



CENTER FOR WOMEN IN LAW ANNOUNCES RELAUNCH, EXPANSION OF ACCELERATE CAREER START PROGRAM

Center's Popular First-Year Associates Program Expands to Multi-Year Initiative Supporting Early Career Women Lawyers

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AUSTIN, TEXAS—The Center for Women in Law (CWIL) today announced the relaunch and expansion of its popular Accelerate program. The goal of the professional development program is to improve the retention of women lawyers and strengthen the pipeline to partnership and leadership positions.

“A strong foundation during the first years of practice can have a lasting impact on the careers of young attorneys,” said Veronica Vargas Stidvent, Executive Director of the Center for Women in Law. “We’re thrilled to expand Accelerate into a multi-year program and broaden our reach by maintaining a virtual component for first-year lawyers across the United States.”

The relaunched program gets a new name, Accelerate Career Start, and additional opportunities for professional development through the expanded multi-year program. The program is also expanding participation to include new lawyers in the non-profit and public sectors. Scholarships are available.

In the first year of the program, new lawyers will learn critical skills and network through plenary sessions addressing such topics as best practices for starting a legal career, the business of law, and effective communications. In the second and third years of the program, participants will explore career opportunities and challenges with small cohorts facilitated by senior lawyers, including partners and general counsel.

“We hope Accelerate Career Start will continue to demonstrate the value to legal employers of investing in early professional development,” said Stidvent.

Accelerate will hold its welcome session on Jan. 31, 2022. Additional plenary sessions will take place in March, May, August and October.

In 2021, the Center for Women in Law's Accelerate program delivered quality programming and networking opportunities through a series of virtual events for 70 participating first-year associates representing seven law firms in ten cities and five states. The Center plans to continue virtual programming to increase participation.

Despite entering in equal numbers, women continue to leave the legal profession at higher rates than men. Accelerate Career Start is an innovative program that focuses on the transition from law school to practicing law. It is the only program of its kind designed to improve and strengthen the first-year experience, which often determines the career trajectories of lawyers.

The Center for Women in Law will use the program to better understand the impact of the early career experience on women's advancement and will share the insights we develop with participating legal employers.

Benefactor sponsors of the 2022 Accelerate Career Start program include **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, Haynes and Boone, Holland & Knight, Katten Muchin Rosenman, and Kirkland & Ellis.**

To learn more about Accelerate Career Start and the work of the Center for Women in Law, visit <https://law.utexas.edu/cwil/accelerate-first-year-associates/>.

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About The Center for Women in Law

The Center for Women in Law (CWIL) is the premier educational institution devoted to the success of the entire spectrum of women in law, from first-year law students to the most experienced and accomplished attorneys. It combines theory with practice, identifying and addressing the persistent issues facing individual women and the profession as a whole. CWIL is the only center of its kind in the United States. CWIL serves as a national resource to convene leaders, generate ideas, and lead change. Online at <https://law.utexas.edu/cwil>