

O. Kate Tragesser

PARTNER / CHICAGO

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Kate concentrates on government procurement, government relations, land use and tax increment financing. She assists clients with federal, state and local government procurement compliance and offers strategic counsel on diversity certifications as part of a broad range of procurement issues. Her substantive understanding of government enables her to advocate effectively for the business solutions her clients need.

She focuses on advising bidders and contractors on government regulations, laws and policies; preparing responsive bid proposals, small business subcontracting plans and bid protests; drafting and negotiating contracts; resolving contract disputes; obtaining contract payments; facilitating contract compliance, including assisting clients to meet contract participation goals for small businesses; representing contractors in debarment proceedings; and structuring competitive strategic alliances and relationships between majority- and minority-owned businesses. She assists MBE/WBE/DBE/VBEs with obtaining and maintaining their certification. For companies looking to be certified for the first time, she provides recommendations on their corporate structure. Additionally, she handles transitions of certified companies from one generation to the next and during the sale of the company, ensuring that there is no disruption to the certification.

Employers in many sectors rely on Kate to identify problems that can develop from supplier diversity programs and to effectively prevent or resolve them. She crafts customized solutions to ensure compliance with national and state laws. She assists clients with the development and implementation of supplier diversity programs and provides training regarding strategic partnerships and maximizing those relationships.



Practices

Corporate Governance
Women, Minority and
Veteran-Owned Businesses
Government Contracts
Government Relations
Land Use and Zoning
Local Government
Real Estate
Education - Litigation
Real Estate Finance

Industries

Construction
Food and Beverage
Technology

Education

DePaul University College of Law
(2001)
Hofstra University, Nice, France,
with Supreme Court Justice
Antonin Scalia (1999)
Xavier University (B.S., B.A.
Economics) (1998)

Admissions

State - Illinois

In addition, Kate has worked on behalf of developers and corporations on land use and zoning matters before the Chicago City Council, the Chicago Plan Commission and the Chicago Zoning Board of Appeals. Her work has involved a wide range of commercial and residential projects, including planned developments, variations, licensing matters and miscellaneous government regulatory issues.

Prior to joining Taft, Kate was the executive partner of another Chicago firm, as well as a chair of that firm's diversity committee. She also spent three years as a prosecutor for the city of Chicago, where she gained significant courtroom experience in both criminal and civil proceedings. Kate was selected as a "Rising Star" by Illinois Super Lawyers in 2010 and the Leading Lawyers Network in 2017 and 2018.

Notable Matters

- Conducts internal investigatory and compliance audits for several companies regarding federal, state and local government contracts.
- Serves as contract compliance counsel by reviewing solicitations and provides counsel on how best to meet those requirements.
- Provides counsel to several companies regarding contract compliance including MBE/WBE/DBE substitution requirements, indirect /direct participation and allocation of credit for MBE/WBE/DBE participation.
- Provides consultation to companies in connection with the formation of strategic relationships to meet contract requirements: subcontracts, joint venture agreements, mentor-protégé agreements and teaming agreements.
- Represented the selected master concessionaire for Chicago's Midway International Airport, Concession Renovation and Expansion Project in the preparation of their ACDBE compliance plan and the approval of their plan with the city of Chicago
- Serves as MBE/WBE compliance monitor for companies during government mandated monitoring.
- Represented large concession companies in the preparation of their proposals and negotiation of their ACDBE relationships for Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.
- Represent DBE/ACDBEs during the challenge of the certifications by various Unified Certification Programs (UCPs) and successfully demonstrate that the companies are qualified for the programs.
- Represented one of the nation's largest Spanish language radio companies in the development of its antennae facility, including land acquisition and all zoning and land use approvals center.
- Represented numerous real estate developers in establishing TIF districts and executing redevelopment agreements for what amounts to nearly \$200 million in TIF assistance. These projects include over 2000 homes and commercial space.

Speeches and Publications

- "Structuring Successful Minority, Women & Veteran-Owned Business Partnerships," Illinois Restaurant Association, Chicago, Ill., May 7, 2018.
- "Top Ten Employment Law Pitfalls," Government Contracting Series, Chicago, Ill., March 1, 2018.
- "How to Avoid the Pitfalls of Minority, Women and Veteran Business Certifications," Government Contracting Series, Chicago, Ill., Oct. 4, 2016.
- "The Power of Joint Venturing," State of Indiana, Northwest Indiana Business Conference, Gary, Ind., Aug. 14, 2015.
- "Reflections Regarding 2014 Utility Section 5-117 Reports," Illinois Commerce Commission Supplier Diversity Policy Session, Chicago, Ill., June 11, 2015.
- "The Basics of MBE/WBE/DBE/ACDBE/VBE Certifications," Government Contracting Series, Chicago, Ill., April 29, 2015.
- "The Changing MBE/WBE Environment and New Partnership Opportunities," Government Contracting Series, Chicago, Ill., Oct. 20, 2009.

Awards

- Honoree, *Leading Lawyers*
- Honoree, Illinois *Super Lawyers Rising Stars* (2010)
- "Chicago's Notable Women Lawyers" Honoree, *Crain's Chicago Business* (2018)

Professional Affiliations

- Chicago United
Member
- Illinois Tax Increment Association
Member
- Illinois Bar Association
Member
- American Bar Association
Member

Community Involvement

- Federation of Women Contractors

Member

- Hispanic American Construction Industry Association
Member