

Dawn L. Smalls

Partner

dsmalls@jenner.com

She / Her

Office

New York

Phone

+1 212 891 1639

Areas of Focus

Government Controversies
and Public Policy Litigation

Investigations, Compliance,
and Defense

Culture Risk and Sensitive
Investigations

Organizational Values and
Strategy Task Force

ESG: Environmental, Social,
and Governance



Overview

Clients of Dawn Smalls value her as a thought partner on complex policy, political, or governance issues that have significant implications for their business. Dawn conducts comprehensive reviews of her clients' policies and programs and determines whether they properly adhere to regulatory requirements and their own internal policies. Her work includes investigations of discrimination or a toxic work environment and external calls for an audit. Dawn also advises clients on strategy and a recommended course of action when they are under regulatory, Congressional, or public scrutiny. Dawn has also litigated high stakes disputes, usually with significant political or policy implications. She serves as a Co-Chair of the firm's ESG Practice.

Dawn makes a difference to her clients by identifying patterns and practices that are not aligned with their legal or regulatory objectives and recommending tactics to strengthen the company's policies and programs. Dawn also crafts legal strategies for matters that involve or dictate industry or policy change.

Dawn's background puts her at a significant advantage in her current work. Her service in two presidential administrations gives her unique insight into government and federal policy and her ongoing active engagement in local and federal politics informs the counsel she provides. In addition, Dawn's work at the Ford Foundation and Open Society Foundations sets the groundwork for longstanding relationships in the civil rights and advocacy

communities. Dawn previously served as the Monitor of a tier-one global financial institution, having been appointed to that position by the New York State Department of Financial Services.



I understand my clients are often balancing competing priorities and constituencies. I help them find the right solution while keeping that balance in mind.”

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- Government Controversies and Public Policy Litigation
- Investigations, Compliance, and Defense
- Culture Risk and Sensitive Investigations
- Organizational Values and Strategy Task Force
- ESG: Environmental, Social, and Governance
- Reproductive Health Task Force
- Business Litigation

Representative Matters

- Led monitorship of a tier-one global financial institution.
- Advise and counsel major financial institution on implications of the Dobbs decision for their business and operations.
- Spearheaded internal review of election related policies and practices of major technology company.
- Led internal review of allegations of racial and sex discrimination and other misconduct at small media company.
- Advise and counsel technology company’s response to congressional committee.
- Led a class action seeking safe shelter during the course of the pandemic for a class of single adult New Yorkers who are experiencing homelessness.
- Represented plaintiffs in a national class action against agencies that colluded to pay low wages to au pairs.
- Advise on best path to resolution for dispute between two major social justice organizations.

Credentials

Admissions

- New York
- Massachusetts

Education

- Stanford Law School, JD
- Boston University, BA, *magna cum laude*, Linguistics with minors in Italian and Political Science

Court Admissions

- US Supreme Court
- US Court of Appeals, First Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Second Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit
- US District Court, District of Colorado
- US District Court, District of Massachusetts
- US District Court, Eastern District of New York
- US District Court, Southern District of New York

Service / Recognition

Awards

- *New York Metro Super Lawyers*, 2023
- *Crain's New York Business*, Notable Diverse Leaders in Law, 2022
- *The American Lawyer*, Northeast Trailblazer, 2021
- *Crain's New York Business*, Notable Women in Law, 2021, 2023
- Legal Aid Society, Pro Bono Publico Award, 2021
- *Legal 500*, Corporate Investigations and White-Collar Criminal Defense, 2021
- National Black Lawyers, Top 100, 2021
- *City & State New York and The Amsterdam News*, Power Players in Government and Politics, 2020

Community

- Roosevelt Institute, Board Member
- Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, Member
- American Constitution Society, National Board Member 2015-2021

Service to the Bar

- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- National Black Lawyers, Member

- New York City Bar Association, Secretary, Ethics Committee

Industry

- New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics, Commissioner