

Melissa R. Grim

Chair, Executive Compensation & Employee Benefits Practice Group

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Overview

Melissa Grim focuses her practice on employee benefits and executive compensation-related matters. She has extensive experience counseling private equity funds and other public and private companies on benefits, ERISA, and executive compensation issues (including Code Section 409A and 280G issues) that arise in mergers and acquisitions, divestitures, carve-outs, restructuring, and ESOP transactions.

Melissa regularly advises clients on the design, structuring, implementation, and ongoing administration and compliance for qualified and nonqualified retirement plans, health and welfare plans, equity and long-term incentive plans, and other benefit and compensation arrangements. She also represents clients in handling and negotiating inquiries, audits, investigations and assessments, advisory or other ruling requests, and voluntary compliance correction matters with government agencies, such as the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

In the context of corporate transactions, her approach is centered around creating value for the client in each phase of the deal, including a unique focus on helping acquisitive companies and private equity funds and their portfolio companies navigate the human capital and people operations aspects of post-deal transition and integration. Melissa regularly counsels clients on creating value creation plans, developing acquisition “playbooks” to drive efficiency and mitigate risk in add-on and tuck-in transactions, and designing policies and procedures, as well as benefit and compensation plans and programs, that incentivize performance and incorporate best practices, industry trends, changes in the legal landscape, and the company’s or private equity fund’s goals and strategic initiatives.

Representative Matters

- Represented Clarendon Capital in its acquisition of O'Donnell Metal Deck & Bar Joist (OMD), a leading value-added distributor of metal decking, steel bar joists, and related structural products serving the commercial construction industry.
- Represented Gridiron Capital in its acquisition of Centroid, a premier Oracle Cloud Infrastructure service provider.
- Represented Cotton Patch Finance, Inc. in its sale to Local Favorite Acquisitions, Inc.
- Advised TowerBrook Capital Partners in acquiring a majority stake in Rael, a leading women's wellness brand focused on holistic cycle care.
- Represented private equity firm Wellspring Capital Management LLC in the $285 million acquisition of Critical Nurse Staffing, LLC, a home healthcare service provider, and certain of its affiliates.
- Advised COEO Solutions, backed by private equity firm Riata Capital Partners, on its acquisition of NetWolves Network Services.
- Represented Smartlink, LLC, a nationwide provider of telecommunications infrastructure services, in the sale of all of its equity to Recognize.
- Represented Astō Consumer Partners, a consumer-focused investment firm, in its $105 million strategic investment in Starface World, Inc.

Credentials

EDUCATION

- DePaul University College of Law, J.D., *magna cum laude*
  - Order of the Coif
- Drake University, 2001, MBA
- Iowa State University, B.S.

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

- Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

Awards & Recognition

- Listed, *The Best Lawyers in America*, Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law, 2023-2027
  - Named, “Lawyer of the Year,” 2025
- Named, *Crain’s Chicago* Notable Woman in Law, 2024

News & Insights

- Benesch Represents Rotunda Capital Partners in Sale of American Equipment Solutions
  November 11, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Advises TowerBrook Capital Partners on Its Investment in Rael
  August 24, 2026 | Press Releases
- 126 Benesch Attorneys Recognized in 2027 Best Lawyers® Rankings
  August 20, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Advises COEO Solutions on its Acquisition of NetWolves
  August 12, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Advises Gridiron Capital on its Investment in Centroid
  July 20, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Represents Altamont Capital Partners in Sale of Cotton Patch Café
  July 2, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Represents L2 Brands in Acquisition of Wild Tribute
  June 25, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Advises COEO Solutions on its Acquisition of S-NET Communications
  May 5, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Advises Astō Consumer Partners in Strategic Investment in Starface World, Inc.
  March 6, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Advises MyFitnessPal on Acquisition of Cal AI, the Viral Calorie App
  March 5, 2026 | Press Releases

Speaking & Events

PAST EVENTS

- Defined Benefit Plans Update | Melissa R. Grim
  January 15, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- How to Do a Deal, Part II: People and Plans | Melissa R. Grim
  January 15, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- Knockout Networking Roundtable | Melissa R. Grim, Megan L. Mehalko, Megan Ratia
  October 15, 2025

- Executive Compensation and Incentives: Benchmarking and Uncovering Trends | Melissa R. Grim
  June 26, 2025 | Speaking Engagement
- Compensation Strategies and Benefits Considerations During Uncertain Times | Melissa R. Grim
  June 17, 2025 | Firm Events