



Deanna R. Cook

PARTNER

Columbus

52 East Gay Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

t: 614.464.6349
drcook@vorys.com

Practice Areas

Alcohol Beverage Law

Franchising and Distribution

Real Estate

Education

Ohio Northern University Pettit
College of Law, J.D., 2007, with
high distinction

*Ohio Northern University Law
Review, Associate Editor*

Bowling Green State University,
M.A., 1996

Bluffton College, B.A., 1993

Bar & Court Admissions

Ohio

*Admitted to practice law only in
the states listed above.*

Industries

Agriculture

Deanna is a partner in the Vorys Columbus office, with a practice focusing on franchise and distribution, liquor and alcohol beverage, and real estate law.

In her franchise practice, Deanna advises franchisors on business matters, focusing on practical solutions aligned with their priorities and goals. She assists franchisors with compliance, franchisee relationships, terminations, non-renewals, system changes, and dispute resolution. She also prepares franchise disclosure documents and agreements, and secures state franchise and business opportunity exemption registrations for clients. Deanna also serves as special franchise counsel for private equity funds, conducting due diligence and identifying risks to help clients make informed decisions, secure favorable deal terms and meet their investment objectives.

In her liquor and alcohol beverage practice, Deanna represents a variety of clients such as bars, restaurants, hotels, catering companies, performing arts venues, concert venues, non-profit fundraising organizations, grocery stores and senior living facilities. She handles permit-related issues, including permit violations, before the Ohio Division of Liquor Control and the Ohio Liquor Control Commission and advises on marketing, advertising, sponsorship and compliance with Ohio's complex liquor and alcohol beverage regulatory framework.

Deanna focuses her real estate practice on commercial leases and purchase and sale transactions, representing landlords, tenants, purchasers, sellers and lenders. She routinely leverages her knowledge of franchise, liquor and alcohol beverage, and real estate law to negotiate leases for franchisees and landlords.

The unique mix and natural overlap of Deanna's practice areas, combined with the extensive range of legal services offered by Vorys, enables her to provide holistic advice and integrated legal solutions for clients of varying industries, sizes and financial profiles.

Career highlights include:

- Representing a private equity fund in acquiring large franchisees and franchise systems, managing due diligence, advising on legal and operational risks and structuring risk-mitigation plans.
- Converting a nationwide distributorship system to a franchise system with more than 700 franchisees, ensuring legal compliance and preparing all necessary documents.
- Successfully representing a large franchisor before a state franchise agency regarding the sale of an unregistered franchise, negotiating an extremely favorable outcome for the franchisor.
- Advising a franchisor on the rollout of a new point of sale and computer system across nearly 800 franchisees and distributors, while securing franchisee buy-in.
- Preparing franchise compliance materials and conducting sales, onboarding and compliance training for numerous franchisors.
- Negotiating and drafting leases for franchisees of emerging and established franchise systems.
- Managing a project involving the acquisition and issuance of liquor permits for a national restaurant chain's Ohio locations.
- Facilitating the permitting and manufacturing of a new product to be brought to market by a craft brewery.
- Successfully navigating Ohio's three-tiered liquor permit regulatory framework to negotiate a sponsorship agreement between a nationally recognized alcohol beverage manufacturer and numerous retail licensees, delivering the client's desired outcomes.
- Advising landlord on risk-reducing practices and lease provisions, resulting in fewer instances of tenant non-compliance with key lease terms.
- Drafting leases for neonatal intensive care units for a major pediatric hospital and research institute.

Deanna received her J.D. with high distinction from the Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law, where she was an associate editor for the *Ohio Northern University Law Review* and a member of the Willis Society. She received her M.A. from Bowling Green State University and her B.A. from Bluffton College.

Honors & Recognitions

Ohio Super Lawyers Rising Stars, Real Estate, 2014, 2017

Columbus CEO Top Lawyers, Franchise Law, 2024–2025

Professional and Community Activities

Capital City Coaches for a Cure Classic (Five C), Co-founder and Board Member, 2017–Present

"Chapters 30 Franchising: Differing Perspectives of Franchisor and Franchisee and Chapter 31 Government Regulation of Franchises," *Advising Small Businesses*, Author, 2023–Present

The Mentoring Center of Central Ohio, Board Member, 2008–2010

CREW Columbus, Member, 2009–2011

Ohio Bar Association, Member

