

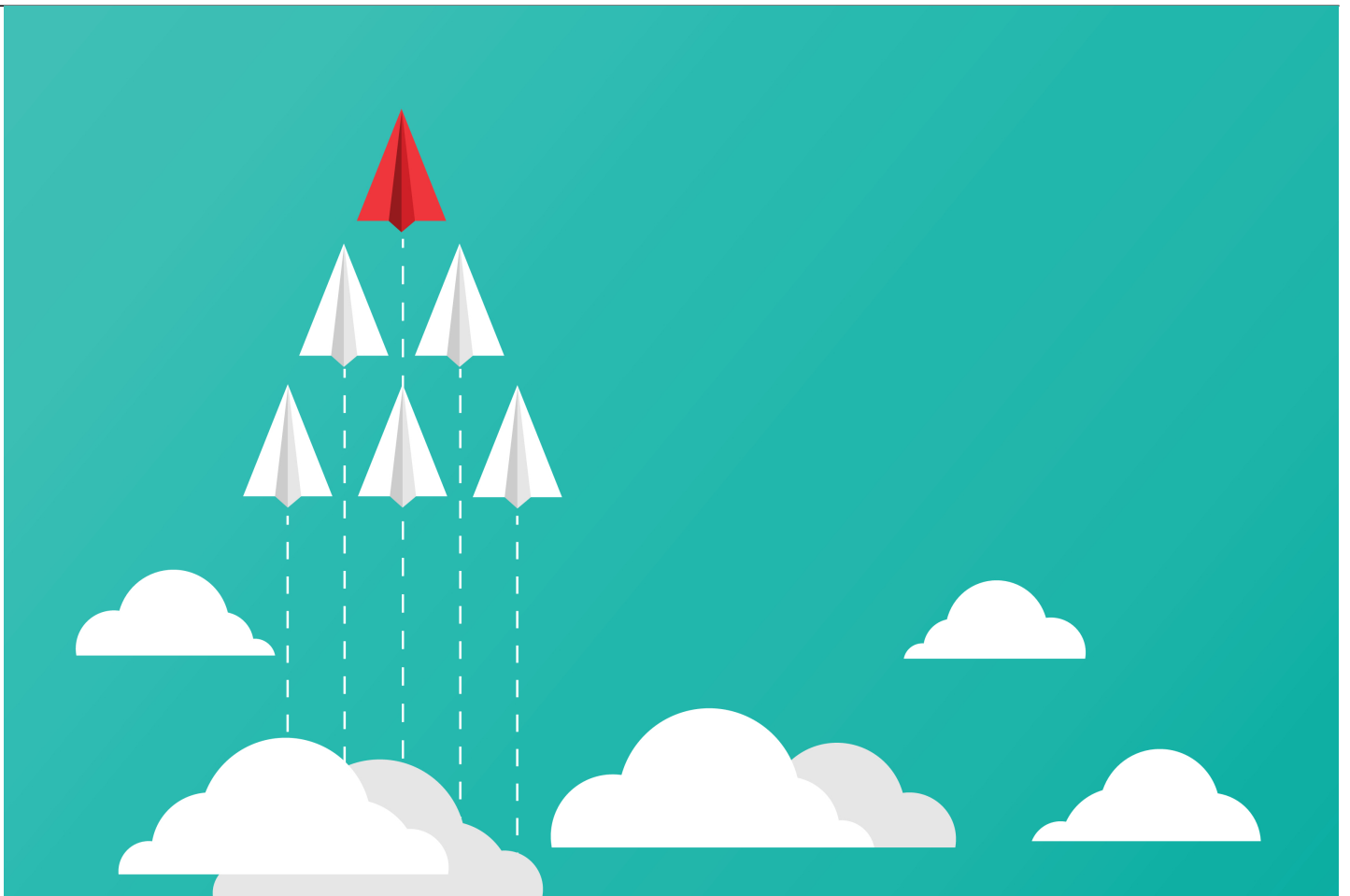


Shifting Gears on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Community

Diversity and Inclusion

Skills and Professional Development



Banner artwork by Yellow duck / [shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com)

“...Getting a seat at the table...Talking the talk; walking the walk.”

Over the years, many expressions have been used to convey the deep desire for action in furthering diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal profession. Amidst this hum of conversation, questions were raised about the role that companies and law firms should play in achieving that progress.

With a history of thought leadership, a diverse roster of attorneys, and a commitment to achieve diverse representation in its outside counsel, Toyota Legal Divisions – collectively, the legal departments of Toyota Motor North America, Inc. and Toyota Motor Credit Corporation – have undoubtedly been contributors to the dialogue.

Room to do more

In August, Toyota Legal Divisions launched the Toyota Counsel in Motion program for a select group of underrepresented senior associates from Toyota’s partnering law firms. The program gives them opportunities to enhance their professional and business development skills, cultivate relationships with Toyota attorneys, and learn in-depth about Toyota’s history, corporate philosophy, and

business. Toyota believes that participation in this program will amplify opportunities for participants to develop enduring relationships with in-house counsel and empower them to elevate their careers.

“Toyota is committed to making the workplace, marketplace, and society a better place for all. We stand behind our commitment to diversity and inclusion...”

Sandra phillips rogers

With this program, Toyota is doing more than just talking about supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion; the company is directly partnering with its outside counsel to tangibly invest in the careers of underrepresented senior law firm associates and, by extension, the pipeline of leadership in the legal profession.

The four wheels of the program are:

1. Fostering legal innovation through design thinking and a hackathon to identify creative solutions to a challenging DEI problem.
2. Enhancing professional growth through one-on-one mentoring sessions with a Toyota attorney.
3. Refining business development skills in workshops with nationally acclaimed thought leaders in this space and by receiving on-the-spot feedback during a business pitch practice.
4. In-depth learning from Toyota executives about Toyota’s corporate philosophy, business, and transformation into a mobility company.



Workshops with thought-leaders encourage collaborative ideation for future leaders.

Toyota Legal Divisions' Diversity and Inclusion Committee designed this trailblazing Counsel in Motion program to work together with partnering law firms that have shown a strong interest in seeking to improve their culture, enhance growth opportunities for underrepresented associates, create more robust client-counsel relationships, and develop future leaders.

Toyota Counsel in Motion – hands on the wheel

For selection, applicants nominated by their firms submitted videos sharing why they wanted to participate and how they planned to leverage their unique experience to enhance their careers. After a rigorous selection process, fifteen participants were selected for the program, which kicked off in August 2022, at Toyota's headquarters in Plano, Texas. The six-month program includes three day-and-a-half in-person sessions, three virtual meetings, and monthly mentoring sessions with Toyota attorneys.



The 2022 Toyota Counsel in Motion cohort gathered in Plano, Texas.

Sandra Phillips Rogers, group vice president, general counsel, chief legal officer and chief diversity officer of Toyota Motor North America, highlighted Toyota's motivation for the ground-breaking program: "Toyota is committed to making the workplace, marketplace, and society a better place for all. We stand behind our commitment to diversity and inclusion, and after several conversations with our partnering law firms, together we believe now is an opportune time to inspire future leaders."

...the company is directly partnering with its outside counsel to tangibly invest in the careers of underrepresented senior law firm associates...

Through the Counsel in Motion program, Toyota hopes to do more than move the needle; it hopes to drive meaningful change by doing its part to ensure that underrepresented attorneys have more than just seats at the table but are also in the driver's seat of their legal career.

We have talked and we have walked – it's time to drive.

Meyling "Mey" Ly Ortiz



Managing Counsel, Labor and Employment

Toyota Motor North America, Inc.

Meyling "Mey" Ly Ortiz is managing counsel of employment at Toyota Motor North America, Inc. Her passions include mentoring, championing diversity and inclusion and a personal blog: TheMeybe.com. At home, you can find her doing her best to be a "fun" mom to a toddler and a preschooler and chasing her best self on her Peloton. You can follow her on [LinkedIn](#). And you knew this was coming: her opinions are hers alone.

