



Valerie Bickerstaff is an attorney in private practice in Shaker Heights, Ohio. She has been a licensed attorney since 1995, and has spent a substantial portion of her legal career in juvenile advocacy, resolving disputes, litigating cases, grant writing and administration involving juvenile justice. Juvenile law is an area in which she has made a substantial impact, having recently served nearly five years as a Magistrate with the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court. In her role as Magistrate, Attorney Bickerstaff handled hundreds of complex court cases each year and effected policy at it relates to children. Her role as Magistrate involved interfacing with children, families, educators, attorneys, social workers, child and parent advocates, law enforcement, and other social service and community partners in rendering decisions that served the best interest of each child. The process was one that required firm knowledge of juvenile law, along with expeditious and legally sound decision-making that addressed the overall welfare of the child. The majority of cases she heard involved children with special education needs, and those with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

From 1999-2004, Attorney Bickerstaff served as an Assistant Cuyahoga County Prosecutor, and had the distinguished honor of writing and administrating a juvenile crime intervention and educational-alternative grant through the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The grant was implemented in the City of East Cleveland, Ohio, as an anti-gang initiative, and pro-social alternative to gang activity among juveniles. Attorney Bickerstaff has since written a grant proposal for the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court Reentry Program, for educational instruction and job training for youth returning to the community from juvenile incarceration. As an Assistant County Prosecutor, Attorney Bickerstaff also served as counsel to the Cuyahoga County Department of Children & Family Services, handling abuse, neglect and dependency cases on behalf of the agency.

Attorney Bickerstaff has a passion for helping children and families, and has spent many years serving youth in the community, as a mentor, advocate and Board Member of East Cleveland Straight Talk Counseling/Treatment Center (1994-1997). She has obtained a significant number of hours in training and continuing education in juvenile justice dealing with issues of school-related matters, educational placement, psychological evaluations, rehabilitation, recidivism, reentry, abuse, neglect and dependency matters, delinquency, truancy, and unruliness. Her knowledge spans the whole gamut of juvenile-related law.

Attorney Bickerstaff also holds a real estate license after what was once a personal hobby became a business enterprise in 2005. In 2012, she was a graduate of Cleveland's first-ever Real Estate Associate Program (REAP) sponsored by the world's preeminent commercial real estate companies such as Walmart, Forest City Enterprises, DDR, CBRE-Cleveland and McDonalds Corporation. The program offered seventy-eight hours of training in commercial real estate in financial and market analysis, brokerage, acquisitions, asset management, leasing and development. She has extensive experience in civil litigation, and transactional law, having served as an Assistant Director of Law in the General Civil Litigation Division of the City of Cleveland Law Department, and having worked early in her legal career as a law clerk and Associate Counsel for the law firm of Forbes, Forbes and Associates.

For nearly two decades, Attorney Bickerstaff has established a track record of efficient, quality legal representation, managing complex matters in juvenile, governmental, and business law. She has had a unique legal career yet one that has been cohesive in terms of building an outstanding body of legal expertise and performance. *"Service you can count on..."*