

Law360 Diversity Snapshot: How Does Your Firm Measure Up?

By **Jacqueline Bell**

Law360 (August 30, 2020, 9:02 PM EDT) --The legal industry has long struggled to change a difficult reality: the profession remains one of the least diverse.

While there has been incremental progress, Law360's 2020 Diversity Snapshot shows that the ranks of U.S. law firms lack significant diversity, particularly at the top.

Less than 10% of equity partners identify as a racial or ethnic minority. Few law firm leaders are attorneys of color.

Initiatives and efforts to remake that reality have taken on a new urgency amid a global pandemic, the economic downturn and renewed calls for racial justice. Law firms are under pressure to revamp internal processes, fund new initiatives, examine hiring practices, create new programs and ensure that attorneys of color have equal access to opportunities.

The legal industry faces two direct questions: Where are we now, and where do we want to be?

The Diversity Snapshot — a picture of the legal industry captured before the pandemic scrambled the present and clouded the future — attempts to shed some light on some of those questions.

When it comes to diversity, no law firms have discovered the answers. Any review of law firm data must first acknowledge that law firms as a whole fundamentally struggle with **diversity and inclusion**, and are at the beginning of a journey to correct longstanding problems, not the middle or end.

Here, we looked at how law firms compare with firms of a similar size on two straightforward measures: the percentage of attorneys of color at the firm and the percentage of equity partners of color.

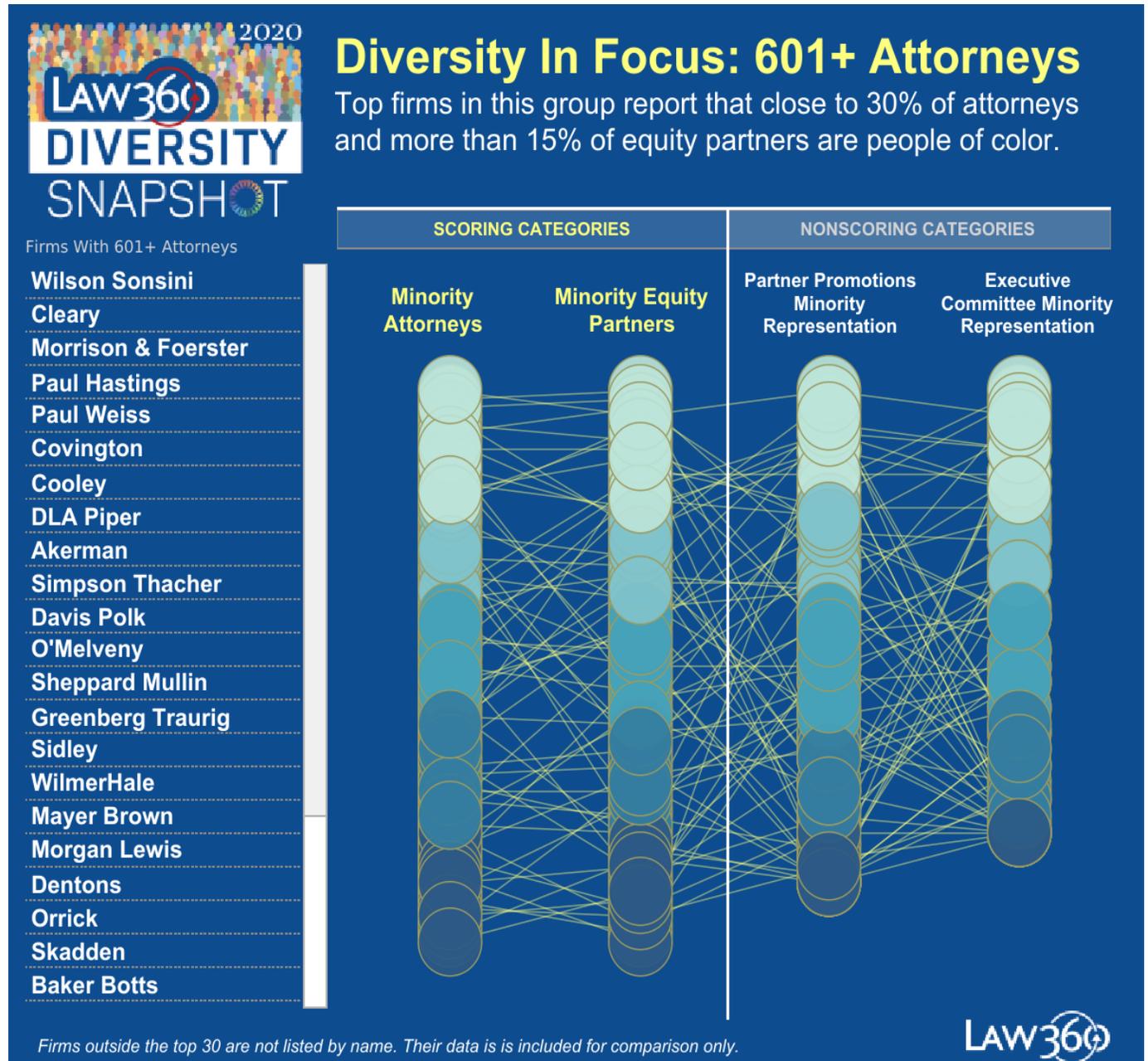
For the firms that rise to the top on those two measures, we also provide a more detailed look at two other measures: the diversity of the firm's executive committee or similar management committee, and the percentage of recently promoted partners who are attorneys of color.

We see this review as the beginning of a conversation that we hope will expand as we develop new ways of examining diversity in the profession, and evaluate the data that is the most relevant to answering difficult questions. As we continue to collect and analyze data, we welcome your comments.

Firms With 601 Attorneys or More

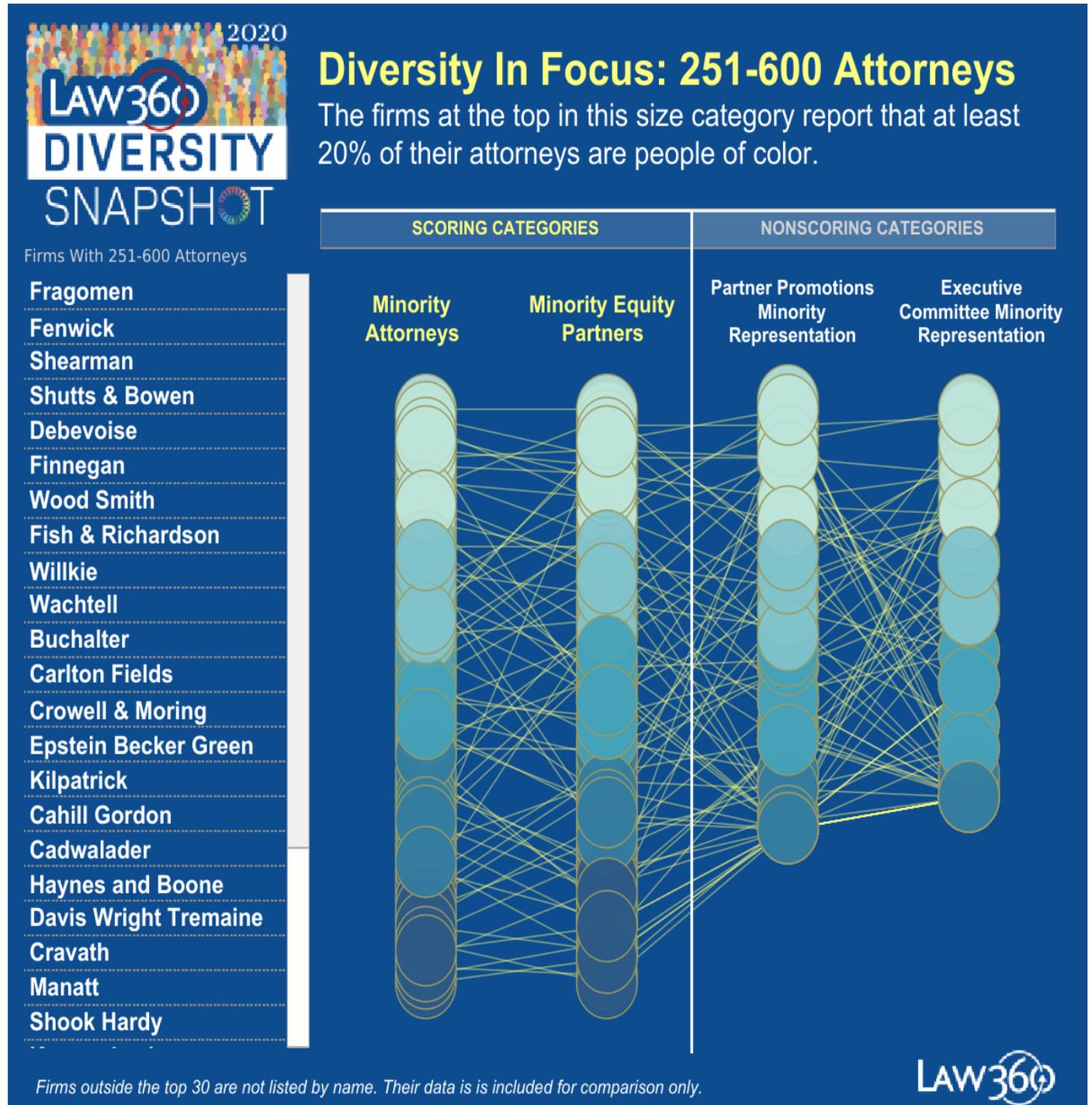
For the largest firms that submitted data on their diversity efforts, the percentage of attorneys of color can range from 30% to less than 10%. Half of these law firms have attorney ranks that are between 15% and 22% attorneys of color.

The firms at the top report that their attorney ranks are above 20% and their equity partner ranks are about 15% attorneys of color.



Firms With 251 - 600 Attorneys

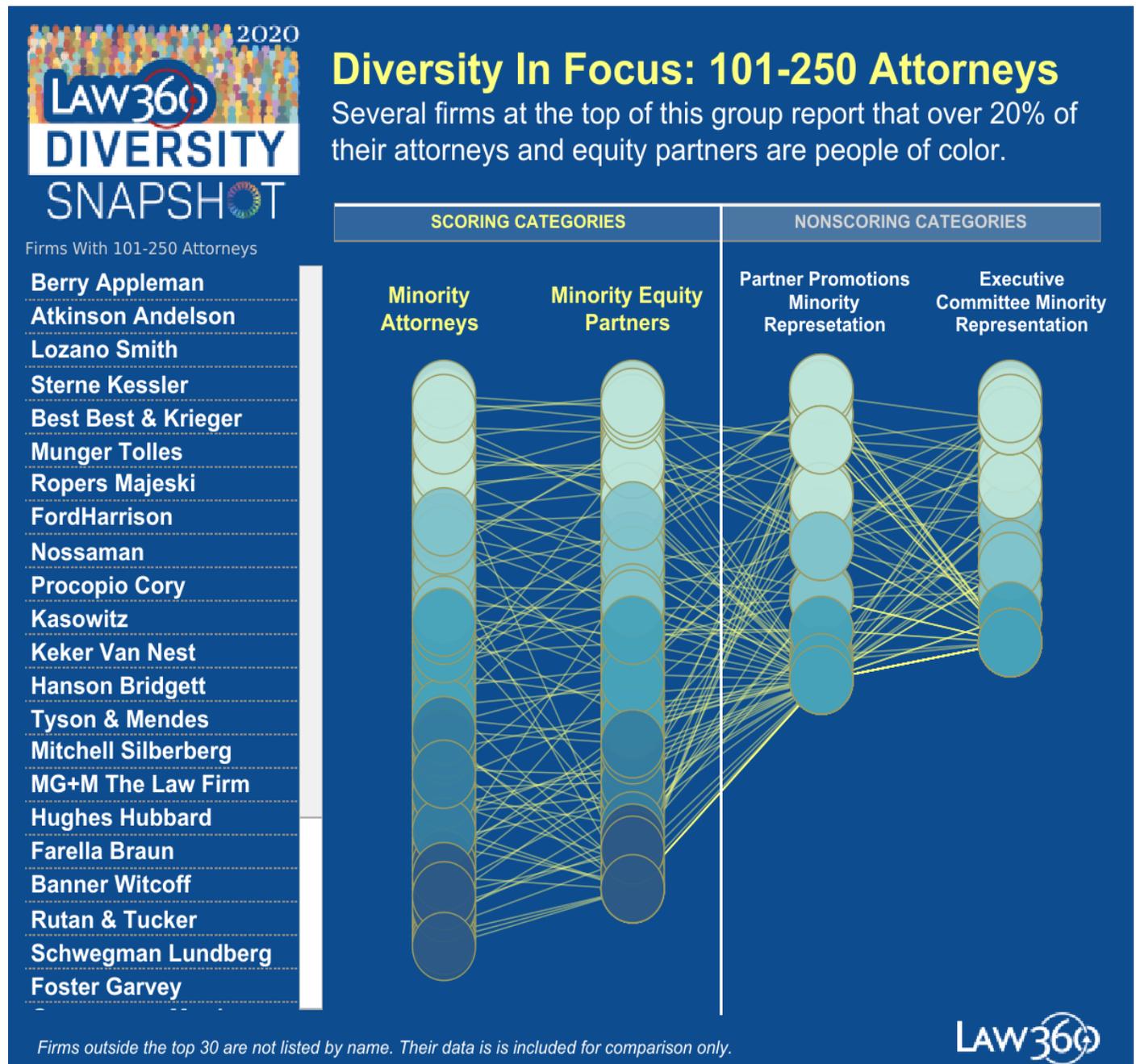
For these firms that submitted data on their diversity efforts, the percentage of attorneys of color ranges from more than 35% to less than 5%. Many of these law firms have attorney ranks that are between 10% and 20% attorneys of color.



Firms With 101 - 250 Attorneys

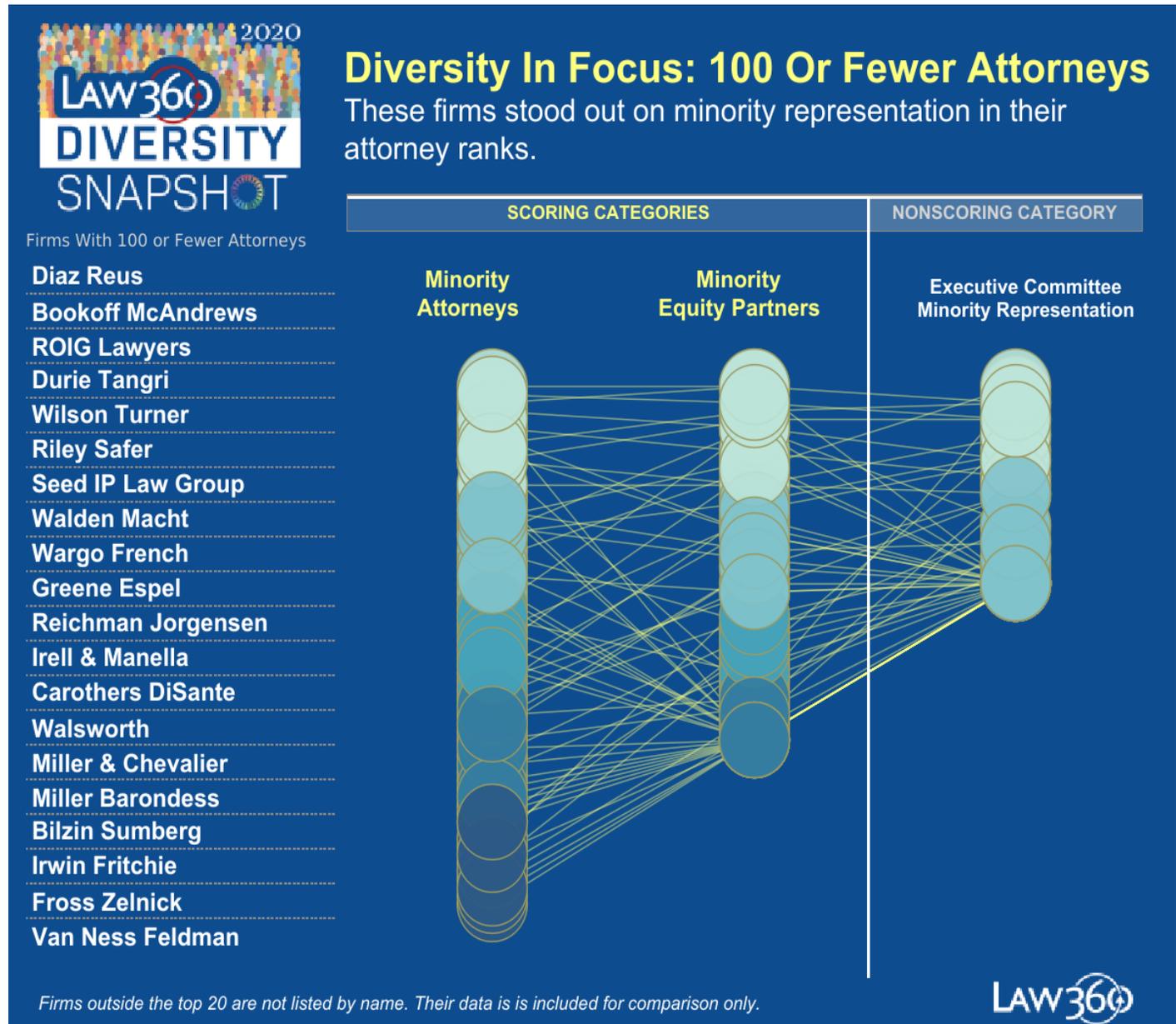
For the firms in this group that submitted data on their diversity efforts, the percentage of attorneys of color ranges from nearly 45% to less than 5%.

Several firms at the top of this echelon report that more than 25% of equity partners are people of color.



Firms With 100 Attorneys or Fewer

Among the smaller firms who submitted details on their attorney ranks, we looked for those that stood out for the representation of minorities in their attorney and equity partner ranks. Here are the 20 firms that rose to the top in both measures.



Methodology:

Law360 reviewed data from more than 300 firms to develop the ranking. In order to be included in the review, law firms had to at least provide demographic data on their overall attorney headcount. Firms had to have at least 20 attorneys in order to be reviewed.

In order to compare organizations of similar size, we divided law firms into categories by the number of total attorneys reported: 601+ attorneys, 251-600 attorneys, 101-250 attorneys, and 100 or fewer attorneys. For the first three size categories, we spotlight the 30 firms with top scores. For firms with 100 or fewer attorneys, we selected the 20 top-ranked firms from among those smaller firms that submitted data.

In order to determine a firm's total score, we ranked law firms on their proportion of minority attorneys and their proportion of minority equity partners. Firms were awarded a proportion of the 50 points available in each category based on their rank in that category. Both measures are weighted equally. Possible scores range from 0-100.

Most, but not all firms provided data on the additional measures, and not all firms had relevant data to share. Some firms do not have executive committees, for example. Firms that are marked "no data provided" could not provide data for those measures. The partner promotion measure includes firm responses to our survey query on the total number of attorneys promoted to partner, equity and nonequity.

A few firms have merged since data on their 2019 numbers were provided, including Faegre Baker and Drinker Biddle. Since this data is reflective of numbers as of Dec. 31, 2019, they are listed under their previous names.