



Governmental & Civil Rights

Crisis events may involve high risk, high exposure, and media attention. Our team has developed a seven-step critical response program that we employ if one of these events occur. Additionally, through counseling on a variety of issues related to public entities, we pursue the goals of reducing lawsuits and minimizing costs of defense and ultimate liability. If litigation occurs, our experienced legal team will work to provide a swift and effective resolution to the matter.

Our attorneys will train your staff and work with you to develop written policies and plans that you can implement before, during, and after a critical incident. If an incident does occur, we will work side by side with you to develop a strategy for press releases, media responses, investigations, potential discipline, and future litigation.

Section 1983 Civil Rights Defense

Civil rights defense is a unique area of law requiring extensive knowledge of 42 USC §1983. This statute provides a civil cause of action for violations of an individual's constitutional rights by a state actor. Our attorneys have in-depth experience defending police officers, police departments, and local governments in these complex claims, with all of their unique characteristics and pitfalls. Defending such claims requires knowledge and understanding of the duties of law enforcement and the legal system, as well as a sense of fairness and confidentiality.

HeplerBroom's Governmental and Civil Rights Practice Group has defended claims involving:

- excessive force
- false arrest
- coerced confessions
- officer-involved shootings
- unlawful detention and arrest
- illegal/unreasonable search and seizure

PRACTICE CONTACTS

Matthew B. Champlin

Stephanie W. Weiner

PROFESSIONALS

Irina Y. Dmitrieva

John C. Hanson

Peter A. Houser

Sarah B. Jansen

Lance T. Jones

Briana J. Leatherberry

Thomas J. Magee

Eric W. Moch

Jamie M. Rein

RELATED PRACTICES

Employment & Labor

- police misconduct
- malicious prosecution
- failure to train
- *Monell* claims

- in-custody deaths
- due process violations
- unlawful policy and practice
- wrongful convictions
- improper procedure
- denial of healthcare
- wrongful death actions
- cruel and unusual punishment
- deliberate indifference
- First Amendment violations
- sexual abuse

Legal Counseling Services

Our attorneys are experienced in representing a variety of local governmental entities and special districts—including municipalities, counties, townships, park districts, school districts, and fire protection districts—in a variety of capacities, from general counsel to special counsel.

We are knowledgeable in the laws governing the critical day-to-day matters encountered by local governments, which enables us to effectively counsel our clients in the following areas:

- legislative and procedural matters
- state and federal compliance issues
- ethics and conflicts of interest
- public bidding
- purchasing and contracting
- open meeting and open records
- labor and personnel issues
- FOIA responses
- council, committee, and board meetings

- government functions and practices

- finance
- vendor contracts
- land use matters
- prosecutions
- labor negotiations
- drafting and reviewing policies, procedures, and general orders
- internal investigations (employment, racial profiling, elected officials)
- crisis response programs

Litigation Services

Our Governmental and Civil Rights attorneys have extensive experience in state and federal courts in Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri, defending §1983 actions and lawsuits alleging personal injury, property damage, and breach of contract. Further, we defend employment-related claims.

Tort Litigation

Our attorneys defend police officers, police departments, prosecutors, and local governmental entities in tort claims brought in Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri state courts. This requires an understanding of the unique laws applicable to such claims, including immunities and other defenses. We have successfully defended claims involving:

- wrongful death
- personal injury
- property damage
- negligence
- breach of contract

Employment Litigation

We also regularly represent a variety of local governmental entities in employment litigation matters. We have extensive experience in matters involving:

- discrimination
- retaliation
- wrongful discharge
- breach of employment contracts
- whistleblowers

- disability

Case Results

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

Davis and Insler Prevail Once Again in Casino Gaming License Case

JANUARY 28, 2025

Davis and Insler Prevail in Illinois Supreme Court Decision in Casino Licensing Case

NOVEMBER 19, 2024

Champlin and Hanson Obtain Summary Judgment for Municipality in Free Speech Claim

AUGUST 27, 2024

Weiner and Jansen Secure Dismissal of False Arrest Claim for Illinois Municipality

APRIL 30, 2024

Reda and Suddarth Obtain Dismissal with Prejudice for Public Water District

APRIL 4, 2024

Davis and Insler Secure Summary Judgment in a Complex §1983 and Casino Licensing Case

FEBRUARY 22, 2024

Weiner and Jansen Obtain Dismissal of Case for Municipality Client

NOVEMBER 1, 2022

Insler and Davis Secure Dismissal of Breach of Contract Lawsuit Against City of Waukegan

AUGUST 23, 2022

Jansen Gets Waukegan Negligence Case Dismissed 3 Times

Insights

News

OCTOBER 27, 2025 | FIRM NEWS

Former Assistant State's Attorney Joins Chicago Office

AUGUST 21, 2025 | RECOGNITION

Magee Named Best Lawyers' 2026 Lawyer of the Year for Two Practice Areas

MAY 20, 2025 | RECOGNITION

Magee Named to Elite List of Powerful Business and Corporate Defense Attorneys

JANUARY 6, 2025 | FIRM NEWS

HeplerBroom Adds Three New Partners

SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 | FIRM NEWS

Appellate Attorney Irina Dmitrieva Joins HeplerBroom

JUNE 14, 2022 | FIRM NEWS

Reda is Certified Mediator

JANUARY 4, 2011 | FIRM NEWS

HeplerBroom Springfield Attorneys Begin Jury Trial In Peoria Federal Court

Events

SEPTEMBER 18, 2025 | SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Four HeplerBroom Attorneys Featured at Illinois Municipal League Conference

SEPTEMBER 17, 2025 | SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Dmitrieva, Tiffany, and Weiner Help In-House Counsel Learn How to Protect Privilege

JULY 6, 2021 | SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Weiner Presents Risk Transfer Webinar

Blog Posts

DECEMBER 2, 2025 | BLOG

Tort Immunity Act Protects Illinois Park District in Badminton Injury Appeal

OCTOBER 1, 2025 | BLOG

Fourteenth Amendment Due Process Claim Fails Without Evidence Officer Knowingly Made False Report

MARCH 13, 2025 | BLOG

Tips for Navigating Candidate Nominating Papers and Electoral Board Challenges in Illinois

FEBRUARY 13, 2025 | BLOG

Recent PFAS Updates

APRIL 23, 2024 | BLOG

Jaywalking— or a Dangerous Condition of Public Property?

FEBRUARY 27, 2024 | BLOG

Law Enforcement Liability for Failing to Perform Statutory Duties in Domestic Violence Situations

DECEMBER 21, 2023 | BLOG

Illinois Supreme Court Reverses Narrow Tort Immunity Exception for Bicyclists Previously Given by First District

FEBRUARY 14, 2023 | BLOG

Child Riding Bicycle on Residential Street Not “Intended User” and Village Entitled to Immunity

AUGUST 5, 2022 | BLOG

Local Governments and Cyclists Take Note: First District Limits Recent Exception to Tort Immunity Act

MAY 24, 2022 | BLOG

First District Creates Narrow Exception to Tort Immunity Act

NOVEMBER 14, 2018 | BLOG

Step on a Crack, Break the City's Bank: Discretionary Immunity Requires a Conscious Decision to Not Repair City Sidewalks

MAY 17, 2017 | BLOG

An Illinois Supreme Court Reminder of What Constitutes Willful and Wanton Conduct under Tort Immunity Act: Barr v. Cunningham, 2017 IL 120751