

Tara E. Levens

Associate



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Palo Alto

White Collar Defense and Investigations
Trials

Commercial Litigation

Export Controls and Economic Sanctions

CooleyREG

Tara is a former federal prosecutor and experienced trial and appellate lawyer with substantial experience handling complex civil and criminal matters. She spent more than four years with the US Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut where she first- and second-chaired trials involving public corruption, racketeering, firearms, and narcotics charges. At Cooley, Tara's practice focuses on responding to government investigations and prosecutions, conducting internal investigations, and litigating complex civil matters.

Tara joined Cooley from the Financial Fraud and Public Corruption Unit of the US Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut. During her tenure as an assistant US attorney (AUSA), she led teams investigating and prosecuting criminal violations, including public corruption, international export controls, wire fraud, organized crime/Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) offenses, firearms trafficking, narcotics, child exploitation, and government program fraud. Tara second-chaired a seven-week public corruption trial as well as a six-week RICO trial at which she presented lay and expert witness testimony, cross-examined witnesses, argued motions and charge conferences, and made closing arguments. She also first-chaired four trials involving firearms and narcotics offenses, managing all aspects of those cases.

In addition to her trial experience, Tara has argued three appeals before the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. For a portion of her tenure with the office, she served as an appellate attorney responsible for reviewing and advising on appellate briefs in both criminal and civil matters. In 2024, Tara received the Executive Office of United States Attorneys Director's Award for Superior Performance by a Litigative Team, which recognizes the exceptional work, dedication and distinguished achievements of AUSAs and law enforcement partners.

Tara began her career by clerking for Judge Stanley Marcus of the US Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit and then-Chief Judge Beryl A. Howell of the US District Court for the District of Columbia. Following her clerkships, Tara joined a top multinational law firm in New York where she represented clients in criminal prosecutions, complex commercial litigation and government investigations. Tara's experience includes conducting internal investigations and compliance reviews focusing on economic sanctions, anti-terrorism financing, and anti-money laundering.

Tara earned her JD from The University of Chicago Law School, where she served as editor-in-chief of The University of Chicago Law Review.

Education

The University of Chicago Law School
JD, with honors, 2016

University of Chicago
BA, Mathematics and Political Science, special honors, 2012

Admissions & Credentials

California

New York

Court Admissions

US District Court for the District of Columbia

US District Court for the District of Connecticut

US District Court for the Eastern District of New York

US District Court for the Southern District of New York

US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit

US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Rankings & Accolades

Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA) Director's Award for Superior Performance by a Litigative Team