

Nicki Applefield Engel

Partner

1065 East Morehead Street
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Helping families plan for and navigate the cycle of life is my passion. My practice involves aiding clients in crisis and those planning ahead by identifying their objectives and achieving those objectives with specially tailored strategies. Through focused planning and compassionate advocacy, I empower clients to protect their loved ones, safeguard their resources, and prepare for an uncertain future.

As an experienced **elder and special needs** law attorney, Nicki Applefield Engel helps clients deal with the legal issues involved with the cycle of life. She prides herself on crafting creative solutions and providing peace of mind for her clients and their families. Nicki's core areas of practice include estate and special needs planning, asset preservation, public benefits, and long-term care planning, guardianships and conservatorships, and probate and trust administration.

Nicki is licensed in North Carolina and South Carolina, and she has over a decade of experience representing and advocating for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Nicki is a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), and she is the past president of the North Carolina Chapter of NAELA. Nicki is the current Chair of the Elder and Special Needs Law Section of the North Carolina Bar Association and the Co-Chair of the Section's Pro Bono Committee. In addition to her memberships and leadership positions, she is certified by the

Practices

Elder Law & Special Needs Planning
Estate Administration
Trusts & Estates

Bar Admissions

North Carolina
South Carolina

Education

West Virginia University College of Law
(JD, , 2011)
Appalachian State University (BS, , 2007)
• Political Science

Associations

Professional

- North Carolina Bar Association
 - Elder and Special Needs Law Section
 - Past Chair
 - Co-Chair, Pro Bono Committee
- National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Inc.
 - North Carolina Chapter
 - Board Member
 - Past President
- North Carolina Guardianship Association, Board Member

North Carolina State Board of Legal Specialization as an Elder and Special Needs Law Specialist and as a Certified Elder Law Attorney by the National Elder Law Foundation.

Prior to joining Johnston Allison Hord, Nicki practiced at several firms across North Carolina in the areas of elder law and special needs planning. She worked as a public benefits paralegal before law school, which provided her with vital hands-on experience assisting individuals with disabilities and older adults. Nicki approaches her work with compassion, precision, and diligence. She is devoted to providing comprehensive and effective life care planning services for families facing the challenges of life.

Speaking Engagements

- Panelist, "*Navigating Elder Care: Guiding Your Clients with Confidence*", Queens University Annual Estate Planning and Wealth Management Forum (May 2025)
- Panelist, "*Restoration to Competency*", North Carolina Guardianship Association Annual Conference (May 2025)
- Speaker, "*N.C.G.S. 35A Changes*", 28th Annual NCBA Elder and Special Needs law Symposium (February 2024)
- Co-Speaker, "*NC's New Guardianship Reform Law*", NC Guardianship Association (December 2023)
- Speaker, "*Senate Bill 308 Update*", NC Guardianship Association Conference (May 2023)

Honors

- **Super Lawyers®** North Carolina – Elder Law (2025)
- **Super Lawyers®** North Carolina – Rising Star – Elder Law (2016-2023)
- **The Best Lawyers in America©** – Elder Law (2024, 2025), Trusts and Estates (2024, 2025)

- **Special Needs Alliance**, Member **Community**
- **Philips Academy**, Board Member

Community

[About Our Firm](#)
[Recognition](#)

- *Business North Carolina* “Legal Elite” – Family Law (2024, 2025)
- 2018 NCBA Young Lawyer Pro Bono Service Award
- Certified Elder Law Attorney, National Elder Law Foundation
- NC State Bar Certified Specialist in Elder and Special Needs Law