HUSCH BLACKWELL



Chengzhuo He

ASSOCIATE

KANSAS CITY, MO
PHONE: 816.983.8364
EMAIL: CHENGZHUO.HE@HUSCHBLACKWELL.COM

OVERVIEW

Chengzhuo is a trusted labor and employment counselor who helps businesses navigate complex workforce issues, manage legal risk, and achieve their strategic objectives.

Chengzhuo advises employers on all stages of the employment relationship, including recruiting and hiring, background checks, employment and restrictive covenant agreements, incentive compensation arrangements, employee leaves and accommodations, wage and hour compliance, worker classification, FLSA overtime exemptions, performance management, employee discipline and separation, workforce reductions, and retirement-related matters. He regularly works with legal, human resources, and executive leadership teams to design and implement compliant handbooks, policies, and employment practices across multiple jurisdictions.

A significant portion of Chengzhuo's practice focuses on the labor and employment aspects of mergers, acquisitions, and other corporate transactions. He conducts employment due diligence, prepares diligence memoranda, evaluates workforce-related liabilities, and develops strategies to mitigate employment risks before and after closing. He also advises on employment-related representations and warranties, restrictive covenants, executive employment and separation arrangements, workforce integrations, reductions in force, employee transfers, WARN Act compliance, and other employment considerations arising in transactional settings.

Industries

Education
Healthcare
Life Sciences

Services

Employment Class & Collective Actions
Employment Litigation Defense
Healthcare Labor & Employment and Immigration
HR Consultation & Training
Labor & Employment
Non-Competes & Restrictive Covenants

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Chengzhuo routinely counsels employers on compliance with federal, state, and local employment laws, including FLSA, Title VII, ADA, ADEA, FMLA, PWFA, USERRA, FCRA, COBRA, and similar state and local laws. He is known for developing practical, effective, and risk-based solutions that enable management teams and boards to make informed decisions while minimizing litigation exposure.

Although his practice is primarily focused on litigation avoidance and proactive compliance, Chengzhuo also represents employers in a wide variety of employment disputes, including claims involving wage and hour issues, restrictive covenant enforcement, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, whistleblower allegations, trade secret misappropriation, and employment-related torts. His litigation experience informs his counseling practice, allowing him to help clients anticipate and address problems before they become lawsuits.

Experience

HIS ADVICE AND COUNSELING EXPERIENCE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Analyze novel and complex legal issues; help design risk-based and client-practical solutions; provide multistate employment and labor law compliance and avoidance advice to multistate employers; identify various problem-solving options, including the pros and cons of each option, so that clients can choose the practical and legal solution that works best for them.
- Advise and represent multistate employers in a wide range of labor and employment law matters, including recruitment and hiring, background checks, employee leave and reasonable accommodation issues, wage and hour matters, employee/independent contractor classification, FLSA exemption issues, performance management, employee discipline and termination, and retirement.
- Design and implement handbooks, policies, procedures, and other employee communication documents for multistate employers.
- Draft vacation/PTO policies and advise on multi-state paid sick and safe leave laws and paid family and medical leave laws.
- Draft and negotiate employment agreements, offer letters, employment agreements, senior executive agreements, retirement agreements, commission and bonus plans, incentive compensation documents, consultancy agreements, separation agreements, and settlement arrangements.

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Experience

- Draft, negotiate, and implement multistate restrictive covenant agreements, including non-competition, non-solicitation, and confidentiality agreements and other business protection measures.
- Implement furloughs, reductions-in-force, and mass layoffs.
- Handle the labor and employment aspects of M&A transactions, including conducting pre-acquisition due diligence, preparing diligence memoranda and disclosure schedules, developing strategies for addressing any issues that are discovered, and reviewing and revising employment-related representations and warranties in stock and asset purchase agreements.
- Represent employers in responding to investigations and audits conducted by administrative agencies, including the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Advise clients on Employee Retention Credit matters, analyze the CARES Act, IRS notices, and relevant governmental orders, and represent employers in responding to audits conducted by the IRS with respect to the Employee Retention Credit.

HIS LITIGATION EXPERIENCE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Defend employers against claims alleging all forms of discrimination, accommodation, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, and wage and hour, including preparing and responding to discovery, drafting position statements and mediation statements, and drafting dispositive motions (such as MSJs).
- Enforce or defend against allegations of breaches of restrictive covenants, theft of trade secrets and raiding of employees, including preparing for or responding to emergency applications for injunctive relief in restrictive covenant litigation.
- Defend employers in California wage & hour class actions, PAGA representative actions, and single-plaintiff cases, including responding to pleadings, preparing and responding to discovery, drafting mediation statements, and drafting dispositive motions (such as MSJs).

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Recognition

- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) Pathfinder Program, 2026

Education

- J.D., Emory University School of Law
  - with honors
  - *Emory Law Journal*, managing editor
- Bachelor of Laws and B.S., Nankai University

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- Missouri



2025 Pro Bono Contributor

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