EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS AT THE USPTO
There are 30 officially recognized employee organizations at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). These groups, known as Voluntary Employee Organizations (VEOs)—including 20 Affinity Groups and organizations in the Denver, San Jose and Dallas Regional Offices—champion the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) by creating opportunities for information sharing, learning, cultural and intellectual exchange, and open dialogue. These Agency-recognized, employee-led, voluntary peer organizations are open to all employees and are formed around a shared interest or common goal. They each provide a unique opportunity for employees to engage with one another and with leaders throughout the USPTO.

VEOs work closely with the USPTO’s Diversity Program Office, a part of the Agency’s Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity, to co-sponsor special observance month flagship and collateral events, luncheons, happy hours, networking socials, concerts, health & fitness activities, trainings, coffee breaks, business meetings, Community Day, and more. They also aid the Diversity Program Office in advising senior leadership on matters impacting the diversity of the agency’s workforce, including outreach, recruitment, retention, and career development and advancement, thereby contributing to the overall success of USPTO’s mission.

Many other informal (i.e., not chartered or have bylaws) employee-led groups also host year-round activities and events.
Affinity Groups

American Muslim and Arabic Cultural Association (AMACA)
The American Muslim and Arabic Cultural Association (AMACA) is one of the oldest and largest Affinity Groups at the USPTO, and is committed to promoting a positive image of Muslim and Arab Americans in the Agency. AMACA regularly hosts Bring Your Own Mug events, trainings and picnics, and organizes mock interviews and mentoring opportunities. AMACA is best known for hosting Iftar, an evening meal when Muslims break their daily fast during the month of Ramadan, and Eid al-Fitr, a celebration marking the end of Ramadan.

American Romanian Intellectual Property Association (ARIPA)
The American Romanian Intellectual Property Association (ARIPA) first participated in Community Day in 2018 and officially became a USPTO Affinity Group in January 2019. Since then, members of ARIPA have hosted several annual events, such as a Romanian Wine Tasting for Ziua Recoltei, or Harvest Day in the fall, and Mărțișor in the spring. ARIPA provides fellowship for members and USPTO employees who are interested in learning about Romanian culture and traditions. ARIPA seeks to highlight the important contributions made by American Romanians to the USPTO workforce, the field of Intellectual Property and the nation.

Asian Pacific American Network (APANET)
The Asian Pacific American Network (APANET) is the largest Affinity Group at USPTO with more than 850 members. APANET hosts the popular Lunar New Year dinner celebration, the Diwali event to commemorate the Hindu festival of lights, and sponsors the Piranhas, an award-winning team at the annual DC Dragon Boat Festival.

Bangladeshi-American Intellectual Property Organization (BAIPO)
The Bangladeshi-American Intellectual Property Organization (BAIPO) has been a USPTO Affinity Group since April 2014. BAIPO partners with the USPTO Diversity Program and other Affinity Groups to educate employees about the rich cultural heritage of Americans of Bangladeshi origin and highlight the contribution of Bangladeshi-Americans in the intellectual property arena. BAIPO also provides professional development and leadership training for its members, mentors new hires, and participates in community service and outreach programs.

Blacks in Government (BIG)
Established in 1982, the USPTO Chapter of Blacks in Government (BIG) continues to support the Agency’s diversity programs and leads the efforts in planning Black History Month events. BIG is also active in outreach with its Future Leaders in Government (FLAG) program and a national student public speaking competition.
Caribbean Intellectual Property Association (CIPA)

The Caribbean Intellectual Property Association (CIPA) focuses on the current and future impact of intellectual property on the Caribbean community and showcases the unique cultural aspects of the region. CIPA celebrates Caribbean American Heritage Month each June with many exciting events and promotes the contributions of employees and inventors of Caribbean descent.

Federally Employed Women – Bright Knights Chapter (FEW)

The USPTO Bright Knights Chapter of Federally Employed Women (FEW) strives to end sex discrimination and promotes the advancement of women in federal service, and at the USPTO in particular. Among its many activities, FEW develops and provides training programs to enable women to increase their skills and enhance their potential for career advancement; develops and provides training programs that address the special needs and challenges women face in the federal government; and educates the general public and policy makers about issues of concern to women, with an emphasis on those of concern to women government employees.

HBCUnity

HBCUnity’s mission is to promote and celebrate the achievements and legacy of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). HBCUnity seeks to support the USPTO’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) goals by assisting the Agency with outreach to and recruitment of HBCU graduates. HBCUnity maintains an employee network that provides support, career development and personal development to graduates of HBCUs who are employees of the USPTO. HBCUnity works to educate USPTO employees about the contributions of HBCUs, especially in the areas of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM).

Hellenic American Intellectual Property Association (HAIPA)

Established in 2021, the Hellenic American Intellectual Property Association (HAIPA) provides fellowship, mentorship, and support for their members and USPTO employees interested in Greek culture and traditions. In addition, HAIPA seeks to help educate others on the important contributions made by Greek-Americans to the workforce, the field of Intellectual Property, and the nation. Membership is open to all USPTO employees, and an association with Greece or Greek culture or heritage is not required. In June 2021, the organization hosted a virtual coffee break during which attendees experienced a trip around Greece through photos and stories from HAIPA members.

Intellectual Property Society of Iranian Americans (IPSIA)

The Intellectual Property Society of Iranian Americans (IPSIA) works to celebrate and share its rich Persian cultural heritage with the USPTO community. IPSIA is best known for hosting its annual Norouz Ball, a celebration of the Iranian New Year, and hosts events to celebrate both Yalda, the longest night of the year, and Mehregan, the Persian Festival of Autumn.
Korean-American Intellectual Property Organization (KAIPO)
The Korean-American Intellectual Property Organization (KAIPO) was established in 2020. The organization aims to promote and support the growth and development of Korean-American intellectual property professionals as well as the diverse cultural and social heritage of the Korean-American community.

Lambda USPTO
Lambda USPTO strives to further education and awareness of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) employee issues and encourage, promote and foster a positive work environment for all USPTO employees, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. Lambda sponsors a variety of educational and social events throughout the year, and works collaboratively with Commerce Pride as well as other Department of Commerce bureau LGBTQ+ employee organizations.

National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) – USPTO Chapter
The National Society of Black Engineers USPTO Chapter (NSBE) is dedicated to increasing the number of culturally responsible engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community. NSBE promotes professional success by hosting brown bag sessions on topics such as “Thriving in Your First Year” and “Legal Competency Exam Prep,” as well as fun social events such as a bowling scramble and potluck lunches.

Network of Executive Women (NEW)
The Network of Executive Women (NEW) supports the growth, development and enhancement of current and future executive women at the USPTO. NEW provides professional dialogue opportunities and collaborative events as well as networking and social gatherings to build collegiality and support among women leaders across the agency.

ResponsAbility: USPTO Disability Advocates
ResponsAbility: USPTO Disability Advocates is dedicated to matters related to individuals with disabilities. Each year, ResponsAbility hosts informative sessions on topics ranging from transportation for the disabled, special needs adoption and mental health issues to reasonable accommodation requests and more. Moreover, in 2019, ResponsAbility, in collaboration with the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity (OEEOD), sponsored the Agency’s first-ever Reasonable Accommodation Technology Fair, to showcase available assistive technologies.
Society of Ethiopian American Engineers and Scientists (SEAES)
The Society of Ethiopian American Engineers and Scientists (SEAES) celebrates the rich culture of Ethiopian Americans in the USPTO community. SEAES has worked to increase the number of Ethiopian American patent examiners by 20 percent since 2010, and hosts educational and social events year-round for its members.

Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) – USPTO Chapter
The USPTO Chapter of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), is all about family, and not just for Hispanics or engineers. Every October, SHPE cosponsors the Hispanic Heritage Month flagship event, and throughout the year hosts fun and culturally focused events, such as welcome dinners, a Three Kings luncheon in early January, and congratulatory happy hours for new supervisory patent examiners (SPEs). SHPE is also committed to outreach activities that inspire and encourage local students to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, such as the annual Noche de Ciencias/Night of Science, ReSET (Raising Excitement for Science, Engineering and Technology), and the Building Better Futures program.

USPTO Military Association (UMA)
The USPTO Military Association (UMA) assists veterans, reservists and military family members at the USPTO. UMA hosts many events to recognize veterans and reservist, such as the annual Memorial Day Walk of Thankful Recognition. The organization also supports military families through student scholarships, holiday donation drives, charity fundraisers, and care packages to deployed service members.

Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE)
Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) is committed to supporting women who work in all roles at the USPTO. WiSE offers diverse programming to connect, recognize, and celebrate women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers; help educate and mentor the next generation of women and girls in STEM fields; and build coalitions and opportunities among diverse individuals and organizations that support women and innovation expansion.

Women in Technology and Science at the Rocky Mountain Regional Office of the USPTO (WiTS)
The Women in Technology and Science at the Rocky Mountain Regional Office of the USPTO, or WiTS, is the first and only Regional Office-based Affinity Group. WiTS promotes careers in intellectual property (IP) and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to local students; provides members with self-enrichment opportunities through seminars and tours; and organizes social activities.
Other Officially Recognized VEOs

**Club for Open Data Enthusiasts (C.O.D.E.)**
The Club for Open Data Enthusiasts (C.O.D.E.) is a place for USPTO employees to innovate and enrich themselves through the power of open data. With open data, the world is open to everyone to realize the clearest “vision of diversity.” From predicting the weather, to discovering insights into how complicated processes such as patent examining operate, now more than ever, there are abundant resources of open, free, available data for anyone to examine to discover new aspects about our world. C.O.D.E’s mission is to help educate and bring awareness to open data and data analysis tools.

**For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, Alumni, Mentors, and Enthusiasts at U.S. Patent & Trademark Office (F.A.M.E.)**
F.A.M.E. was organized by a group of FIRST alumni working within the USPTO with similar interests. The group formed a charter to: encourage and promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in an interactive environment for USPTO employees and families; create volunteering and networking opportunities for members; and aide the USPTO’s recruiting efforts. F.A.M.E. has promoted many FIRST related events in and around the Alexandria, Va., campus, including virtual events like coding for kids.

**Patenteers USPTO Chorus**
The USPTO Patenteers Chorus promotes musical expression and development across the Agency, particularly in a group setting. The group meets weekly for rehearsals and provides performances for employees and members of the general public several times a year, including at official USPTO events, such as the Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies, technology center (TC) holiday parties, Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) fundraising events, Community Day, and more. Patenteers members are provided with opportunities to explore and develop their musical interests—from singing, coaching and technique, to providing musical accompaniment and conducting—in a friendly setting with encouragement and support.

**Patent and Trademark Office Society (PTOS)**
The Patent and Trademark Office Society (PTOS) is for patent and trademark professionals and other interested individuals. Founded in 1917, the Society is today internationally recognized for its activities in the patent and trademark fields. From its inception, the Society has actively influenced the patent and trademark systems, promoting the systems’ growth and well-being, recalling our rich heritage and promoting the social and intellectual welfare of our members. Membership Benefits include: a subscription to the *Journal of the Patent & Trademark Office Society* (JPTOS), social events, athletic activities, membership discounts, members-only events, outreach opportunities, educational lectures, and volunteer opportunities.
USPTO Hiking Club
The USPTO Hiking Club was formed to: promote good health among members and participants; promote good working relationships among members and participants; and enhance members’ awareness and appreciation of nature and the environment, and of the need to conserve open spaces.

Rocky Mountain Work-Life Organization (RMWLO)
The Rocky Mountain Work-Life Organization is based in the Rocky Mountain Regional Office of the USPTO. RMWLO organizes various activities to engage examiners and other employees affiliated with the Rocky Mountain Regional Office that promote a work-life balance.

Supervisory Patent Examiners and Classifiers Organization (SPECO)
SPECO is a nonprofit organization established more than 50 years ago. It is composed of approximately 400 USPTO supervisors, managers and professionals, and it promotes the progress of its members and the patent examination system. SPECO hosts a variety of social events and seminars for its members and invited guests.

Silicon Valley Work-Life Organization (SVWL)
The Silicon Valley Work Life Organization (SVWL) arranges events to support USPTO employees and examiners affiliated with the Silicon Valley Regional Office. SVWL has organized a variety of social events and programs, such as managing a snack and beverage station in the office and organizing coffee breaks, trips, game events and discussions for examiners.

Texas Regional Office (TXRO) Work-Life Organization
The Texas Regional Office Work Life Organization creates a balanced work-life environment for employees and encourages them to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities and events while also supporting professional development. The organization hosts events (e.g., lunches, happy hours, trivia nights, picnics, holiday parties, etc.); provides amenities (snack bar/group discounts); coordinates across the Texas Regional Office for outreach and professional development opportunities; empowers employees to interact, relax, and share perspectives; and provides professional and personal balance to the lives of Texas Regional Office employees.

USPTO Toastmasters
Toastmasters is a nonprofit organization whose members practice communication and leadership skills. Toastmasters learn by giving prepared or extemporaneous speeches and evaluating others. There are no instructors; members review each other’s presentations and offer feedback, making learning fresh and fun. The USPTO Toastmasters is a President’s Distinguished Club, having members who use goal setting, time management, and benchmarking to reach individual and club goals. USPTO members also have the opportunity to participate in area, division, district, and international events. Moreover, each year, the organization holds the World Championship of Public Speaking contest for worldwide acclaim.
Informal Employee Organizations

Bible Reading and Discussion Group
Minyan Services
Patents PMers Running Group
PTO Badminton Club
PTO Bowling League
PTO Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Club
PTO Chess Club
PTO Triathlon Club
Rocky Mountain Region Outdoor Club
San Jose Regional Office Outdoor Recreation Club
USPTO Tennis Team
USPTO Work Life Running Club

Contact the USPTO Diversity Program Office at Diversity@USPTO.gov for more information about any of the groups listed in this brochure, or to have a group added to this document.