

PRACTICE AREAS

Labor and Employment Law

What is Labor and Employment Law?*

Traditional labor practice deals with the relationships between workers and their employers. Specifically, labor attorneys play an important role in labor relations matters, counseling both labor and management. Attorneys practicing labor law advise clients on a number of matters, including collective bargaining negotiations between management and labor unions. Labor attorneys may also be involved in day-to-day matters facing businesses and unions, including affirmative action and hours and wages regulations.

Employment law is an important outgrowth of a traditional labor practice. Attorneys practicing employment law work in the defense of clients' interests in cases involving violations of their civil rights. These cases may involve allegations of employment discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, and/or sexual orientation. In addition, employment lawyers may also defend clients sued for breach of employment contracts, breach of covenants not to compete, failure to comply with wage and hour laws, and workplace libel and slander. More recently, employment attorneys have become involved in litigation of claims involving sexual harassment, as well as the formation and institution of employee handbooks, important policies, and educational programs, including those addressed at eradicating harassment from the workplace and complying with other federal, state, and local employment laws.

Employment Opportunities*

Many labor and employment lawyers work in law firms. Some large and mid-size law firms may have departments solely devoted to the labor and employment law practice. Labor unions often employ attorneys to handle issues concerning their members. Corporations may also employ in-house counsel to focus on labor and employment issues. State and federal government agencies also employ a number of labor and employment attorneys, including the National Labor Relations Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, state civil rights commissions and many others.

Online Resources

Union Jobs Clearinghouse: www.unionjobs.com

United States Department of Labor: www.dol.gov

American Bar Association, Section on Labor and Employment Law:
www.abanet.org/labor/home/html

*See LISA L. ABRAMS, J.D., THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO LEGAL SPECIALTIES (Harcourt Legal & Professional Publications 2000).

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: www.eeoc.gov

Federal Labor Relations Authority: www.flra.org

National Labor Relations Board: www.nlr.gov

American Arbitration Association: www.adr.org

Occupational Safety & Health Administration: www.osha.gov

LaborNet: www.labor.net

Employment Law Net: www.employmentlaw.net

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation: www.pbgc.gov

American Bar Association: <http://www.abanet.org/labor/pastprogr.html>

Practicing Law Institute: www.pli.edu

The Peggy Browning Fund

The Peggy Browning Fund is a non-profit corporation whose mission is to provide law students with diverse, challenging work and educational experiences in the area of workers' rights.

The Peggy Browning Fund holds an annual National Law Students Worker's Rights Conference in the beginning of October, usually in the metro DC area. GW is a participating university at the conference which includes workshops and serves as an excellent networking opportunity. For more information about the fund and internship opportunities, visit www.peggybrowningfund.org.