



## Christa Richer Cook

### Member

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### Profile

**Christa assists employers with their labor and employment issues in a manner that is practical, cost-effective and which is sensitive to the culture of the workforce and the client's individual goals.**

Christa counsels clients with respect to day-to-day human resources management and regularly handles various matters, such as:

- internal investigations
- employment discrimination litigation
- customized in-house workplace diversity/ harassment training
- unemployment insurance
- FMLA and New York's Paid Family Leave compliance
- Title IX compliance
- Counseling on employee discipline/discharge issues
- wage and hour issues
- restrictive covenants (including non-compete, non-solicitation and confidentiality agreements)
- consumer directed personal assistance program compliance
- workforce reductions
- student and employee disability accommodation issues
- developing personnel policies and employment agreements

She also represents management in collective bargaining, grievance proceedings, labor arbitration hearings, and union organizing campaigns. Christa counsels public sector clients on Civil Service Law matters and in interest arbitration proceedings. She has successfully defended clients in unfair labor practice proceedings, collective and class actions under the FLSA, retaliation claims and all types of employment discrimination litigation before the New York State Division of Human Rights and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), as well as in state and federal court.

Christa also regularly appears before the New York State Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Labor, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), New York's Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), the New York State Department of Education (SED), the U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and federal and state courts. Her practice extends across several key industries including health care, higher education, public school districts and municipalities. Christa's practice also includes in-house labor and employment training for employers.

### Education

- Syracuse University College of Law (J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2000)
- State University of New York at Fredonia (B.S., *summa cum laude*, 1997)

### Bar/Court Admissions

- New York
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York

### Practices

- School Law
- Higher Education
- Labor and Employment
- Title IX

Christa is also a member of the firm's school districts practice group. In addition to providing general labor and employment advice and counseling, she advises school districts regarding tenure issues, layoffs and recalls, and employee discipline.

## Representative Matters

- Assisted in the successful representation of a large employer in a jury trial involving allegations of race discrimination, harassment and retaliation before the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of New York.
- Successfully represented a healthcare client in defeating two successive union election petitions and subsequently assisted that same client in improving employee relations between staff and management.
- Successfully represented a public school district in a Section 3020-a proceeding in obtaining dismissal of a teacher who engaged in physical abuse of a student
- Defended numerous employers in employment discrimination and retaliation claims before administrative agencies and, when it was determined to be in the client's best interests, successfully mediated such claims
- Successfully negotiated successor collective bargaining agreements for both private and public sector clients.

## Honors & Affiliations

- *Martindale-Hubbell®*, AV Preeminent Rated
- New York State Bar Association, Labor and Employment Law Section
- New York State Women's Bar Association
- Onondaga County Bar Association
- New York State Association of Management Advocates for School Labor Affairs
- New York State School Boards Association
- Central New York School Boards Association
- Order of the Coif
- Central New York Women's Bar Association, Board Member, 2004-2005
- 2013 Syracuse 40 Under 40 Honoree

## Representative Presentations

- New Sexual Harassment Law Update, Haylor, Freyer & Coon Seminar, November 1, 2018
- Sexual Harassment and the #MeToo Movement, New York State Association of Management Advocates for School Labor Affairs 41st Annual Summer Conference, July 16, 2018
- Employment: New Challenges in Hiring Practices, Haylor, Freyer & Coon Seminar, September 22, 2016
- Transgendered in Central New York: Employer - Legal Do's and Don'ts, CNY SHRM, March 22, 2016
- The Impacts of New Title IX Guidelines on Public Schools Across the Country: Is Your District in Compliance?, Central New York School Boards Association, March 24, 2015

- Avoid The Price of Silence - Investigating and Addressing Bullying in the School Environment, New York State Association of Management Advocates for School Labor Affairs 37th Annual Summer Conference, July 20, 2014

### Other Activities

- Fredonia College Foundation, Board of Directors
- Volunteer Advocate Lawyer for Animal Abuse Court, Onondaga County Bar Association
- Beaver Lake Nature Center, Board Member, 2000-2011