT remained at or, in some cases, well above the 30% threshold for what Diversity Lab refers to as “outcomes” (i.e., women, attorneys of color, and/or LGBTQ+ attorneys who were promoted or who currently serve in leadership roles, as distinct from candidates who were considered for such positions). FBT’s outcomes-related data in the executive committee, practice group leader, and equity partner categories held firm or rose slightly from prior years, while remaining consistent with broader trends for Mansfield participation. This includes a consistent growth rate for underrepresented attorneys across most categories.

Mansfield Next Gen & Next Steps

In addition to traditional Mansfield certification, FBT was among the first firms to sign on to Diversity Lab’s Next Gen Pilot program in 2023 and Disability Inclusion Commitments in 2024. As part of the Next Gen Pilot program, participating firms are asked to focus their efforts on a particular area impacting historically underrepresented attorneys’ economic influence, such as client recognition and succession planning. Over the past year, FBT developed dashboards to track the firm’s succession planning data in real-time. When partners retire, for instance, the succession planning dashboard helps ensure lawyers who have experience with the client, including women attorneys, attorneys of color, and/or LGBTQ+ attorneys, are

considered in the transition for retiring attorney's clients and open matters.

FBT's focus on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in succession planning is beginning to yield important insights, even though the initiative is still in its first year. The firm plans to relate its findings and next steps as part of Mansfield's knowledge-sharing requirement. The goal is to eventually develop a succession planning framework other firms can replicate and that will help continuing generations of attorneys advance and thrive in their practice.

FBT was joined by more than 360 law firms to achieve Mansfield Certification for 2023–2024—a 13% increase from the prior review period and a sign that the legal industry is pressing forward with DEIB, even as organizations in other sectors walk back or slow-walk their own DEIB programs. This marks the fifth year FBT has sought and achieved certification, earning the firm Diversity Lab's "early adopter" status, which is reserved for firms that have participated every year since 2019. Though FBT earned its first Mansfield certification in 2019, the firm fell just shy of meeting Diversity Lab's requirements for Plus-level distinction.

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