

Justice & Diversity Center of The Bar Association of San Francisco Launched, Combining Legal Services with Diversity Educational Programs

March 14, 2013 – San Francisco – The Bar Association of San Francisco today launched its new Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) which brings together two of BASF’s most dynamic and impactful efforts in the legal community—the Volunteer Legal Services Program (VLSP) and the Diversity Educational Program—into one 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Creation of the JDC was a two-year process that started with the merger of the BASF Foundation into VLSP on January 1, 2012. During the past year, the new legal service and diversity entity embarked on a strategic planning effort that helped define its shared identity, resulting in the new Justice & Diversity Center and the development of a mission statement: “The Justice & Diversity Center advances fairness and equality by providing pro bono legal services to low-income people and educational programs that foster diversity in the legal profession.”

According to Christopher C. Kearney, BASF’s 2013 president and a partner at Kecker & Van Nest LLP, “The breadth of the JDC’s pro bono legal services is truly remarkable, including eviction defense and other cases involving basic human needs that are the center of San Francisco’s Right to Civil Counsel movement. These pro bono services—combined with groundbreaking educational programs that foster diversity in the legal profession—put the JDC at the forefront of access to justice issues.”

The Justice & Diversity Center is governed by a 25-person board of directors and is administered by an executive director. It contains three components: Pro Bono Legal Services Program, the Homeless Advocacy Project, and the Diversity Educational Program. Within these programs some two-dozen major activities operate.

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The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) is a nonprofit voluntary membership organization of over 8,000 attorneys, law students and legal professionals in the Bay Area. Founded in 1872, BASF is one of the largest and most dynamic metropolitan bar associations in the U.S., with a long and distinguished record of community action, public service and service to the legal profession.