



History of the Mentor Program

Are you interested in becoming a mentor?

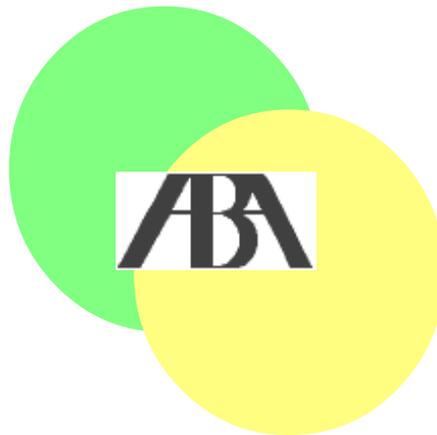
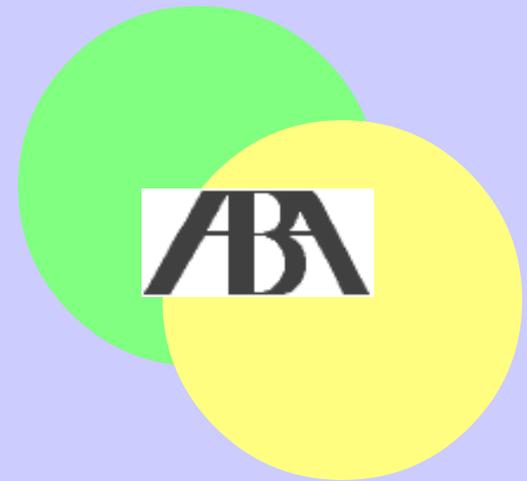
Commission on Mental and Physical Disabilities

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MENTOR PROGRAM



If you are interested in receiving more information about the Mentor Program, please contact Jamie Hochman Herz, Special Projects Coordinator, herzj@staff.abanet.org, call (312) 988-5682 or write American Bar Association, 321 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60610. Visit our website at www.abanet.org/disability for more information.

Mentoring program is a great experience—nice to have a source of support and to have someone that you can go to for advice on all aspects of your legal career whether it's the type of classes you should take, or advice regarding a summer associate position. It's definitely a valuable program! Thanks to the ABA for establishing it! -Melissa K.



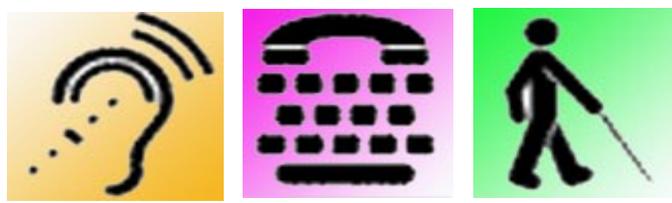
The mentor program was established in 2000. It began with just handful of ABA accredited law schools in Washington, DC, but has expanded to include over 20 law schools across the country. However, you do not need to be affiliated with any of these law schools because any law student with a disability or lawyer may participate through the internet. The mentor program consists of students with disabilities who are enrolled in law school and attorney mentors who practice in a variety of settings. Many of the mentors also have disabilities, and are paired with students who have similar disabilities, although this is not a requirement for mentor participation. You can find more information about the mentor program on our website at www.abanet.org/disability.



How does the Program Work?

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Jamie Hochman Herz, our Special Projects Coordinator, at herzj@abanet.org. She will send you a brief questionnaire by email. Once you have completed and returned the questionnaire, she will match you with a law student. Each student is also required to complete a questionnaire, which provides us with his or her basic information and some insights about his or her particular type/(s) of disability/(ies). The questionnaire also gives us a sense of the type of relationship the law student is looking for. Once we receive the questionnaire back from the student, we do the matching, and leave it up to you to determine whether you would like to initiate contact, or whether you would like the law student to do so. Our office has no further involvement in the relationship other than to periodically survey the mentors/mentees to ask how the relationship is going.

If you have any additional questions about the program, please do not hesitate to contact Jamie Hochman Herz at herzj@staff.abanet.org. We look forward to your participation in the program and appreciate your interest in providing such a wonderful resource to law students with disabilities.



What are My Responsibilities as a Mentor?

There are no requirements for being a mentor. You and your mentee can work together to develop the relationship that is right for you. In order to be an effective mentor, however, here are some general tips:

- Students are often seeking academic and career advice, information about bar associations, and information about accommodations in the workplace.
- Although being a mentor is not a large time commitment, it is important to be available to the student and interested in his or her professional development and to contact the student on a regular basis.
- Many mentors are not in the same geographic location as their mentees - so it is important to facilitate communication as much as possible by reaching out to the students by phone or email.
- Mentors often act as role models for mentees
- Mentees may look to you for networking/job opportunities

These tips are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they are suggestions for creating and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship.



What do Current Mentees Have to Say about the Program?

The ABA Mentorship program has been an amazing experience. In my case, I was matched with the “perfect” mentor. We both share the same disability, MS. And we were both diagnosed during a critical time in our studies.

My mentor has been a priceless help and encouragement for me during my time of the LSAT and applying to various universities. Also, as I am faced with a serious family illness, she has been a tremendous help in deciding where to study law, and the whole transferring process.

In short, my mentor has become much more than a “mentor”. In the brief time we have known each other we have become great friends, and I am confident that we will remain friends over the years. We often joke about how close we have gotten, and ask ourselves “who’s really the mentor”! Knowing that I am able to give my advice and support to “my” mentor, who in my eyes has accomplished so much, has been a great motivator in this whole process and in life in general.
-Verena C.



It is very comforting to speak with an attorney who can understand my situation and provide advice based on REAL experience. -Sue S.