HUSCH BLACKWELL



Shawna Ruetz

PARTNER

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OVERVIEW

Shawna is a seasoned labor and employment attorney who draws on her experience in litigation and as a human resource professional to offer strategic advice and counseling.

After more than a decade in practice, Shawna focuses most of her efforts on preventative counsel and routine advice for employers. She works particularly often with employment agreements, including upon hire and at separation, such as noncompetes and executive employment agreements. Shawna regularly performs Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) audits, considering whether employees have been correctly classified as exempt, nonexempt, or independent contractors. She also audits clients for pay equity concerns and advises on the potential for discrimination allegations during layoffs and terminations. What she loves most is the long-term relationships her practice allows her to build with clients: Shawna often represents organizations over multiple years, offering day-to-day advice on employment matters, and she enjoys getting to know the details of how these companies operate.

Many clients today are grappling with the challenge of complying with a patchwork of state laws as they operate nationwide. Shawna has a special focus on employment regulations that tend to vary by state or even municipality, such as paid sick leave and vacation time policies and restrictive covenants.

In addition to her advice and counsel practice, Shawna continues to handle employment litigation, particularly class and collective actions and noncompete actions. She has previously represented

Industry

Healthcare

Services

Employment Class & Collective Actions

Employment Litigation Defense

Healthcare Labor & Employment and Immigration

HR Consultation & Training

Labor & Employment

Non-Competes & Restrictive Covenants

Pay Equity

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clients before administrative agencies and in both federal and state courts, and she has managed investigations and responded to administrative complaints, including before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Colorado Civil Rights Division. Her experience as a litigator makes her instinctively aware of where potential problems might arise, and she drafts client policies and makes recommendations with past litigation at the top of her mind. Shawna also has a firm grasp of likely agency interpretations—particularly in her home state of Colorado, where worker protections have grown in recent years.

Prior to pursuing her law degree, Shawna began her career as a human resource professional with a graduate degree in industrial-organizational psychology. She worked closely with other human resource leaders and employment attorneys, giving her a very personal perspective on the client's day-to-day world. Shawna understands firsthand where clients are coming from, and she offers advice that's legal, practical, and actionable.

Experience

- Represented Peaksware Holdings in its sale of TrainingPeaks and TrainHeroic to Garmin Ltd. (NYSE: GRMN).
- Obtained favorable settlement on behalf of a franchisor in a federal collective action brought by several franchisees alleging wage and hour misclassification and violations.
- Successfully mediated and settled a large complex class action involving allegations of fraudulent transactions and negligence.
- Advised clients with national and international operations as well as small local employers on day-to-day employment matters.
- Routinely obtains findings of "no probable cause" for employers based on the submission of position statements to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Colorado Civil Rights Division.
- Attained dismissal of state action brought against a hospital involving wrongful termination in violation of public policy and whistleblower claims.
- Defended to resolution claims of discrimination, retaliation, and wage and hour violations against a variety of employers.

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Experience

- Negotiated favorable terms on behalf of employers for employment and independent contractor agreements.
- Successfully settled contentious noncompete litigation for minimal damages.
- Advised hospital system on selection criteria, compliance with legal requirements, severance packages offered, and communication strategies during a series of reductions in force.
- Provided trainings on workplace investigations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), compliance with EEOC guidelines, employment discrimination and harassment, and business ethics.
- Conducted workplace investigations related to discrimination, safety, ethical, and cultural complaints for various organizations.

Recognition

- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America*
    - Labor and Employment Law - Management, 2023-2025

Education

- J.D., University of Denver Sturm College of Law
    - *Denver University Law Review*
    - Workplace Law Certificate
- M.A., University of Colorado Denver
    - Industrial/Organizational Psychology
- B.A., University of Nevada, Reno

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Admissions

- Colorado
- Nevada
- U.S. District Court, District of Colorado
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit



2025 Pro Bono Achiever

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