

HISTORY OF THE COMMISSION & THE MENTOR PROGRAM



The ABA's Commission on the Mentally Disabled was established in 1973 to respond to the advocacy needs of persons with mental disabilities. After the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the ABA broadened the Commission's mission to serve all persons with disabilities and changed its name to the Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law (CMPDL). Today, the CMPDL carries out an array of projects and activities addressing disability-related public policy, disability law, and the professional needs of lawyers and law students with disabilities.

The Mentor Program was created in 2000. It began with just handful of ABA accredited law schools in Washington, DC, but has expanded to include numerous law schools across the nation. Since its inception, the Program has grown to accommodate hundreds of mentors and mentees.



740 15th Street, N.W., 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202-662-1570

Fax: 202-442-3439

E-mail: cmpdl@americanbar.org
<http://www.abanet.org/disability>



AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

**Commission on
Mental and Physical
Disability Law**



**NATIONAL
MENTOR
PROGRAM FOR
LAWYERS AND
LAW STUDENTS
WITH
DISABILITIES**

~ ABOUT THE CMPDL MENTOR PROGRAM ~

The Mentor Program is guided by the Commission's Committee on Lawyers with Disabilities. This national program is intended for:

- law students with disabilities
- prospective law students with disabilities, and
- recent law school graduates with disabilities

The Program's purpose is to give mentees the opportunity to learn from an experienced attorney on various disability-related and legal issues. The Program is run on a volunteer basis and both mentors and mentees may join and leave at their leisure.

Support from staff is available to help participants with their relationships.



MENTOR INFORMATION

Mentors are expected to aid their mentees on topics such as seeking accommodations, finding summer employment or internships, learning about different areas of the law, getting involved with the ABA and other

bar associations, studying for the bar exam, and making contacts in the legal profession.

You **do not need to have a disability** in order to be a mentor. Experience in working with those with disabilities is strongly preferred in lieu of having a disability. Above all, a willingness to donate your time is needed.

MENTEE INFORMATION

The Program is open to all students with disabilities who are considering law school, currently attending law school, or have recently graduated from law

school.

If you qualify as a mentee, you will be asked to provide information regarding your disability and what you desire in a mentor. Based off of this information, CMPDL staff will attempt to find the best suited mentor for your needs.

Many of our mentees return to the Program later as mentors.

What's being said about the Mentor Program:

"Great program. My mentor is a great person, [and] from the first day he has inspired me in so many ways. The Mentor Program is so important because so many of us with disabilities have insecurities, [and] talking to someone who has experienced some of our disabilities and has risen through them is inspiring, rewarding, and incredibly valuable. Thank you!"

- Anonymous Mentee

"I have been very happy spending time with my mentee. He is smart and active in the disability rights community. I think that we both learn from each other. I would recommend participating in this program to my colleagues."

-Anonymous Mentor

For additional information or to join the Mentor Program, please visit:

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/mental_physical_disability/resources.html

For questions about the program please contact:

William J. Phelan, IV, Esq. • Special Projects & Technology Coordinator

Phone: 202-662-1576 • william.phelan@americanbar.org