



Elena G. Babinecz

Shareholder

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Elena Babinecz, shareholder in Baker Donelson's Washington, D.C., office, is a seasoned financial services regulatory attorney with extensive experience in consumer protection and fair lending laws and regulations.

With more than 20 years of experience in consumer financial services, Elena Babinecz advises clients on regulatory compliance, shifting governmental priorities at the federal and state levels, and strategic prioritization of legal issues to minimize risks and innovate responsibly.

Before joining Baker Donelson, Ms. Babinecz served more than 12 years at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) as a regulatory expert on fair lending, small business lending, and language access. As the Deputy Assistant Director in the Office of Regulations in charge of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA), she gained unique insight into how regulators interpret and enforce consumer protection and fair lending laws and regulations.

Ms. Babinecz led the CFPB's work to interpret the ECOA and Regulation B. This involved coordinating with other financial regulatory agencies such as the Office of Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the Federal Reserve Board (FRB), and the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), as well as the Department of Justice on enforcement matters.

Ms. Babinecz was responsible for managing interdisciplinary rulemaking teams consisting of attorneys, paralegals, economists, and market experts, such as the small business lending data collection rulemaking implementing Section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act. She also facilitated industry compliance with the 2015 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) as the agency's HMDA Implementation Team Lead.

As a leading attorney on regulatory challenges faced by the industry in serving limited English proficient consumers in their access to financial services, Ms. Babinecz is a thought leader in advancing financial inclusion. She engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including financial institutions, community groups, civil rights organizations, non-profits, and trade associations to bring diverse viewpoints to bear on the agency's work.

Prior to her work at the CFPB, Ms. Babinecz was in private practice for more than a decade. She counseled financial services clients in fair lending examinations and investigations by federal and state government agencies, including state attorneys general, as well as enforcement matters related to the mortgage banking industry.



Professional Honors & Activities

- Member – Women in Housing and Finance (WHF)
- Member – Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA)
- Member – CFPB Recruitment Ambassador Program (2024)
- Co-chair – CFPB Diversity & Inclusion Council of Employees (2016 – 2018)
- Recipient – CFPB, Team Achievement Award, Small Business Lending Proposed & Final Rule (2023)
- Recipient – CFPB, Team Achievement Award, COVID-related Fair Lending Guidance (2020)

- Recipient – CFPB, Team Achievement Award, Coordination with FHFA & GSEs on Uniform Residential Loan Application (2016)
- Recipient – Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Recognition for Voting Rights Project and Hate Crimes Initiative (1999)

Publications

- "Disparate Impact Liability Is Top of Mind – Is Your Financial Institution Ready?" (January 2026)

Speaking Engagements

- "Navigating Fair Lending in a Shifting Landscape: Regulatory & Litigation Trends Every Institution Must Know," Wolters Kluwer Webinar (January 2026)
- "The CFPB Proposed Changes to ECOA, Why It Matters," Consumer Federation of America, Washington, D.C. (December 2025)
- "Fundamentals of Fair Lending Regulations and Examination Procedures" and "ECOA/Regulation B & Section 1071: What the Proposed Changes Mean for You," and "Small Business Lending Data Capture: The Evolution of CFPB's Dodd-Frank Section 1071," Wolters Kluwer CRA & Fair Lending Colloquium, Los Angeles, California (November 2025)
- "Small Business Lending Final Rule Basics," Wolters Kluwer CRA & Fair Lending Colloquium, Austin, Texas (November 2023)
- "Small Business Lending Proposed Rule," National Black and Latino Economic Summit (November 2021)
- "HMDA Final Rule," Wolters Kluwer CRA & Fair Lending Colloquium, Las Vegas, Nevada (November 2016)
- "HMDA Final Rule," Mortgage Bankers Association Regulatory Compliance Conference, Washington, D.C. (September 2016)
- "HMDA Final Rule," Mortgage Bankers Association Legal Issues and Regulatory Compliance Conference, Denver, Colorado (May 2016)
- "HMDA Final Rule," American Bankers Association Consumer Financial Services Committee Winter Meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah (January 2016)

Webinars

- CFPB's New Equal Credit Opportunity Act/Regulation B Proposal: What to Expect (December 2025)
- CFPB's New Section 1071 Small Business Lending Proposal: What Are the Changes and What to Expect (December 2025)

Education

- Duke University School of Law, J.D., 2002
- Cornell University, B.A., 1998, cum laude

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- California
- Florida (inactive)