

The West Virginia State Bar LGBTQ+ Committee

Presents:

A Three-Part Free CLE Series

June 11, 2025, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

3 Credit Hours of CLE including:

Part 1: Cultural Competency – Working with LGBTQ+ Clients and Diverse Family Structures 9:00 am – 9:50 am

Both the West Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct and the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct codify the importance of effective communication with clients (Rule 1.4). Legal practitioners must therefore be mindful of the implications of cross-cultural communications on the attorney-client relationship. Without a cautious approach, cultural misunderstandings and miscommunications may occur. When working with LGBTQ+ clients or families with diverse family structures, attorneys must be mindful of the varying cultural experiences, terminology, and the diverse perspectives that may be presented. In this first CLE session, speaker Ming Wong will discuss the importance of cultural competence and civility as well as ways practitioners can improve in their client communications.

Speaker: *Ming Wong, Esq., Director of Community Justice and Access, National Center for Lesbian Rights* **Part 2: Practitioner Education on Pre-Birth Orders, Surrogacy, and Adoption Processes in W. Va. 10:00 am – 10:50 am**

In our second CLE session, speaker Lisa Hawrot will provide information on navigating West Virginia's legal system as it relates to surrogacy proceedings, pre-birth orders, and adoption processes. An overview will be provided as to relevant statutory provisions and the differences between regular adoption cases, abuse and neglect adoption cases, and circumstances where pre-birth orders are warranted. Information will be provided as to what adoption attorneys need and need to know (for adoption vs. pre-birth order scenarios). Timing of filings, the required filings, and proposed orders will be discussed for each of the above-mentioned circumstances.

Speaker: *Lisa Hawrot, Esq., Counsel & Co-Chair of the Family Law Practice Group, Spilman, Thomas, & Battle*

Part 3: Practical Case Examples from W. Va. Courts, Troubleshooting, and Time for Q&A

In our final (and most interactive) CLE, speakers Lisa Hawrot and Molly Russell will pose and work through practical case examples with attendees to demonstrate step-by-step processes for adoptions and pre-birth orders. Participants will be provided opportunities to issue-spot and troubleshoot with the speakers on commonly seen issues in family law practice when handling these types of cases. Finally, the session will close with time for additional questions and answers.

Speakers: *Lisa Hawrot, Esq., Counsel & Co-Chair of the Family Law Practice Group, Spilman, Thomas, & Battle*

Molly Russell, Pro Bono Supervising Attorney, Legal Aid of West Virginia