

# Mintz Continues Hiring Spree, Taking Partners From Nixon Peabody and Sidley

The latest additions, in Boston and D.C., put the firm's lateral haul for 2020 at 21 partner additions.

By Patrick Smith  
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Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo has added former Nixon Peabody fund formation team leader Kari Harris in Boston and former longtime Sidley Austin project finance and infrastructure partner Ayaz Shaikh in Washington, D.C., as the firm continues to bulk up during the pandemic.

Bob Bodian, Mintz's managing member, said in a statement that hiring Harris is part of a greater strategy to "to build and diversify our investment funds practice and fund formation capabilities."

"Her background and expertise enhances the firm's ability to represent private investment funds in the fundraising and structuring of funds, including guidance on regulatory compliance, and institutional investors in their alternative investments. Furthermore, Kari's in-house experience and perspective as general counsel to a global family office and private equity fund help her bring effective solutions to clients," Bodian said.

Harris, who officially started at Mintz on Nov. 25, said the choice to join the firm was a mix of professional opportunity and cultural fit.

"I think for me it was becoming aware of the vibrant funds group they are building," Harris said



Courtesy photos

Ayaz Shaikh, left, and Kari Harris, right, with Mintz.

in an interview. "It seemed like a real opportunity to bring my practice, which is similar but also a bit different, and my in-house experience that gives me a business and client oriented approach, to Mintz."

She added, "The culture, the people and the firm's supportive environment for women also played a role" in her decision to move.

Harris said the move to Mintz was a solo effort and she doesn't expect any other attorneys from her former Nixon Peabody group to join in short order. She also said that she expects her clients, with which she was the primary manager of the relationship, to join her.

“Some will continue to work with Nixon, and in some cases we will both be working with them,” she said.

Shaikh, who spent the last ten years at Sidley, said while the decision to join Mintz was easy, the counterbalance of leaving Sidley wasn't.

“I have nothing but good things to say about Sidley, which I am still quite happy with,” he said. “It was a very calibrated decision that took a long time. But, coming to Mintz felt natural.”

Shaikh will join the firm as co-chair of its project development and finance practice. He has over 25 years of experience spanning 30 countries and five continents, the firm said.

Shaikh represents domestic and foreign companies, project sponsors, banks and funds, as well as governmental entities. He was an architect of the World Bank's first Prototype Carbon Fund investment, the Kyoto Protocol, which established the framework for emissions credits and clear energy projects, the firm said.

“Ayaz is an important addition to our substantial clean energy and renewables practice and his arrival is a key step in the continued expansion of

our project finance capability,” Bodian said in a statement. “As one of the top lawyers in this space, he brings skills honed across an expansive sphere of energy and infrastructure projects in both the U.S. and in emerging markets. We're delighted to welcome him to the firm.”

“Mintz was an early mover in the clean energy and sustainability arenas,” Shaikh said. “This move allows me to focus more intently on this area, and the firm has a differentiated practice in the space. It will be one of the most important growth areas in the energy sector in the next couple of decades.”

Harris and Shaikh are the latest partner hires in a busy year for Mintz on the lateral front. According to ALM data, the firm added eight partners in 2018 and 12 in 2019. The firm has now added 21 in 2020.

Nixon Peabody and Sidley did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

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