

# Please Join the Illinois Human Rights Commission



**LUNCH**  
—AND—  
**LEARN**  
**CLE**

**March 23, 2023**

**Duration:**

12:00 pm—1:00 pm

## Lunch & Learn via WebEx

Please visit <https://hrc.illinois.gov/about/events.html> for WebEx information

**CLE Credit:** One hour of general CLE credit for Illinois attorneys (pending)

**Moderator**—Azeema N. Akram, Administrative Law Judge, Illinois Human Rights Commission

**Presenters**— Rachel M. Arfa, Esq., Commissioner, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

Brandy L. Johnson, Partner, Early & Miranda, P.C.

Andrew Webb, Esq., Staff Attorney, Civil Rights Team, Equip for Equality

**Topic**— *Is Disability a Part of Diversity? Lawyers with Disabilities Respond*

### Biographies

**Azeema N. Akram** is an Administrative Law Judge at the Illinois Human Rights Commission, where she presides over claims of unlawful discrimination pursuant to the Illinois Human Rights Act. As a deaf/hard-of-hearing attorney, Azeema is passionate about accessibility in legal proceedings. She presents regularly to attorneys and judges on accommodating people with disabilities in court. Judge Akram's career in public service includes regulatory litigation, agency in-house, and legislative and rulemaking experience. She serves on the board of directors for several organizations including the national Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bar Association, Disability Lead in Chicago. Judge Akram also serves on the Regional Transportation Authority's Paratransit Certification Formal Appeals Program Eligibility Review Board. She graduated with a B.A. from the University of Missouri-Columbia and her J.D. from DePaul University College of Law.

**Rachel M. Arfa** serves as the City of Chicago Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). She is the first deaf commissioner of MOPD, and the highest ranking deaf person to serve in a City government leadership role. She has years of experience as a disability and civil rights attorney. Commissioner Arfa has held numerous civic and leadership roles, including advocating to make Chicago's cultural spaces accessible to people with disabilities. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan (B.A. American Culture) and received her J.D. from the University of Wisconsin School of Law.

**Brandy L. Johnson** is a Senior Partner at Early & Miranda, P.C. She concentrates her practice in workers' compensation and employment law, but has experience in the areas of tort litigation, including premises liability, personal injury, appellate practice, insurance law, and medical malpractice. Ms. Johnson is a member of the Illinois State Bar Association and serves on the Association's Standing Committee for Disability Law and its Diversity Leadership Council. In 2019, she was selected to serve on the Illinois Legal Aid Diversity & Inclusion Working Group. Ms. Johnson has published numerous articles and speaks regularly at seminars related to workers' compensation in Illinois, Missouri, and nationally. She received a B.A. and her J.D. from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

**Andrew Webb** is an attorney at Equip for Equality, the protection and advocacy system for Illinois within the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN). He is blind as well as hard of hearing, manages Equip for Equality's Assistive Technology Program, and works to ensure the accessibility of healthcare services and public accommodations. Mr. Webb's work encompasses community outreach and education, client consultation and direct representation including litigation in federal and state courts and administrative proceedings. He is a graduate of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and obtained his J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School, where he recently served as an Adjunct Professor for a course on Disability Rights Law.