

Allegheny County Bar Association Committee on Law and Disability

The Allegheny County Bar Association (ACBA) Committee on Law and Disability is committed to providing disability-related education, advocacy and professional services to members of the legal profession, consumers of legal services and the general public; promoting and supporting accessibility and fair and equal treatment of persons with disabilities; and furthering the inclusion and professional development of disabled attorneys and law students by creating programs and resources to support their professional needs.

Members of the Committee on Law and Disability have knowledge in many areas of the law, including, but not limited to:

- Accessibility and public accommodations
- Disability discrimination
- Disability policy issues
- Employment discrimination
- Housing and transportation
- Criminal justice
- Private disability benefits
- Public services and programs
- Social security disability and Medicaid benefits
- Special education
- Special needs planning and trusts
- Veterans benefits

Mentoring opportunities are also available for law students who may be interested in being mentored by members of the committee. Any law students seeking mentoring opportunities with committee members are invited to contact committee member and Duquense Law alumna Ramona Arena Baker at ramonaarenabaker@gmail.com.

The Committee on Law and Disability meets on the first Monday of the month from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. at the ACBA headquarters, James I. Smith, III Boardroom, Koppers Building, 4th Floor, 436 Seventh Ave. in downtown Pittsburgh. A call-in number is also available. Law student members are welcome. For more information or to join the committee, contact staff@acba.org.

Allegheny County Bar Association

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RESOURCES FOR LAW STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



Disability Defined

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12102, the term **"disability"** means, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of a person; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment. A person is regarded as having such an impairment if he/she establishes that he/she has been subjected to a prohibited action because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity.

Major life activities include, but are not limited to:

- walking, standing, lifting and bending
- seeing, hearing, speaking, and communicating
- learning, reading, concentrating, and thinking
- caring for oneself and performing manual tasks
- eating, sleeping, and breathing
- working

Major bodily functions include, but are not limited to:

- functions of the immune system
- normal cell growth
- digestive, bowel, and bladder functions
- neurological and brain functions
- respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions

An impairment that is episodic or in remission is still a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active and the determination of whether an impairment is disabling is made without regard to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures such as medication or equipment. The ADA definition of disability will be construed in favor of broad coverage, to the maximum extent permitted by the terms of the law.

Duquesne University School of Law

The university provides all students at Duquesne with information regarding accommodations. More information is available online at www.duq.edu/life-at-duquesne/student-services/disability-services, including information relating to academic accommodations, campus accessibility, service animals and testing procedures. As the review and development of accommodations may take several weeks, students are strongly encouraged to initiate the application process well before classes begin.

The Office of Disability Services is responsible for verifying the eligibility of students requesting accommodation on the basis of disability. A student who plans to request accommodations must first disclose his or her disability to the Office of Disability Services by submitting a report that documents his or her needs. For general information about the Office of Disability Services go to: www.duq.edu/life-at-duquesne/student-services/disability-services. For information about the documentation needed to request an accommodation go to: www.duq.edu/life-at-duquesne/student-services/disability-services/documentation-guidelines. All documentation is confidential and should be submitted to: Disability Services, Duquesne University, 309 Duquesne Union, Pittsburgh, PA 15282. Once a student's eligibility is established, the Office of Disability Services will formulate reasonable accommodations to ensure equality of access and opportunity.

Contacts:

Ella A. Kwisnek
Assistant Dean of Students and the Evening Division
412-396-1474 | kwisnek@duq.edu

Dean Kwisnek works closely with:
Duquesne University Office of Disability Services
Adam Wasilko
Director of Freshman Development and Disability Services
412-396-6657 | wasilko@duq.edu

Duquesne Law students may also contact ACBA Committee on Law and Disability member and Duquesne Law alumna Ramona Arena Baker at ramonaarenabaker@gmail.com with questions about the work of the committee.

Additional Law Student Resources

American Bar Association Commission on Disability Rights Resources

www.americanbar.org/groups/disabilityrights/resources.html

National Association of Law Students with Disabilities

www.nalswd.org

In particular, see the resource page: www.nalswd.org/resources.html

National Association of Blind Lawyers

www.blindlawyer.org

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bar Association

www.deafbar.org

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers

www.lclpa.org | 1-888-999-1941

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers provides a caring peer assistance program to save the lives and restore the health and professional competence of Pennsylvania's judges and lawyers, members of their families and law students who are at risk as a result of alcohol and drug use, gambling, depression or other serious mental illness. They carry out this mission through a combination of confidential helpline services, volunteer support and education.

Information Relating to Bar Exam Accommodations

Pennsylvania Bar Exam

Law school graduates with physical or mental impairments can receive nonstandard testing accommodations (NTA) on the bar exam if they meet certain criteria. In order to request NTA, applicants must complete multiple forms and submit extensive documentation of their disabilities. Therefore, applicants should begin the process of requesting NTA early in their last semester of law school to ensure they do not miss any deadlines. More information on the Pennsylvania Bar Exam NTA can be found here: www.pabarexam.org/bar_exam_information/nta.htm.

Other Bar Exams and Additional Information

For more bar information for applicants with disabilities, see www.americanbar.org/groups/disabilityrights/resources/biad.html.

