

BLANKROME

Allison N. Powers | Partner
Labor & Employment

444 West Lake Street
Chicago, IL 60606
+1.312.776.2546
allison.powers@blankrome.com

photo coming soon

Allison devotes her practice to guiding management through a wide array of organizational conflicts and to vigorously defending clients facing agency actions or litigation. In devising custom solutions for clients, Allison capitalizes on nearly 20 years as an employment litigator, trial attorney, and strategic partner, plus a unique set of soft skills that have made her indispensable to clients navigating high-profile matters requiring discernment and discretion.

Allison's employment litigation practice emphasizes defense of claims of discrimination and harassment in private lawsuits, as well as government agency actions under federal and state statutes. In addition to single-plaintiff litigation, Allison is well-versed in implementing sophisticated and ultimately successful defense strategies in high-profile multi-plaintiff and class action cases. Allison's current and past clients include *Fortune*-ranked corporations in the luxury, fashion and retail, banking, telecommunications, motor vehicle, and pharmaceutical sectors.

More than a litigator, Allison is a strategic partner to her clients and, as such, devotes a significant portion of her practice to counseling clients facing a variety of issues. Having been seconded multiple times to clients, Allison brings valuable in-house perspective to the solutions she proposes.

In March 2022, Allison was appointed by the Illinois Governor to the role of Commissioner of the Executive Ethics Commission ("EEC"), a key agency for sweeping ethics reform for the State of Illinois. Allison serves in this critical role with state senate confirmation alongside her position as partner at the firm.

Allison maintains a successful pro bono practice that has included representing inmates bringing claims of civil rights violations, immigrants seeking asylum and

other relief under federal immigration laws, honorably discharged veterans seeking benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and branches of the armed forces, and first-time home buyers formerly housed in Chicago Housing Authority units and receiving Section 8 benefits. Allison received her alma mater's Distinguished Alumni Public Service Award in 2017.

Prior to her legal career, Allison worked in fundraising and grant writing, serving in positions in large cultural institutions in New York and at the New York City Emergency Management Office.

Select Engagements

Litigation & Agency Enforcement Actions

- Served in the role of a Special Appointed Attorney General while defending a former Illinois State official against highly publicized claims of retaliation involving underlying allegations of sexual harassment and assault in a bench trial.
- Tried as a lead defense counsel claims of discrimination and retaliation against a Fortune 50 aerospace company and defense contractor, both times securing jury verdicts in state court.
- Represented a motor vehicle client in high-profile multi-plaintiff systemic race discrimination matters with national press coverage.
- Represented a pharmaceutical client in nationwide gender discrimination case with putative class of approximately 1,500.
- Represented a telecommunications client in long-running race discrimination class action, with class of approximately 400.
- Represented a retail client in Equal Employment Opportunity Commission representative action on behalf of approximately 150 claimants in case alleging disability discrimination.
- Represented clients in wage and hour collective actions and subsequently defended against, and resolved, individual cases following decertification.

Investigations & Audits

- Handles sensitive workplace Code of Ethics investigations involving complainant and accused executives and employees at all levels.
- Leads crisis investigations and develop reputation protection strategies for retail clients.
- Conducts privileged disparate impact, pay equity, and other self-critical analyses.

Compliance & Counseling

- Counsels clients through complicated workplace questions, including employee disciplinary matters and terminations, wage-hour compliance, safety and business restrictions, enforceability of restrictive covenants, executive employment agreements and severance, and transaction and post-

transaction diligence and reviews.

Admissions

- California
- Illinois
- Missouri
- New York
- U.S. District Court - Central District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court - Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court - Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court - Northern District of Ohio
- U.S. District Court - Southern District of Illinois

Memberships

- Black Women Lawyers Association of Greater Chicago
- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- Illinois Executive Ethics Commission

Education

- Northwestern University, BA
- Washington University School of Law, JD

Recognitions

- 2023, Notable Leader in Labor & Employment Law, listed in *Crain's Chicago Business*
- 2021, Rising Stars in Law, listed in *Crain's*
- 2022, Fellow, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity
- 2017, Dean's Attorney of the Year for Public Service, by Washington University School of Law

Professional Activities

- Commissioner, Illinois Executive Ethics Commission (Governor's Appointee) (2022–Present)
- Member, Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
 - Board of Directors
 - Chair, Board Development Committee
- Member, Black Women Lawyers Association of Greater Chicago
- Member, Young Professionals Board, Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA) (2014–2017)