FORDHARRISON

ANESSA ABRAMS

Partner / Washington, DC
aabrams@fordharrison.com / P: 202-719-2029



Anessa Abrams has more than 25 years of experience as a management labor and employment attorney.

Anessa appreciates the importance of learning her clients' businesses and working collaboratively with decisionmakers to achieve business objectives. Over the course of her career, Anessa has represented clients in labor and employment matters in a variety of industries, including automotive, education, credit union, bank, restaurant, hospitality, construction, tree care, and beverage distribution, as well as non-profit organizations, trade associations, and government contractors.

Within the education industry, Anessa has represented public and private institutions of higher education, public charter schools, and an online higher education provider. Her work includes, among other things, defense of claims brought by faculty, staff, and students concerning, among other things, wrongful termination, harassment, discrimination, and retaliation; grievance arbitration; defense of unfair labor practice claims; and investigations before the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

In addition to her litigation work across industries, Anessa counsels corporate executives and managers on the myriad of issues that arise in the employer-employee relationship, including leave and accommodation requests, layoffs, disciplinary action, and employee terminations. Anessa also investigates allegations of inappropriate workplace conduct, and conducts training sessions for managers and supervisors o employment-related issues.

Representative Experience

- Obtained defense verdict on behalf of a credit union in a state court jury trial on claims of religious discrimination and retaliation.
- Obtained favorable ruling in a binding interest arbitration on behalf of a public agency.
- Obtained dismissal of a First Amendment claim brought by a former professor, which was affirmed on appeal.

EDUCATION

- George Washington University Law School (J.D., *with honors*, 1995)
- University of California, San Diego (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1992)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- District of Columbia
- Maryland

COURT ADMISSIONS

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
- U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland

- Obtained dismissals of administrative agency claims alleging that faculty members were improperly terminated.
- Obtained dismissal of an eleven-count complaint brought by a former graduate student against an educational institution.
- Obtained dismissal of an unfair labor practice complaint, after an administrative trial, on behalf of an educational institution.
- Obtained no cause findings on Charges of Discrimination for clients in a variety of industries, including automotive, hospitality, financial, and non-profit.
- Obtained summary judgment on a race, religion and national origin case based on failure to hire.
- Successfully represented clients in grievance arbitration, including favorable decisions involving employee termination, rehire rights, and bumping.
- Obtained dismissal of an eleven count complaint alleging race/color and disability discrimination, retaliation, FMLA violations, breach of contract, and employment torts. Dismissal affirmed by the Fourth Circuit.

Honors & Awards

- AV® Preeminent Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell
- *The Best Lawyers in America* - Litigation - Labor and Employment (2025-2027)
- "Washington, DC Super Lawyers," *Super Lawyers* magazine (2013, 2017-2022)

Memberships

- District of Columbia Bar Association
- Maryland State Bar Association
- American Bar Association, Section of Litigation
- American Bar Association, Section of Labor and Employment Law
- National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA)

News & Insights

- August 21, 2025 - Three Washington D.C.-Based FordHarrison Attorneys Listed in the 2026 Best Lawyers in America and One Listed in Ones to Watch

- October 30, 2024 - EEOC's Recent Enforcement of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act: What Employers Need to Know
- August 15, 2024 - Three Washington D.C.-Based FordHarrison Attorneys Listed in the 2025 Best Lawyers in America and One Listed in Ones to Watch
- April 21, 2022 - Maryland is the Latest State to Pass Paid Family and Medical Leave

Offices

- *Washington:*
  2000 M St NW, Suite 505
  Washington, DC 20036