

Michael J. Voves

Partner

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Michael helps clients with benefits and compensation matters, including retirement plans and executive compensation.

Michael is Chair in Dorsey's Benefits and Compensation Group and head of the firm's Executive Compensation practice group. Michael advises clients on tax, ERISA, and related issues affecting equity compensation, deferred compensation, executive compensation, pension, ESOP, and 401(k) arrangements. Michael's practice can be broken into two areas of focus – equity/incentive compensation and retirement benefits/investments.

Michael creates equity, phantom equity and cash incentive programs for entities of all sorts, including corporations, partnerships, LLCs, and cooperatives. Because Dorsey has a strong public company client base, Michael is particularly experienced in designing cash and stock incentive programs that adhere to ISS and Glass Lewis standards. Michael also works with a stable of ESOP-owned clients and frequently presents on topics for the National Center for Employee Ownership. Michael is an active member of the National Association of Stock Plan Professionals, and is on the board of the Twin Cities chapter organization.

Michael's other practice area falls under ERISA fiduciary compliance, particularly with respect to retirement and pension investments. Michael advises numerous plan sponsors and plan service providers with respect to ERISA fiduciary and prohibited transaction issues. Michael frequently attends investment committee meetings for many clients and understands many investment vehicles and services that are offered under ERISA covered retirement plans – whether retail, institutional, custom, or private equity investments.

Accolades

- *Best Lawyers in America*®, ERISA Law, 2025-2026

Education

- University of Minnesota Law School (J.D., 1997)
 - *cum laude*
 - Minnesota Law Review
 - Charles E. Nadler Award
 - Law Review Staff Member of the Year
 - Wagner Labor Law Moot Court Director and Competition Team Member
- University of Wisconsin - Madison (B.S., Economics with a Mathematical Emphasis, Political Science, 1994)
 - graduated with distinction

Bar Admissions

- Minnesota

- *Minnesota Monthly*, Top Lawyer in Employee Benefits Law, 2024
- *Minnesota Super Lawyers*, "Rising Star", 2008, 2011-2012

Languages

- German

Select Presentations

- MSBA: Executive Compensation Update (February 28, 2019)
- DorseyU: Preparing for the 2019 SEC Reporting Season (December 6, 2018)
- NASPP: Divorce, Death, Disability and Other Separations: How They Affect Your Equity Plan (July 12, 2018)
- MSBA: Equity and Phantom Equity Incentives for Partnerships (May 7, 2018)
- MSBA (Advanced Employee Benefits Workshop): Equity Compensation Trends in the Public and Private Spheres (February 22, 2018)
- DorseyU: 2017 Tax Cuts & Jobs Act: What You Should Know - Business and International Tax Reform (February 21, 2018)
- NCEO: ESOP Alternatives: Eligible Individual Account Plan and Other Alternatives (October 4, 2017)
- NCEO: Equity Compensation for LLCs (June 6, 2017)
- MSBA (Advanced Employee Benefits Workshop): DOL Audits of Retirement Plans (February 9, 2017)
- NCEO: Alternative Approaches to Equity Compensation (for ESOP Companies) (September 20, 2016)
- DorseyU: DOL's Final Fiduciary Rule (May 10, 2016)
- NCEO: Sustainability Beyond Repurchase (April 14, 2016)
- MSBA: Compensating the Executive – Five Important Things You Should Know (October 27, 2015)
- Midwest Pension Conference: Amendments to DOL's Definition of Fiduciary (September 27, 2015)
- NCEO: Alternative Approaches to Equity Compensation (for ESOP Companies) (September 1, 2015)
- DorseyU: The DOL's Changes to the Fiduciary Rules: How Do They Impact You? (June 9, 2015)
- NCEO: Decision-Maker's Guide to Equity Compensation (March 3, 2015)
- 2015 Advanced Benefits Workshop: Self-Directed Brokerage Windows (February 19, 2015)
- NCEO: Fiduciary and Legal Issues in Executive Compensation in ESOP Companies (October 2, 2014)
- NCEO: The ESOP Symposium: Selling the Company (September 16, 2014)
- DorseyU: Closely-Held Businesses: Ownership and Transition Strategies (April 17, 2014)

Insights

February 1, 2023

How ESG Factors Should Be Bundled Inside Your 401(k) Funds

November 23, 2022

Voves Comments on DEL's New ESG Rule

May 7, 2020

DOL and IRS Relief on Deadlines

September 20, 2018

Under New IRS Section 162(m) Guidance, Many Common Arrangements will not Retain Grandfathered Status

November 12, 2016

Dorsey Partner Michael Voves Comments on Starkey Embezzlement Case