

Legal Innovators, ALSP that Promotes Diversity, Enters Deal with Global Engineering Firm Bechtel

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We're changing many aspects of how the law is practiced, without sacrificing quality.

By Bob Ambrogi on December 1, 2020

Legal Innovators, a Washington, D.C., alternative legal services provider that aims to promote diversity and inclusion among junior legal hires, has entered a deal with the global engineering, construction and project management company **Bechtel** to place recently graduated lawyers in its legal department.

As I **wrote last year** when Legal Innovators launched, the company seeks to upend how new lawyers are recruited, hired, priced and trained, and in so doing, help enhance diversity and inclusion in larger law firms and corporate legal departments.

Legal Innovators' formula is to take on the job of recruiting law school graduates, employing them for their first two years, and providing training and mentorship. It pairs these lawyers with law firms and legal departments, where they work for up to two years, gaining practical, on-the-job experience. The company's hope is that many of these placements will become permanent.

In the Bechtel deal, Legal Innovators will place two lawyers in its legal department, initially for terms of one year, with the opportunity to continue the placement for a second year.

In keeping with Legal Innovators' goal of promoting diversity, the two attorneys are both Black women. Because of the pandemic, they will work virtually, but report directly to Bechtel's legal department. During the term, they will also receive ongoing training and mentoring from Legal Innovators.

“Legal Innovators offers an innovative solution to address training and diversity challenges in the legal profession,” **Michael Bailey**, Bechtel's general counsel, said in a statement provided by Legal Innovators. “Our collaboration with Legal Innovators gives us access to an exciting and diverse pipeline of legal talent.”



Bryan Parker

Bailey said that these junior lawyers “will get an opportunity to work along senior lawyers on some of the most complex projects in the engineering and construction industry, getting unparalleled training and mentoring opportunities.”

At the same time, he said, Bechtel begins to build a pipeline for future talent to come into the company.

“We need to change how new lawyers are coming into the market, the price is not sustainable,” **Bryan Parker**, Legal Innovators’ CEO, told me during a recent call. “Our approach brings that innovation, it fits within the other cost rationalizations that these companies are going through.”

In addition, Parker said, Legal Innovators offers the training and mentoring that many legal departments are not set up to offer junior lawyers. “Our lawyers will go through our training for the entire time they’re there.”

Given that Legal Innovators launched just months before the pandemic, the year has been somewhat of a roller-coaster ride, Parker says. But the company had some success with a **flexible-term placement program** it launched in July, has placed lawyers in other legal departments, and is close to deals with multiple law firms.

Meanwhile, it has expanded the roster of law schools with which it partners. From the three D.C. law schools with which it originally partnered — Howard, George Washington and Georgetown — it has added Boston University, Cornell University, Duke University, Northwestern, New York Law School, New York University, Texas A&M, UConn School of Law, UNC School of Law, University of Houston, University of Virginia, and Vanderbilt Law School.

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