PRACTICE AREA

Retirement Plans

Comprehensive legal guidance for every stage of retirement plan administration.

Friday, Eldredge & Clark's Retirement Plans practice is led by the largest and most experienced Employee Benefits group in Arkansas, and one of the most established in the region. Our seven dedicated lawyers focus exclusively on the legal, tax, and Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 ("ERISA") aspects of retirement plans, from plan design and implementation to daily administration, fiduciary governance, and responses to audits and investigations. Every member of the group holds a Master of Laws in Taxation, many are certified public accountants (inactive), and most members of the Employee Benefits Practice Group are recognized for their work in The Best Lawyers in America, and several have received special recognition from such authoritative organizations as Chambers and Partners and the American College of Tax Counsel.

We advise public, private, tax-exempt, and governmental employers of all sizes on qualified and nonqualified retirement programs, including profit-sharing and 401(k) plans, defined benefit and cash balance plans, IRAs, and ESOPs. Whether you sponsor a single-participant plan or a complex, multi-entity program with thousands of participants, we provide practical, detail-driven guidance to help you maintain compliance, manage risk, and deliver meaningful retirement benefits to your workforce.

Our clients, based in Arkansas and beyond, represent a broad cross-section of leading employers, including state and regional energy utilities, banks and bank holding companies, major retail organizations, food processing companies with regional and national operations, large healthcare systems and hospitals, family-owned businesses with multiple entities, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities such as the State of Arkansas deferred compensation plan. We serve clients of all sizes and provide the same level of attention, precision, and practical guidance whether advising sole proprietors or large public companies with thousands of employees.

We work with all types of employers on the design, implementation and administration of qualified and nonqualified retirement plans including profit sharing, IRC Section 401(k) plans; defined benefit and cash balance pension plans, IRAs and Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs). We also advise our clients on day-to-day issues that are needed to maintain a retirement plan. This support includes ERISA governance, audits and investigations, compliance audits, mergers and acquisitions, issues related to planning distributions, service provider contracts and audits and investigations.

While other firms may address this area of the law with employment lawyers who are not trained in the complexities of tax law, you have the assurance of knowing that our Employee Benefits Practice Group focuses exclusively on the tax and ERISA (Employee Retirement and Income Security Act) concerns of your unique retirement plan and compensation needs.

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SUMMARY

- **Comprehensive Plan Design & Maintenance:** Advising employers on creating, updating, and administering 401(k), pension, cash balance, profit-sharing, IRA, and ESOP plans.
- **Day-to-Day Compliance Support:** Handling ERISA governance, plan operations, corrections, distributions, and service provider contracts.
- **Audit & Investigation Defense:** Guiding plan sponsors through DOL and IRS audits, investigations, and compliance reviews.
- **M&A and Transaction Support:** Addressing retirement plan issues in mergers, acquisitions, restructurings, and business transitions.
- **Tax & ERISA-Focused Team:** Dedicated benefits lawyers with advanced tax training and ERISA depth focused on employer retirement plan needs.

Related Practice Areas

Employee Benefits & Executive Compensation Planning

Health & Welfare Plans

Tax-Exempt & Governmental Plans

Key Contacts

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Areas of Focus

Plan Design & Implementation

We help employers design and establish qualified and non-qualified retirement plans that align with business goals and compliance obligations. Our team advises on 401(k) plans, profit-sharing plans, defined benefit plans, cash balance plans, IRAs, and Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs). We ensure your plan is tailored to meet both regulatory standards and workforce needs.

Plan Administration & Compliance

Employers rely on our attorneys for guidance on daily plan administration and regulatory compliance. We handle issues involving ERISA governance, fiduciary duties, service provider contracts, plan amendments, corrections, and participant communications, helping clients avoid costly compliance missteps.

Audits, Investigations & Dispute Resolution

When the IRS or Department of Labor initiates an audit or investigation, our attorneys are ready to respond. We represent plan sponsors through all stages of compliance audits and enforcement actions, resolving issues efficiently while minimizing disruption to your operations.

Mergers, Acquisitions & Corporate Transactions

Our attorneys frequently counsel buyers and sellers on retirement plan issues arising in mergers, acquisitions, restructurings, and divestitures. We help clients identify potential liabilities, address plan terminations or mergers, and ensure smooth transitions for plan participants and fiduciaries.

Meet the Team

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