



JEFFREY D. SMITH

Partner

Cleveland / Columbus

440.838.8800

440.838.8805

Service Focus

- AI, Data, and Analytics
- Employee Benefits and Tax
- Labor Relations
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Multi-Employer Pension Fund Audits, Contributions and Withdrawal Liability
- Reductions in Force (RIFs)
- Unionized Mergers, Successorship, and Acquisitions

Industry Focus

- Education
- Manufacturing
- Non-Profit and Tax-Exempt Organizations

OVERVIEW

Jeff Smith helps clients develop and implement successful strategies for responding to a broad range of employee benefits and compensation issues, including retirement plans, health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, and other employment-related benefits. He ensures they comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations, like the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) and

the Affordable Care Act (ACA), among others. He guides them through the design and implementation of benefit plans, including advising on tax implications and other regulatory compliance and reporting of their benefits strategy. And he spends considerable time on executive compensation, multiemployer pension plan advice, and employee benefits issues in mergers and acquisitions.

Jeff's strengths include counseling clients of all types – for-profit businesses and corporations, non-for-profit entities, private schools, and others – on compensation issues for their top leaders. This involves negotiating and drafting employment and compensation agreements and all types of incentive compensation plans.

In addition, working closely with his labor relations colleagues, Jeff advises employers contributing to multiemployer pension plans on withdrawals and withdrawal liability and helps employers minimize their costs. Finally, he helps buyers and sellers of businesses facilitate employee benefits issues in their transactions. For many merger and acquisition clients, Jeff coordinates the Fisher Phillips team with outside corporate counsel.

Jeff is devoted to helping clients remain competitive in an evolving business market, providing them with the solid foundations they need to meet – and overcome – the challenges they face, from new and novel market entrants to the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence as a business strategy, and everything in between.

Credentials

Education

- Case Western Reserve University School of Law, J.D., cum laude, 2004
- Baldwin Wallace University, B.S., summa cum laude, 2001

Bar Admissions

- Ohio

Court Admissions

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

Recognitions

- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* (2016 – 2026)
 - Selected for inclusion in *Ohio Super Lawyers - Rising Star*
 - Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America - Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law* (2020)
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Affiliations

Professional Activities

- Ohio State Bar Association

Community Activities

- Symphony West Orchestra

INSIGHTS

Event

Oct 28, 2025

The New Age of HR Management: Navigating the Challenges of Generative AI in the Workplace

Insights

Jan 30, 2025

Ohio Public Schools Must Update Policies on Curriculum Content and Religious Instruction: 6 Key Takeaways From New "Parents' Bill of Rights" Law

Insights

Dec 3, 2024

Ohio's New "Bathroom Ban" Law Restricts Transgender Student Access: 5 Things Schools Should Do

Event

Jul 25, 2024

Employee Benefits Issues That Keep Contractors Up at Night

News

Jul 23, 2024

Attorneys Quoted By McKnight's Senior Living for Their Post-Chevron Era Insight

Insights

Jul 19, 2024

Is the Post-Chevron Era All It's Cracked Up to Be? 4 Reasons Businesses Might Not Celebrate the New Normal