

Gender Fairness Guidelines for Women Attorneys Juggling Work/Life Balance

- Things to look for in a law firm environment:
 - Look for an environment where people you can identify with are thriving and find out what they are doing to be successful.
 - Are there women partners or senior associates in your department? Are they successful in obtaining professional leadership opportunities? Are they successful in juggling their work and home responsibilities?
 - Get perspective of both partners and associates regarding gender fairness policies. Are they supported universally or only by the younger generation?
- Assignments/Professional Development:
 - Are there women in leadership roles who cultivate junior associates and act as informal or formal mentors?
 - How are projects assigned? Are the favorable assignments routinely given to men? What checks are available to ensure that does not happen?
 - Are there meaningful assignments that do not involve extended travel?
- Networking and Leadership Opportunities (non-billable work):
 - Does the firm encourage non-billable time such as committee work and networking opportunities? Do hours spent doing such activities take away from billable requirements?
 - Are the women associates and partners involved in leadership and networking organizations internally or externally – or do you find that they are discouraged?
 - Are there any formal or informal programs designed to assist women in business development? (e.g. Baker Botts Global Women's Forum)?
 - Do pro bono hours count towards the billable requirement?
- Mentoring:
 - Does the firm have formal/informal mentoring?
 - Are there any mentoring programs specifically geared towards women or women with families (e.g. Women at Weil, or New mothers' groups)?
- Part time/ Flex Time: Look for the availability of formal part-time (fewer hours) or flex-time (alternate hours) programs.

- Inquire as to the availability of the program (i.e. restrictions or criteria one must fulfill before applying). Are there limits as to how long one can be working part-time or flex time (informal or formal)? How many associates/partners work part time or flex time?
- Inquire as to applicability of the program. How is it monitored to be certain that part-time associates are not marginalized with less opportunities? If a part-time attorney works more than the typical part-time hours, is his/her compensation modified to account for the increased hours? Do part time attorneys have opportunities for promotion? Under what circumstances?
- Do associates work from home or work alternate shifts at work? How often?
 - What kind of technical support is available for attorneys who are working from home?
 - Is it acceptable to work from home on the weekends?
- Maternity/Medical leave:
 - Inquire as to the firms' policy for medical leave and maternity leave. How long and do most associates/ partners take the full time?
 - Is there a paternity leave policy? Mandatory or voluntary? How long?
- Assistance for working mothers:
 - Does the firm offer any child care programs, back up, sick child care or otherwise?
 - Ask associates with children if their child care ever fell through and if so, how they handled it.
 - Are there lactation rooms or accommodations for nursing mothers (locks on office doors)?
 - Parent affinity groups
 - Concierge service (pick up prescriptions, dry cleaning)
- Suggestions for balances:
 - Get a good childcare system that works for you.
 - Keep one calendar for work and family commitments and meetings.