

# NEWS



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## Houston Law Firms, Corporations on Board Project TRAIN

### *Program Helps Employers Make Successful Hires of Special Needs Individuals*

(Houston – October 16, 2017) In recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 19 Houston law firms and companies have agreed to join the Houston Bar Association's Project TRAIN Network, pledging their proactive support for employing individuals with special needs. Houston Bar Association president, Alistair Dawson, created Project TRAIN (the Training, Readiness and Inclusion Network) to develop and distribute materials and training programs that will assist employers in hiring and retaining individuals with special needs or cognitive disorders.

The Project TRAIN Network, made up of attorneys and representatives of disability rights groups, is developing materials that provide practical advice on the unique situation of hiring special needs individuals, as well as address legal issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act and employment law. The materials also will feature stories from firms and offices that employ special needs individuals who contribute to the success of their businesses.

Dawson said the materials will be available in early spring 2018. "We will provide employers with training materials to assist them in preparing for and hiring employees with special needs, as well as managing issues that might arise," said Dawson. "Hopefully, these employers will be better prepared to welcome an increased number of differently-abled individuals in their work force."

Project TRAIN will actively recruit and educate employers, then assist with the interviewing process by coordinating with charitable organizations that can provide the right potential employees to fit their needs. Organizations involved in the network include The Center, Social Motion Skills, H.E.A.R.T, Jewish Family Service and Disability Rights Texas.

The HBA's Project TRAIN Network also will provide pro bono legal services to ensure that children and teens are getting the services they are entitled to in school and assist them and their parents in establishing supported decision-making arrangements or guardianships once they turn 18.

### *Participating Employers, as of press time:*

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP  
Andrews Kurth Kenyon LLP  
Apache Corp.  
Baker Botts LLP  
Bracewell LLP  
Beck Redden LLP  
Constable Alan Rosen  
Gardere Wynne Sewell  
Haynes & Boone LLP  
Hogan Lovells LLP  
Jackson Walker LLP

Little Mendelson LLP  
Locke Lord LLP  
Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP  
Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP  
Porter Hedges LLP  
Reed Smith LLP  
Thompson Knight LLP  
Vinson Elkins LLP

Employers who would like more information can contact Alistair Dawson at [adawson@beckredde.com](mailto:adawson@beckredde.com) or at 713-951-6225.

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*The Houston Bar Association, with over 11,000 members, is the nation's fifth-largest metropolitan bar association. The HBA provides professional development, education, and service programs for the legal profession and the community.*