



## INTERNSHIP AND EXTERNSHIP RIGHTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDE

How to Navigate Your Legal  
Internship or Externship

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	2
Definitions .....	3
What Are My Rights? .....	4
Paid Interns .....	4
Unpaid interns.....	5
Clerks .....	6
Externs Receiving Credit Through Academic Institutions .....	6
How and When to Discuss Accommodations .....	9
What Kinds of Accommodations Should I Request? .....	10
Finding an Accommodating Placement.....	11
Conclusion .....	13

## INTRODUCTION

Interning or externing is a great way to gain practical experience before becoming an attorney. However, disabled interns and externs face additional barriers and concerns about discrimination in selecting and participating in an internship or externship. Many law students who begin internships or externships, particularly for the first time, are not aware of their rights in that workspace, how to access or request accommodations, or how to find an inclusive and accommodating placement. This National Disabled Law Students Association's guide is intended to assist disabled law students with obtaining these positions and understanding their rights.

The National Disabled Law Student Association ("NDLSA") is an organization run by law students and recent graduates to support the unique needs of disabled law students before, during, and after their legal education by creating community through advocacy, peer network facilitation, and disability diversity education. NDLSA aims to eliminate the stigma of disability within the legal profession and foster an environment where legal professionals are easily able to have their access needs met to achieve career success.

The NDLSA leadership is composed of current students, recent graduates, and attorneys with ample experience navigating internship, externship, and workplace accommodations, making NDLSA leaders a particularly trustworthy, passionate, and knowledgeable authority on these issues.

**While we can provide general guidance and training, *this guide is not intended to convey or constitute legal advice. This guide is not a substitute for obtaining legal advice from a qualified attorney or for applying legal rules to a particular set of facts or circumstances.***

While we make every effort to be as inclusive as possible, this guide **does not** include information about all possible employment circumstances and the rights that may be associated with them.

For any accessibility requests regarding this document, please contact [info@ndlsa.org](mailto:info@ndlsa.org).

## DEFINITIONS

**Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”)**—A federal civil rights law first passed in 1990 that protects the rights of people with disabilities with regard to employment, public entities, public accommodations, and telecommunications, among other areas. Title I covers employment. Title II covers public entities.

**Externship**—A position for which an individual receives academic credit; this position may be accompanied by an externship course

**Internship**—A paid or unpaid position for which an individual does not receive any academic credit; a student may submit hours completed for pro bono hours, depending upon a school's requirements

**Rehabilitation Act of 1973**—A federal law that prohibits disability discrimination by various entities, including those that receive federal funding, the federal government, federal government agencies, and federal government contractors. It also includes some affirmative action provisions.

## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

### PAID INTERNS

Paid interns for private employers with 15 or more employees may be protected under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which addresses employment.<sup>1</sup> Any paid employee of a state or local government may also be protected under Title II of the ADA, which addresses public entities.<sup>2</sup> As per Department of Justice regulations enforcing Title II, if the public entity has 15 or more employees and is otherwise subject to Title I, the requirements of Title I also apply.<sup>3</sup> However, if the employer has fewer than 15 employees, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (this law is described in more detail below) is applied.<sup>4</sup> Standards and protections under Section 504 and Title I are the same. For more information about Title II requirements, you can view the Department of Justice's [technical assistance](#). The Congressional Accountability Act applies workplace protection laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act to protect congressional employees.<sup>5</sup>

Any paid federal agency interns may be protected under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Protections for federal sector employees in Section 501 are equivalent to the protections under the ADA. Section 501 also requires targeted recruitment programs and the establishment of comprehensive reasonable accommodation procedures. However, no minimum number of employees at the worksite is required. Any paid intern of an employer that receives federal funds may be protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which further states that no qualified individual with a disability shall be discriminated against. These protections are also identical to the ADA and require no minimum number of employees to apply. Any paid intern of an employer under a contract or subcontract with the federal government in excess of a certain amount may be protected under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.<sup>6</sup>

These protections apply during the hiring process (including interviews); while one is employed; and in any adverse employment decisions, such as firing or demotion. Additionally, under these laws, supervisors and human resources staff can not reveal information about your disability

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about whether you may be protected under Title I, visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/your-employment-rights-individual-disability> and <https://askjan.org/publications/ada-specific/Technical-Assistance-Manual-for-Title-I-of-the-ADA.cfm>. Factors such as whether you are a qualified individual with a disability or may be regarded as having an impairment, for example, are important. Any accommodation requests must be reasonable.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about whether you may be protected under Title II, visit [https://www.ada.gov/ada\\_title\\_II.htm](https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_II.htm). You must be a qualified individual with a disability, among other factors.

<sup>3</sup> 28 C.F.R. § 35.140(b)(1).

<sup>4</sup> 28 C.F.R. § 35.140(b)(2).

<sup>5</sup> 24 U.S.C. § 1302(a)(3).

<sup>6</sup> You must also be a qualified individual with a disability to be protected under these sections. Any accommodation requests, like under Title I of the ADA, must also be reasonable.

and reasonable accommodation to your co-workers, except under extremely limited circumstances (for example, to a supervisor or manager who directly supervises you, if necessary to provide your accommodations). An employer would also not be permitted to retaliate against you for asking for reasonable accommodations or making a complaint about the violation of your rights. Retaliation for accessing your rights or filing a complaint about an act prohibited under the law is also not permitted.

State laws may provide additional protections and coverage, particularly where the ADA or federal law fails to provide protection. For example, the D.C. Human Rights Act covers all employers with one or more employees.<sup>7</sup> For more information about protections in your state, you can visit the [Workplace Fairness](#) or [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) websites.

## UNPAID INTERNS

As an unpaid intern (assuming it is proper that you are an unpaid intern in your position),<sup>8</sup> it is not likely that you are protected under federal anti-discrimination laws. The ADA and similar anti-discrimination laws define “employee” as an individual “employed by an employer.” In a majority of circuits, these laws have been interpreted to require, as a threshold, some form of remuneration, or compensation, to be considered an “employee” and for the laws and protections to apply.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, that means that, in those circuits, unless there is significant remuneration (which might also be provided in the form of direct benefits other than wages), unpaid interns are likely not protected by antidiscrimination laws such as the ADA or the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Other circuits look at more than one factor; they apply additional factors more consistent with the general questions typically asked when determining whether an employment relationship has been established. However, the outlook is still rather grim, and it is unclear whether protections would apply in practice based on any fact-specific inquiry.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, many organizations provide accommodations to interns, and many may have internal policies that require such accommodations to be provided. These organizations may still have an obligation to provide accommodations based on these internal policies. Additionally, not

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<sup>7</sup> D.C. Code § 2-1401.02(10).

<sup>8</sup> There are a number of tests that courts apply to figure out whether it is proper for an internship to be unpaid. *Glatt v. Fox Searchlight Pictures, Inc.* lays out some of these factors. 811 F.3d 528 (2d Cir. 2015) (describing that a court must determine who the primary beneficiary of the relationship was by exploring, among other possible considerations, the extent to which the intern and the employer understand that there is no expectation of compensation; the extent to which the internship provides training similar to an educational environment; the extent to which the internship is tied to the intern’s academic coursework; the extent to which the internship accommodates the intern’s academic commitments; whether the intern replaces the need for other staff, or simply supplements their work; and the extent to which there is an expectation of a paid job at the end of the internship).

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *O’Connor v. Davis*, 126 F.3d 112 (2d Cir. 1997).

<sup>10</sup> See *Bryson v. Middlefield Volunteer Fire Dep’t, Inc.*, 656 F.3d 348 (6th Cir. 2011) (holding that remuneration was only one factor, but remanding after evidence was provided that the firefighters received workers’ compensation and insurance coverage, gift cards, use of facilities, training, access to an emergency fund, and, in some instances, retirement or hourly wages).

providing accommodations to and discriminating against unpaid interns would, of course, be a terrible look for any non-profit, particularly one that aims to serve the public interest. Several jurisdictions have different or more protective laws that do protect unpaid interns from discrimination; however, this is the current state of federal anti-discrimination laws.

Unpaid interns may still wish to advocate for themselves, highlight the value of their work and perspective, and explain the benefits that providing accommodations brings to any given internship placement to an organization. However, unpaid interns should be aware of the potential gap in protections.

Schools can assist students by only recommending or sharing posts for positions at placements that will provide accommodations to, and not discriminate against, disabled applicants. Schools can also otherwise use their leverage and power in the legal community to ensure students are protected. Students can pressure schools to organize and use this leverage, as well.

Students may also wish to advocate for local and federal policies that may expand protections to unpaid interns and other unprotected workers.

Even if you are not a paid employee, basic requirements for a facility under Title III of the ADA for public accommodations, Title II of the ADA for a public entity, or other protections may also apply. That might include physical building or other requirements, for example.

## CLERKS

For rights as a federal, state, or local clerk, please stay tuned a separate resource that will describe your rights in greater detail. Although protections for state and local clerk protections are largely in line with the protections described in this guide, federal clerkships operate under a much different system.

## EXTERNS RECEIVING CREDIT THROUGH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Externs may be protected under Title III of the ADA, Title II of the ADA, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act through their institution. Which law applies and whether it applies depends upon a number of factors, including whether your institution is a public or private institution, whether your institution receives any federal funding (most universities do), and whether your institution is in a circuit that has decided Congress did not validly abrogate sovereign immunity in the context of higher education. The Eleventh Amendment bars claims against states unless “Congress has validly abrogated the immunity pursuant to section five of the Fourteenth Amendment; ... the state has clearly waived its immunity; or ... the plaintiff is suing state

officials for prospective relief for an ongoing federal constitutional or statutory violation.”<sup>11</sup> The circuits are currently split on the issue of whether Congress validly abrogated sovereign immunity.<sup>12</sup> This issue affects whether a public university may be subject to Title II of the ADA, although public universities are likely subject to Section 504 as well due to sources of funding. Any school that offers federal student loans to its students, for example, would be subject to Section 504.<sup>13</sup> Since externs are receiving credit for the placement through their institutions, their institutions may, arguably, be responsible for ensuring that they receive accommodations.

In particular, for any school that receives financial assistance from the Department of Education,<sup>14</sup> the Code of Federal Regulations includes specific provisions to effectuate Section 504.<sup>15</sup> These regulations state the following:

- (a) No qualified handicapped student shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any academic, research, occupational training, housing, health insurance,

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<sup>11</sup> *Doe v. Bd. of Trs. of the Univ. of Ill.*, 429 F. Supp. 2d 930, 937 (N.D. Ill. 2006) (citing *Sonneleitner v. York*, 304 F.3d 704, 717 (7th Cir. 2002)); *see U.S. CONST. amend. XI*.

<sup>12</sup> *Bowers v. NCAA*, 475 F.3d 524, 555-56 (3d Cir. 2007) (holding Congress exercised valid authority in abrogating state immunity in the educational context); *Toledo v. Sanchez*, 454 F.3d 24, 40 (1st Cir. 2006) (finding Congress validly abrogated state sovereign immunity); *Constantine v. Rectors & Visitors of George Mason Univ.*, 411 F.3d 474, 487-90 (4th Cir. 2005) (finding Congress validly waived sovereign immunity in the context of post-secondary education, given the history of discrimination and proportionality of remedial measures); *Ass'n for Disabled Ams., Inc. v. Fla. Int'l Univ.*, 405 F.3d 954, 959 (11th Cir. 2005) (finding Congress validly exercised its powers in the context of higher education); *Robinson v. Univ. of Akron Sch. of Law*, 307 F.3d 409, 411-13 (6th Cir. 2002) (finding no due process reasoning behind plaintiff's claim, thus dismissing the claim, since abrogation for equal protection claims under ADA Title II is not a valid exercise of Congressional power); *Doe v. Bd. of Trs. of the Univ. of Ill.*, 429 F. Supp. 2d 930, 939 (N.D. Ill. 2006) (holding the burdens Title II places on public universities is disproportionate, particularly given education is not a fundamental right); *Press v. State Univ. of N.Y.*, 388 F. Supp. 2d 127, 135 (E.D.N.Y. 2005) (holding that it was unwilling to “expand the scope of Title II and encroach on the state's immunity with respect to a non-fundamental right such as access to post-secondary education that is subject only to rational review”); *Johnson v. S. Conn. State Univ.*, No. 3:02-CV-2065, 2004 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 21084, at \*4 (D. Conn. Sept. 30, 2004) (dismissing a Title II lawsuit, finding the state was immune because education is not a fundamental right).

<sup>13</sup> *See* 34 C.F.R. § 104.3(f), (h); *Grove City Coll. v. Bell*, 465 U.S. 555, 571-72 (1984) (holding a college that allowed students to receive federal grants earmarked for educational expenses was a “recipient” of federal funds); *Moreno v. Consolidated Rail. Corp.*, 99 F.3d 782, 787 (6th Cir. 1996) (holding Conrail was subject to 504 as an indirect beneficiary of federal money, disbursed to it from the state of Michigan); *Dupre v. The Roman Catholic School of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodeaux*, 1999 WL 694081, at \*4 (E.D. La. Sept. 2, 1999) (holding receipt of federal funds through the school board, rather than direct payment by the United States, was sufficient to consider a school a recipient of federal funds for the purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

<sup>14</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.2, 104.41.

<sup>15</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 104.1.

counseling, financial aid, physical education, athletics, recreation, transportation, other extracurricular, or other postsecondary education program or activity to which this subpart applies.

(b) A recipient to which this subpart applies that considers participation by students in education programs or activities not operated wholly by the recipient as part of, or equivalent to, and [sic] education program or activity operated by the recipient shall assure itself that the other education program or activity, as a whole, provides an equal opportunity for the participation of qualified handicapped persons.

(c) A recipient to which this subpart applies may not, on the basis of handicap, exclude any qualified handicapped student from any course, course of study, or other part of its education program or activity.<sup>16</sup>

These regulations imply that schools that receive<sup>17</sup> federal financial assistance<sup>18</sup> from the Department of Education<sup>19</sup> must ensure externships are accessible and that students receive accommodations.<sup>20</sup> Externship programs are considered equivalent to an education program or activity operated by the school—students receive credits for these positions. Part (b) of the above subsection states that it is no matter that the program is not wholly operated by the school, so long as the school considers the program or activity equivalent to its own. If so, it must “assure itself that the other education program or activity, as a whole, provides an equal opportunity for the participation of qualified handicapped persons.”<sup>21</sup>

Additionally, the regulations state, “A recipient that assists any agency, organization, or person in providing employment opportunities to any of its students shall assure itself that such employment opportunities, as a whole, are made available in a manner that would not violate

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<sup>16</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 104.43(a) – (c).

<sup>17</sup> A “recipient” is defined as “any state or its political subdivision, any instrumentality of a state or its political subdivision, any public or private agency, institution, organization, or other entity, or any person to which Federal financial assistance is extended directly or through another recipient, including any successor, assignee, or transferee of a recipient, but excluding the ultimate beneficiary of the assistance.” 34 C.F.R. § 104.3(f).

<sup>18</sup> The definition of “federal financial assistance” is listed as the following:

[A]ny grant, loan, contract (other than a procurement contract or a contract of insurance or guaranty), or any other arrangement by which the Department provides or otherwise makes available assistance in the form of:

(1) Funds;  
(2) Services of Federal personnel; or  
(3) Real and personal property or any interest in or use of such property, including:  
(i) Transfers or leases of such property for less than fair market value or for reduced consideration; and  
(ii) Proceeds from a subsequent transfer or lease of such property if the Federal share of its fair market value is not returned to the Federal Government.

34 C.F.R. § 104.3(h).

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that unlike Section 504 itself, these regulations appear to apply only to those institutions that receive funding from the Department of Education—not institutions that receive *any* federal funding.

<sup>20</sup> See *id.*; Sande L. Buhai, *Practice Makes Perfect: Reasonable Accommodation of Law Students with Disabilities in Clinical Placements*, 36 San Diego L. Rev. 137, 169 (1999).

<sup>21</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 104.43(b).

Subpart B if they were provided by the recipient.”<sup>22</sup> Subpart B of Part 104 discusses employment practices, and includes regulations on prohibited discrimination, making reasonable accommodations, prohibited and permitted employment criteria, and prohibited and permitted pre-employment inquiries.<sup>23</sup> Assuming externship or career offices assist students with externship placement, this regulation is particularly relevant. The school is responsible for ensuring that these opportunities are with employers who will not discriminate against employees in any manner contemplated by Subpart B, even if the school is not the direct employer.<sup>24</sup>

## HOW AND WHEN TO DISCUSS ACCOMMODATIONS

If you know your organization provides accommodations, consult the organization’s internal processes for requesting accommodations. Many organizations have different processes for making accommodations requests, such as going through a human resources department or making a request to a specific supervisor. If you do not know the process, consult your supervisor or human resources.

Even if you are not sure whether your organization provides accommodations for interns or whether you have legal rights, you may still advocate to be accommodated. With or without legal protections, providing accommodations and opportunity is the right thing to do. Additionally, most accommodations do not cost employers much or any money. Talking to human resources or your supervisor to determine what the process would be to implement accommodations is an important place to start.

If you know you will need accommodations for the interview, be sure to start this conversation before the interview. If you are legally protected or your organization provides accommodations, you may be able to request reasonable accommodations for your interview. If you will need accommodations during your internship, you may need to disclose your disability to request any accommodations. Disclosure of a disability may prevent an employer from taking any adverse action (like firing or demoting you), particularly if that action is due to something related to your disability. However, even if you are legally protected, employers do not have to retroactively reverse adverse employment decisions if they were not aware of your disability. That is one reason why it is so important to disclose if you believe you will need accommodations. If you do not believe you will require any accommodations, the decision about whether to disclose is personal. You may wish to consult this [post](#) about that fact-based, case-specific inquiry.

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<sup>22</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 104.46.

<sup>23</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.11 – 104.14.

<sup>24</sup> 34 C.F.R. 104.46, 104.11 – 104.14; Buhai, *supra* note 5, at 169.

## WHAT KINDS OF ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD I REQUEST?

If your employer is legally required to accommodate you, your employer is required to provide reasonable accommodations that do not place an undue burden on them. Even if there is no legal requirement, you can advocate for employers to provide you with reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have the same access to opportunities. Additionally, accommodations may allow you to better serve your clients, be more productive and efficient in your work, and more effectively finish tasks for your supervisor.

If you are not sure what kinds of accommodations you might need, the [Job Accommodation Network](#) (JAN) is a good place to start. JAN has an A to Z accommodations list, as well as an accommodations search. These lists are not all-inclusive, but they can help to provide you with ideas and possible solutions.

The legal workplace is unique. There are a number of issues we face in the legal profession that you may wish to address. Here are some ideas specific to our work in the legal field that may be helpful:

- 1) Requesting the use of accessible legal research tools, or being allowed to not use an inaccessible legal research tool
- 2) Ensuring control over workload, which is particularly important for maintaining ethical duties
- 3) Requesting notice of last-minute projects or avoidance of such tasks, which may require some additional time management and teamwork between co-workers to ensure work is completed in a more appropriate, timely fashion
- 4) Requesting that feedback be provided in a certain way or at certain intervals
- 5) A flexible work schedule
- 6) Telework
- 7) Qualified readers and sign language interpreters, which may be helpful for going through physical court or discovery documents, interactions with clients and co-workers, and other aspects of the job
- 8) Electronic versions of books and legal materials
- 9) Office close to the bathroom
- 10) Office with a closed door for fewer distractions or if you dictate
- 11) Space to stretch or do physical therapy exercises, to inject, or take care of other needs in the office that is not the bathroom
- 12) Sit-to-stand desk funding
- 13) Natural light accommodations
- 14) Installing text-to-speech or speech-to-text software

- 15) Reasonable accommodations to ensure workers are able to meet any billable hours requirements<sup>25</sup>
- 16) Prorating billable hours<sup>26</sup>
- 17) Sending assignments in a specific format (e.g., sending assignments via email or in writing versus calling to assign)
- 18) Office attire accommodations (i.e. those with colostomy bags, sensory concerns, or other disabilities that may affect the type of clothing that is accessible to them)
- 19) Notetaker for meetings with clients
- 20) Particularly if your internship is unpaid, you might also be able to talk to your internship about whether it is possible to work fewer hours; be sure to look into requirements with your school if you are working for academic credit or pursuing public interest or other summer funding.

## FINDING AN ACCOMMODATING PLACEMENT

Although it is most ideal to intern or extern at an organization with a mission that genuinely interests you, it may be difficult to work in an organization that is discriminatory or unaccommodating. Not all organizations are created equal. Even organizations whose mission is to advance civil, disability, or other rights may treat disabled employees, interns, or externs poorly. Many workplaces that are not accommodating may also be generally toxic workplaces. Interns and externs may wish to avoid those issues by seeking accommodating placements.

Here are some ways that you can identify accommodating placements:

- Does the workplace have any disabled individuals on staff or in leadership positions? Do they push disability justice or other platforms? Although internalized ableism exists and

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<sup>25</sup> U.S. Equal Emp. Opportunity Comm'n, EEOC-NVTA-2006-2, Reasonable Accommodations for Attorneys with Disabilities (2006), available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/reasonable-accommodations-attorneys-disabilities> ("Employers are not required to lower or eliminate production standards for essential functions, either quantitative or qualitative, that are uniformly applied. For example, a law firm may require attorneys with disabilities to produce the same number of billable hours as it requires all similarly-situated attorneys without disabilities to produce. Reasonable accommodation may be needed to assist an attorney to meet the billable hours requirement, but it would not be a form of reasonable accommodation to exempt an attorney from this requirement.").

<sup>26</sup> See Rachel J. Minter, *Disability in the Legal Profession: New York State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education* 27 (2016), available at <https://nysba.org/NYSBA/Coursebooks/Fall%202016%20Coursebooks/Disabilities%20in%20the%20Legal%20Profession/1MinterDisabilityintheLegalProfession.pdf>; Donald H. Stone, *The Disabled Lawyers Have Arrived; Have They Been Welcomed with Open Arms into the Profession – An Empirical Study of the Disabled Lawyers*, 27 L. & INEQ.: J. OF THEORY & PRAC. 93, 102 (2009), available at <https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1117&context=lawineq> (citing AM. BAR ASS'N COMM'N ON MENTAL HEALTH & PHYSICAL DISABILITY LAW, THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF LAWYERS WITH DISABILITIES A REPORT FROM THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION 61-62 (2006)).

not all disabled individuals will be accommodating, if disabled individuals are in leadership positions or work at the organization, that could be a good sign.

- Does the workplace have an affinity group for disabled employees? Not only does that indicate that there are disabled staff members, but it also indicates willingness to create a space for disabled employees. It also could provide some information about current disabled employees to reach out to about their experience.
- Ask past disabled and/or non-disabled interns and externs about their experiences. Was it positive? Negative? Did they receive accommodations? If so, did they experience difficulty receiving those accommodations? It might be difficult to find past disabled interns or externs. Your career services office, professors, and the National Disabled Law Students Association could be able to help to connect you with past disabled interns or externs.
- Discuss potential accommodating workplaces with professors who are disabled or allies, as well as your law school disability accommodations office or career services office if they are well-versed in the matter.
- If you have mentors or connections in the legal field, particular disabled mentors or connections, they might be able to provide you with some insight.
- Disclosing your disability during the interview or application process is also a decent way to weed out any organizations that may be discriminatory. The downside is that it is possible organizations may not hire you based on your disability in a pretextual determination, and it would be impossible to tell. The positive is that you will know that organizations hiring you, at the very least, hire disabled people. It may not mean they are perfect on accommodations or other workplace issues, and it does not guarantee the workplace is not toxic, but it is one possibility.
- Ask about processes before you accept any offers or during an interview (if you are comfortable hinting at or disclosing your disability). For example, you may ask about accommodations procedures, whether the employer provides accommodations, and whether employer has ever had disabled employees, interns, or externs.
- Has the organization ever written or communicated on the issue of disability? What did the statement or communication say? Was anything problematic communicated? If so, how deep is the transgression?
- Did the employer note anywhere in application materials that they do not discriminate against applicants with disabilities? Did the employer inform applicants of any reasonable accommodations procedures or the availability of reasonable accommodations in advertisements?
- Has the employer signed the [ABA Pledge for Change](#) on disability diversity in the legal profession? Although it is not a guarantee, it does demonstrate some awareness of the lack of disability diversity in the legal field and a general commitment to changing the profession.

## CONCLUSION

As an intern or extern, you will want to make the most out of your experience. Because you will have limited time at your placement, you will want to absorb as much as possible and make as many connections as possible. That does not mean that you cannot receive adequate accommodations. Submitting quality work (remember, it does not have to be perfect—you are learning after all), bringing passion to the workplace, engaging, making connections, and learning is what is most important. Getting accommodations, if you need them, will make it much easier to participate. You can still leave a lasting impression, even if your accommodations lead you to miss some days of your internship, or you have a flexible work schedule that means you are in the office at different hours from your supervisor. Keeping in contact after your internship concludes is also incredibly important. Be sure to nurture those connections.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Marissa Ditkowsky at [info@ndlsa.org](mailto:info@ndlsa.org). We wish you the best of luck in your internships and externships!