



Vesna K. Harasic-Yaksic

Partner



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Vesna defends multinational corporations, small and mid-sized businesses, and executives in high-stakes government investigations, litigation, and alternative dispute resolution proceedings. Drawing on her experience as a trial attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice's Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section (MLARS), she represents her clients in a wide range of administrative, civil, and criminal matters, with a particular focus on money laundering investigations and forfeiture proceedings.

Vesna also counsels clients across a wide range of industries on corporate compliance matters, including compliance with the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) and other anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regulations; the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA); the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA); and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA).

For three consecutive years, Vesna has been recognized in *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch* in White-Collar Criminal Defense.

Representative Matters

Notable Accomplishments:

- Obtained favorable settlement for European cryptocurrency trading platform in parallel civil and criminal investigation involving AML compliance failures.
- Secured declination from DOJ Fraud Section for a political strategist.
- Secured dismissal with prejudice for medical device company in *qui tam* suit involving Anti-Kickback Act (AKA) allegations.

Practice Areas

Anti-Money Laundering
Cyber and Privacy Investigations, Incidents & Enforcement
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Counseling and Support
FCPA and Anti-Corruption
Global Disputes
Litigation
Privacy and Cybersecurity Litigation and Investigations
White Collar Defense & Government Investigations

Credentials

Education

J.D., *cum laude*, American University
Washington College of Law
B.A., Cornell University

Law Journals

Editor-in-Chief, *American University Business Law Review*

Bar and Court Memberships

District of Columbia Bar
Maryland Bar

Certifications

Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist (CAMS)

Languages

Spanish

- Obtained probationary sentence in lieu of incarceration for an individual convicted of embezzlement in the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.
- Obtained dismissal by relator in *qui tam* suit against a large defense contractor in the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.
- Secured declination by DOJ Antitrust Division for a Fortune 500 Company.

Investigations and Litigation:

- Represented European cryptocurrency trading platform in money laundering investigation and related forfeiture proceedings.
- Represented a Chief Operating Officer in connection with bribery allegations involving Department of Veteran Affairs contracts.
- Represented various individuals in FCPA investigation involving Afghanistan.
- Represented entity in Special Counsel investigation.
- Represented an individual in connection with an investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia relating to conduit campaign contributions.
- Represented executive in an investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia involving allegations of public corruption and procurement fraud.
- Represented an insurance company in an FCA investigation involving alleged false certifications of eligibility for government contracts.
- Representing HUBZone contractor related to potential False Claims Act violations.
- Represented a foreign financial executive in connection with parallel SEC/DOJ investigations of accounting fraud.
- Representing an international company in an Anti-Terrorism Act suit arising from the performance of government defense contracts in Afghanistan.
- Representing a government contractor in connection with an Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation.
- Represented a company in a time fraud investigation involving a waste treatment facility.
- Represented a defense company operating in Iraq related to false certifications under a large government contract.
- Represented a military contractor and its executives against allegations of fraud, misappropriation, and business torts.

Corporate Compliance Counseling:

- Advises various companies on CTA requirements and developments.
- Conducted full-scale AML/CFT compliance program review for foreign telecommunications provider operating mobile money platform.

- Advised international association on the applicability of money services business (MSB) regulations in connection with a payment platform.
- Advised video game developer on the implementation of adequate AML/BSA controls for in-game currency.
- Counseled asset management firm on AML risks associated with investment opportunity.
- Analyzed the applicability of AML rules to gift card program of a public company.
- Advised European trading platform on implementation of “Know Your Customer” procedures for U.S. customers.
- Counseled a scientific research organization regarding its AML compliance obligations in relation to a government subcontract.
- Advised a Fortune 500 company on antitrust compliance policy and electronic data preservation issues.
- Advise multiple clients on compliance issues related to law enforcement data requests, including responding to subpoenas, 2703(d) orders, and search warrants.

Alternative Dispute Resolutions:

- Represented a company in domestic arbitration involving environmental remediation issues.
- Represented a large real estate developer in an arbitration seated in Singapore involving a joint venture agreement to build an entire foreign city.

Trial Attorney, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section, U.S. Department of Justice (2015-2017):

- Represented the United States in complex money laundering prosecutions and grand jury investigations, including the investigation of a large-scale money laundering organization operating a black-market peso exchange. Those investigations involved grand jury subpoenas, search and seizure warrants, wiretaps, surveillance, and other law enforcement tools.
- Represented the United States in civil forfeiture matters including the successful forfeiture of nearly \$1 million dollars in insurance fraud proceeds.
- Assisted in the investigation of financial institutions for AML/BSA violations and failures to implement effective anti-money laundering compliance programs and controls.

Special Assistant United States Attorney, U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia (2016-2017):

- Represented the United States in the prosecution of an individual for fraud and money laundering offenses involving U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) foreign assistance funds in Africa.
- Provided forfeiture assistance to AUSAs in more than 30 federal criminal cases including fraud, bank robbery, narcotics trafficking, and sex offenses.
- Represented the United States in a civil forfeiture proceeding against an aircraft engine intended for illegal re-export to Iran in violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and

other U.S. sanctions violations.

- Participated in a grand jury investigation of a foreign company involved in money laundering and IEEPA violations.

Special Assistant United States Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia (2016):

- Lead counsel for the prosecution of an individual charged with bulk cash smuggling and false statements.
- Represented the United States in the prosecution of a large-scale visa fraud scheme.
- Represented the United States in the prosecution of various misdemeanors on federal land.
- Represented the United States in supervised release and probation violation hearings.

Professional Experience

- Trial Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section (2015-2017)
- Special Assistant United States Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia (2016-2017)
- Special Assistant United States Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia (2016)
- Summer Honors Law Intern, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (2013)
- Criminal Law Intern Investigator, Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (2012)

Affiliations

- Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) and Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (HBA-DC)
- Women's White Collar Defense Association (WWCDA)
- Cornell Club of Washington
- 2024 Pathfinder Peer Group Facilitator, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)
- 2020 Pathfinder, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)

Recognitions

- Included in *The Best Lawyers in America* directory of "Ones to Watch" for Criminal Defense: White-Collar (2023-2025)
- Named by *The Legal 500 US* a "Recommended Lawyer" (2024) in Dispute Resolution: Corporate Investigations and White-Collar Criminal Defense