

December 2, 2010, Rev. 17: Final

ABA SEER Sustainability Framework for Law Organizations

(Note: This framework has been approved by the Council of the ABA Section of Environment, Energy and Resources (SEER) and is supported by the ABA Standing Committee on Environment Law, the Law Practice Management Section and other ABA groups.)

B. Model Sustainability Policy

Vision: It is in the best interests of our law organization and society as a whole that our organization move along the path to sustainability, that is, the so-called Triple Bottom Line of social, economic and environmental responsibility. To that end, we will strive to achieve the following vision of performance, publicly communicate this commitment, and periodically report our progress and challenges in fulfilling it. To identify practices and programs to help implement this policy, we will give due consideration to the relevant policies, programs and other tools of the ABA and state and local law and governmental organizations, and will publicly cite in our policy below or elsewhere those major initiatives we embrace.

1. Economic success: the wise use of financial resources

- a. Organization's Economic Prosperity. Our organization will be positioned to survive and prosper economically.
- b. Community's Economic Prosperity. We will help our community survive and prosper economically through the taxes, salaries, and suppliers we pay, and through our civic and philanthropic efforts.

2. Social responsibility: respect for people

- a. Respect for Employees. We will treat those within each level of our workforce in a respectful way, especially with regard to compensation and benefits; promotion; training; open, constructive dialogue with management; working conditions that are safe and healthy; employment-termination practices; and encouraging wellness and appropriate work-life balance.
- b. Diversity, Fair Hiring Practices. We will promote diversity and use hiring practices for our employees, management board, and suppliers that are fair and responsible and do not discriminate on the basis of factors such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, ethnicity or race, that are unrelated to the requirements of the job,
- c. Responsible Governance; Professional Courtesy. We will manage our risks properly, use our economic power responsibly, and operate our organization in a way that is ethical and legal. We will treat with due respect others who are involved with us in the discussion of legal issues and resolution of legal claims.
- d. Dealing With Clients. We will embrace our primary legal and ethical duty to serve our clients honestly and effectively. We will compete fairly for their business, respect their privacy and confidentiality, and provide them efficient and effective services under the conditions we promise.
- e. Awareness and Advice. We will help raise the awareness of our employees about sustainability issues in the primary fields of our legal practice, and include consideration of such issues in the advice we provide our clients.
- f. Well-being of Stakeholders. We will work collaboratively with stakeholders in our community to enhance the well-being of others through pro bono legal services, other voluntary efforts, philanthropy, and/or other ways.

3. Environmental responsibility: respect for life; the wise management and use of natural resources

- a. Resource and Energy Conservation. We will conserve our use of natural resources and energy to the extent practicable.
- b. Waste and Pollution Prevention and Management. We will reduce to the extent practicable the quantity and degree of hazard of the wastes we generate from our operations, and handle them in a safe, legal, and responsible way to minimize their environmental effects. We will also reduce to the extent practicable the direct and indirect emissions of greenhouse gases and other harmful air pollutants from our operations and travel.
- c. Reduction of Supply Chain Impacts. We will work with others in our supply chain to the extent practicable to help reduce adverse environmental impacts and risks associated with our operations and optimize environmental benefits.

