

How They Are Selected

This is the 12th edition of the Nation's Most Powerful Employment Attorneys, a joint project produced by *Human Resource Executive*® and Lawdragon, which offers the most elite recognition a lawyer can achieve.

We first published this guide in 2007, honoring the nation's top 50 corporate employment attorneys. It has since grown alongside the practice of employment law in the U.S., and this year recognizes 220 employment lawyers who stand out for their ability to guide employers through the constantly evolving laws governing the workplace. In this issue, we honor 100 leading corporate-side lawyers; 20 specialists apiece in immigration, traditional labor law, and employee benefits and ERISA; and 40 Up-and-Comers.

This year's guide also celebrates a record class—20—newly added to the *HRE*/Lawdragon Hall of Fame. Now in its sixth year, the HOF features legends of the employment bar whose contributions to the field, as well as their firms, are unparalleled. Very few lawyers are considered for Hall of Fame status—with eligibility requirements that include at least 35 years in the employment-law trenches and consistent recognition for all-around excellence in counseling clients, contributing to the bar and serving as a visionary to improve workplaces. Last year, we admitted a record class of 16, topped by this year's 20 all-stars. The recognition reflects a transition in the ranks of the leaders of the labor and employment bar—many of whom began their careers when there was only labor law. They have seen and been part of a revolution in the workplace and played a critical role balancing protections for workers with progress for companies. They will be retired from future consideration for other lists; their achievements are perpetually recognized on *HRE*Executive.com at <http://bit.ly/2WESzUd> and on Lawdragon's website at <https://bit.ly/2KoPC3y>.

Of particular note is the increasing inclusiveness of these guides. This year's 220 honorees include 72 women, or 33% of the most respected corporate employment lawyers in the U.S., as well as 13% known inclusive (including African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic and self-identified LGBTQ individuals).

Each of these lists is intended to offer corporate counsel and human resource professionals an unsurpassed guide to the best lawyers to help them resolve difficult employment situations and keep them in compliance with the country's increasingly complicated and changing workplace-related laws and regulations. The process pairs online balloting and submissions with rigorous vetting, as well as editorial and peer review.

In December, *HRE*'s 75,000-plus subscribers and Lawdragon's 500,000 database members were invited to submit nominations for the guide. Nomination forms were also posted on both websites, and attorneys who came in through

this process are included on these lists. Three months and thousands of submissions later, the vetting began—first by Lawdragon's research team and then through each nominee's clients and peers. To make the cut on the general and specialty lists, a lawyer typically has practiced more than 20 years and amassed a list of remarkable accomplishments—defending and counseling companies in the day's most critical matters, advising them on hiring and retaining the best employees from around the world, and continuing to unravel the ever-evolving world of employee benefits. A recognized attorney has also generally chaired his or her firm's employment department and often has been selected to lead his or her state or national employment-bar organization.

The Up-and-Comers list recognizes standout lawyers who are typically partners and generally have at least 10 years of experience. This year, we began to implement a ceiling of 20 years in practice for Up-and-Comers, a guideline that will be fully applied in 2020.

All candidates have received glowing recommendations from corporate counsel who have reaped the benefits of their wisdom; in every case, their clients would hire these lawyers when next they are tested. The lawyers included on the *HRE*/Lawdragon lists are also vetted for integrity. Bar records are checked, and peers and counsel are questioned about their integrity beyond a lawyer's technical and tactical skills. It's important that those who make the cut admire—even if they don't always agree with—their colleagues on these lists.

Lastly, an editorial advisory board comprised of a who's who of the nation's corporate employment bar vets the finalists. They discuss their own experiences with those being considered and follow the trail to the clients, judges and opposing counsel, who offer first-hand experiences with these lawyers. Only those who earn glowing marks from clients, peers, colleagues and judges make the cut.

For those keeping score of the law-firm representation, 24 firms have three or more lawyers on this year's guide (not including prior years' HOF members). They are:

Proskauer	16	Kramer Levin	5
Greenberg Traurig	12	Paul Hastings	5
Jones Day	12	Fragomen	4
Morgan Lewis	8	O'Melveny	4
Seyfarth	8	BakerHostetler	3
Orrick	7	Berry Appleman	3
Winston	7	Cozen O'Connor	3
Gibson Dunn	6	Ford Harrison	3
Littler	6	Norton Rose	3
Duane Morris	5	Ogletree	3
Groom Law Grou	5	Fisher Phillips	3
Jackson Lewis	5	Weil	3