



2022 Annual Training Conference Agenda

"Back to the Future"

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

8:00 a.m. Golf Outing at The Cedar River Course, Shanty Creek Resort

2:00 p.m. Conference Registration

3:00 p.m. President's Welcome

3:15 p.m. **Roundtable of Bargaining**

Valerie A. Colbert-Osamuede, Deputy Director - Labor Relations, City of Detroit; Chelsea K. Ditz, Director Human Resources, City of Rochester Hills; and Ryan Fantuzzi, Attorney, Kirk, Huth, Lange & Badalamenti

The panelists will discuss recent and trending issues experienced in collective bargaining. Examining shifting priorities for organized employees, unique bargaining demands, and ways to effectuate a productive bargaining.

4:45 p.m. **A Year in Review: Critical Cases and Legislative Updates Affecting Michigan Public Employers**

Laura Dinon, Labor and Employment Attorney, Plunkett Cooney

This presentation will review notable state and federal cases and legislative updates (including the status of COVID-19 related legislation, orders, and rules) that impact public employers throughout the state of Michigan. Topics will include: what we've learned from a very busy Supreme Court season; addressing complicated leave issues under the FMLA and ADA; assessing critical EEOC trends; and shedding light on other important state and federal court decisions affecting Michigan public employers.

6:00 p.m. President's Reception

7:15 p.m. Fun and Food at the Dockside



Thursday, September 15, 2022

8:00 a.m. Conference Registration
MPELRA Buffet Breakfast

9:00 a.m. **The Fiduciary Duties of a DC Retirement Plan Sponsor**
Zach Karas, Principal, Retirement Plan Advisors

Sponsoring a defined contribution or deferred compensation retirement plan is complicated. It comes with risk and liability, especially in an increasingly stringent regulatory environment. Are you meeting your fiduciary obligations? This session covers the duties that you must fulfill as the sponsor of and a fiduciary to your employees' workplace retirement plan.

10:30 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions A and B (choose one):**

Session A. **The Great Resignation: Trends and Strategies for Effectively Retaining, Engaging and Attracting Talent**

Chadd Hodgkinson, Area Senior Vice President, Gallagher

"The Great Resignation" has created a talent retention and attraction crisis for all employers. This session will explore current data and trends among employers, managers and employees along with concepts that are key to understanding drivers of talent retention and attraction. Attendees will learn strategies being employed to effectively compete for talent as individuals continue to exit the U.S. workforce at an alarming rate.

Session B. **The Strategy Enigma: How do I have time to be strategic when I'm so busy?**

Cynthia H. Pepper, Director of Human Resources, City of Dearborn

'I'm too busy to take the time to be strategic' is a statement I have heard for 30 years as a management consultant here and abroad. This presentation discusses a seven-step process for addressing this common dilemma plaguing leaders at all levels in all industries. Seemingly trapped on an operational fire-fighting treadmill, opportunities for key strategic initiatives can slip by because it's too difficult to carve out the blocks of time thought to be necessary to devote to strategic thinking and planning. This seminar walks through an easily-acquirable approach to strategic thinking and planning based on tools drawn from other disciplines and supported by neuroscience. Participants will learn how the power of questions and data pictures can allow comprehensive, potent strategies to emerge in incremental steps and the fullness of time. Attention will be paid to internal inputs as well as the six key external drivers of change that impact the success of any strategic initiative.

12:00 p.m. MPELRA Luncheon

1:15 p.m. **Understanding the Business Case for DEI and 10 Key Strategies Towards Implementation**

Darlene King-CDP, Executive Director, Michigan Diversity Council

This session is designed to help organizations and municipalities understand the business case for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). It will cover how the work will improve internal and external organizational characteristics, which set the stage for innovation and growth. Additionally, the ten key benchmark strategies of implementation will be shared in efforts to provide national best practices for development and delivery.

- 2:45 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions C and D (choose one):**
- Session C. **Union Organizing Efforts and the Challenges of Negotiating a First Contract with a Newly Organized Group**
Gregory T. Schultz, Partner, Keller Thoma, P.C.
- Most public employers are familiar with the process and challenges of bargaining collective agreements with its current unions. However, negotiating a first collective bargaining agreement with a newly formed union presents a situation that is very different from the more common experience negotiating a successor agreement with a current union. In this session, we will explore some of the basics of union organizing efforts in the public sector, and explore challenges presented in both union organizing efforts and the subsequent bargaining of a first collective bargaining agreement with a newly organized union. The session will also prepare attendees for this potential experience with a newly formed union by addressing techniques and processes that can be used to address the challenges, and will concurrently serve as a refresher for bargaining with current unions.
- Session D. **Responding to Your First Responders - Supporting the Behavioral Health Needs of the Police and Fire Personnel**
Susan Styf, LMSW, CAADC, CCS, CEAP, President & CEO, CARE of Southeastern Michigan
- This presentation will assist the human resources professional in supporting the unique behavioral health needs of the first responders. Participants will learn the different categories of trauma that first responders experience over a career, how to support the police/fire leadership to better recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in personnel, current best practices to manage trauma in first responders, services available to support personnel, and the future of peer support teams for first responders and how the human resources department can help.
- 5:30 p.m. Reception
- 6:30 p.m. Banquet
- 8:00 p.m. An Evening of Entertainment

Friday, September 16, 2022

- 8:00 a.m. Annual Business Meeting – Election of Officers, Annual Reports and MPELRA Buffet Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. **MERC Case Update and More Since Mid-COVID-19**
Sidney McBride, Bureau Director, Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC)
- This session will provide an overview of key MERC case rulings and other aspects since January 2021 (mid-COVID-19).
- 10:30 a.m. **Dueling Attorneys**
Brandon Fournier, Partner, Shifman Fournier and Peter Sudnick, President, SudnickLaw, P.C.
- Labor attorneys Brandon Fournier and Peter Sudnick will breakdown a series of workplace issues and analyze the scenarios from a management and labor union perspective and offer insight from both sides of the table to assist in achieving the best outcomes.
- 11:45 a.m. Prize Drawing (*You must be present to win!*)
- 12 Noon Adjourn

Meet the Speakers

Listed in Order of Presentation

Valerie Colbert-Osamuede, Deputy Director-Labor Relations, City of Detroit
Wednesday, September 14, 2022, 3:15 PM: Roundtable of Bargaining

Valerie Colbert-Osamuede is Deputy Director of Labor Relations for the City of Detroit. The City of Detroit Labor Relations is responsible for the negotiation and administration of over 30 Master and Supplemental Agreements for the City's unionized workforce. As Deputy Director, Valerie is responsible for the daily management and direction of the Labor Relations Staff, developing labor policies, advising executive management, department directors and managers on labor matters. Valerie serves as Chief Negotiator for the principle collective bargaining agreements and oversees both the union and non-union grievance and arbitration process. Prior to serving as Deputy Director, she was the City's Chief Labor and Employment Attorney managing the City of Detroit's Labor and Employment Division to include the labor and employment practice group, police misconduct, and worker's compensation. Valerie is experienced in advocacy, policy development, collective bargaining which includes Fact Finding and Act 312 proceedings, grievance and arbitration administration, representation, and unfair labor practice litigation before the Michigan Employment Relations Commission. Ms. Colbert-Osamuede earned her Bachelor of Arts at Michigan State University-James Madison College and her Juris Doctor from Case Western Reserve University.

Chelsea K. Ditz, Director Human Resources, City of Rochester Hills
Wednesday, September 14, 2022, 3:15 PM: Roundtable of Bargaining

Chelsea Ditz combines her passion for labor law, problem solving, and strategic organizational development as an HR professional with a legal background. With a strong labor background, from her experiences at the UAW and SEIU Healthcare Michigan, Chelsea found herself aligned with management perspectives on problem solving. As an Associate Attorney at Keller Thoma, P.C., practicing in labor and employment law, with a primary focus on municipal clients, Chelsea drove to provide her clients legal and strategic organizational development direction. Combining these interests, Chelsea joined the HR profession in 2019 and served as Associate Director of Academic Human Resources at the University of Michigan, before returning to municipal work and joining the City of Rochester Hills as HR Director in February 2021.

Ryan Fantuzzi, Attorney, Kirk, Huth, Lange & Badalamenti
Wednesday, September 14, 2022, 3:15 PM: Roundtable of Bargaining

Ryan Fantuzzi practices labor and employment law with Kirk, Huth, Lange & Badalamenti PLC. Ryan proudly serves law enforcement leaders in employment disciplinary matters, arbitration, and collective bargaining. He treasures living in a free country with his wife Emina and son Dean.

Laura Dinon, Labor and Employment Attorney, Plunkett Cooney
Wednesday, September 14, 2022, 4:45 PM: A Year in Review: Critical Cases and Legislative Updates Affecting Michigan Public Employers

Laura Dinon is a Labor and Employment Attorney at Plunkett Cooney. Ms. Dinon has been practicing law for over 30 years, focusing on representing public and private employers in all aspects of employment law including labor relations. Ms. Dinon works out of Plunkett Cooney's Petoskey, Michigan office but practices in federal and state courts across the state. She also represents her broad client base in arbitrations and administrative agency hearings.

Zach Karas, Principal, Retirement Plan Advisors

Thursday, September 15, 2022, 9:00 AM: The Fiduciary Duties of a DC Retirement Plan Sponsor

Zach began his career with a leading governmental plan provider in 1984 and spent over 24 years in their retirement plans practice. In 2009, he joined Retirement Plan Advisors, where today he serves as a Principal leading the firm's Plan Support Team.

Zach's professional experience encompasses all elements of governmental defined contribution and deferred compensation plans, including but not limited to plan design, plan operations, investment advisory services, fiduciary oversight, regulatory compliance, marketing, vendor management and search services, and participant enrollment and education.

A graduate of Connecticut College, Zach earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics. He holds FINRA Series 6, 26, 63, and 65 registrations, and is licensed to offer life, health and accident, and variable contracts insurance.

Chadd Hodkinson, Area Senior Vice President, Gallagher

Thursday, September 15, 2022, 10:30 AM: Concurrent Session A: The Great Resignation: Trends and Strategies for Effectively Retaining, Engaging and Attracting Talent

Chadd is an Area Senior Vice President with Gallagher, one of the largest insurance brokers in the world, and leads Gallagher's public sector practice in their Bloomfield Hills, Michigan office. Chadd and his team consult with public sector employers to evaluate and optimize their benefit program strategy and overall people strategy with a focus on long term sustainability and optimal talent attraction, retention and engagement. He regularly presents related thought leadership to a broad range of public sector professional associations. Chadd lives in East Lansing, Michigan with his wife and four children.

Cynthia H. Pepper, Director of Human Resources, City of Dearborn

Thursday, September 15, 2022, 10:30 AM: Concurrent Session B: THE STRATEGY ENIGMA: How do I have time to be strategic when I'm so busy?

Cynthia H. Pepper, Director of Human Resources at the City of Dearborn and Principal of Pepper Consulting Group, LLC, is a seasoned professional in the areas of human resources and organizational development.

For over thirty years, Ms. Pepper has served as a consultant to organizations in the midst of change, aligning HR programs with the strategic goals and supporting the business operations. Her focus has been primarily state and municipal government, higher education, and the utility sector – institutions where legal, regulatory, and labor issues add complexity to management operations.

A licensed counselor certified in many individual, team, and organizational assessment tools, Ms. Pepper has extensive experience providing consultative support focusing on culture change, team dynamics, design and delivery of professional development programs, and as a private executive coach.

Ms. Pepper has led the HR Department in Dearborn for eight years, using her experience to lead the reengineering of HR operations and strategic planning for these challenging times.

Her undergraduate focus on biopsychology, graduate focus on ethology, and 30+ years in HR/OD provide the background for her work at the nexus of human and organizational behavior. Her research has been published in international professional journals and she is a contributing author for two books on culture change.

In addition to her professional career, Ms. Pepper has served as a volunteer in leadership roles on many local, state and national boards and foundations.

She and her husband, an attorney and the State Representative for Dearborn, share a bunch of kids, a handful of grandchildren, and a strong commitment to service.



Darlene King-CDP, Executive Director, Michigan Diversity Council
Thursday, September 15, 2022, 1:15 PM: Understanding the Business Case for DEI and 10 Key Strategies towards Implementation

Darlene King, CDP began her career with the Michigan Diversity Council-MIDC, a division of the National Diversity Council, in 2015. As the executive director, her charge is working with corporations and organizations in developing diversity and inclusion initiatives, programs, processes, and procedures. She also oversees the growth of the council in the area of business development, consulting and training and development throughout the entire state of Michigan as well as nationally.

Prior to her tenure with the MIDC, she held the role of director of events, consultant services, training and development for all 34 school districts under the Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency for over 10 years. Her territory covered implementation and execution of all workshops and conferences as well as maintaining CEU's for teachers and administrators within Wayne County MI. She managed more than 60 consultants as well as county-wide, signature events such as the Teacher Job Fair, County K-12 Art Fair and the Cultural Collaborative for Learning. Darlene was also an inaugural member of the Diversity Strategic Planning Committee, which rolled out a county-wide diversity plan for all districts.

Darlene's background is widespread. She spent six years as a national concert promoter, traveling around the world with some of today's most popular artists in the industry. She has produced and promoted shows at every concert venue in Detroit and beyond.

In 2008, she launched her consulting company, Life's Journey Training and Consulting. Competing in today's global market, Life's Journey offers services in industries ranging from education to automotive, medical, non-profits and manufacturing. Its area of expertise consists of diversity and inclusion, leadership development, marketing, and public relations. Life's Journey has provided service deliverables to Wayne County Head Start Programs, Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency, The Order of the Fisherman, The Detroit Medical Center, Revival Home Health Care, RTM Music Group, Real Times Media, Stonecrest Behavioral Health, Detroit Area Agency on Aging, Universal Studios, Detroit Community Schools, MASCO Corporation, Diversity Lansing and many more.

Darlene is a native of Michigan and enjoys spending time with her family, nephews and niece. She says her faith in God, family, passion for people and her love of traveling and gardening are the drivers which keep her on a Life's Journey. Darlene has a passion for people and earned a bachelor's degree in public relations and marketing from Wayne State University in Detroit. She has been operating in this capacity as well as in education and organizational development for 25 years. Darlene earned her National Certification as a Certified Diversity and Inclusion Professional in 2018.

Gregory T. Schultz, Partner, Keller Thoma, P.C.

Thursday, September 15, 2022, 2:45 PM: Concurrent Session C: Union Organizing Efforts and the Challenges of Negotiating a First Contract with A Newly Organized Group

Gregg Schultz practices in all areas of labor and employment, almost exclusively in the area of public sector labor relations, with an emphasis on collective bargaining, grievance arbitration and general contract administration. He has also been heavily involved in representation of his clients in Act 312 arbitrations, fact-finding proceedings and unfair labor practice matters before the Michigan Employment Relations Commission. He has extensive experience in assisting local governments in cost containment in health insurance, pensions and other budget items. Mr. Schultz also helps employers manage risks associated with statutory and regulatory compliance, employee disciplinary and termination actions, harassment and discrimination claims, and employee handbook and policy manuals.

Mr. Schultz is a 1992 cum laude graduate of the University of Detroit School of Law and received his undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Michigan in 1989.



Susan Styf, LMSW, CAADC, CCS, CEAP, President & CEO, CARE of Southeastern Michigan
Thursday, September 15, 2022, 2:45 PM: Concurrent Session D: Responding to Your First Responders - Supporting the Behavioral Health Needs of the Police and Fire Personnel

Susan Styf is President & CEO of CARE of Southeastern Michigan. She is a licensed social worker who has over 30 years of experience in the field of behavioral health services. Ms. Styf specializes in treating substance use disorders and providing trauma focused services for first responders. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Miami University, and a Master of Social Work from the University of Michigan. CARE of Southeastern Michigan is a nonprofit behavioral health organization based in Macomb County. CARE provides employee assistance programs to municipalities, school districts and fellow nonprofits with an emphasis on trauma informed and crisis response services.

Sidney McBride, Bureau Director, Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC)
Friday, September 16, 2022, 9:00 AM: MERC Case Update and More Since Mid- COVID-19

Sidney joined the agency in 2009 having held positions of Administrative Law Specialist, MERC Labor Mediator Mediation Division Administrator, and since 2020-- Bureau Director. During this period, Sidney has engaged in key responsibilities that have included research and drafting Commission case decisions, conducting representation elections, administering the agency's Act 312 and Fact-Finding programs, spearheading training initiatives and rule-making projects, as well as oversight of special projects such as the 2019 replacement of the agency's obsolete case tracking system, launch of a voluntary mediation program for unfair labor practice and election cases, as well as, the agency's expanded application of virtual and remote services. In Summer 2020, Sidney spear-headed the agency's use of a fast-track virtual mediation process (along with FMCS mediators) to successfully resolve contract disputes involving a prominent health services union and 19 metro area nursing facilities--thereby preventing major work stoppages during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Before MERC, Sidney worked for 20 years at the state's largest circuit court in labor and management roles-- Local President and Associate Court Administrator. This experience involved relevant functions such as collective bargaining, grievance processing, as well as arbitration and MERC proceedings.

Sidney has served as board member on various labor-management affiliations, most recently being the Michigan Labor Management Association (until 2021) and Association of Labor Relations Agencies (current). He is an active member of the State Bar of Michigan and member of its Labor and Employment Law Section. A lifelong Detroit resident, he regularly participates in various volunteer organizations for which, at times, he provides pro bono consultation.

Brandon Fournier, Partner, Shifman Fournier
Friday, September 16, 2022, 10:30 AM: Dueling Attorneys

Brandon J. Fournier is a partner in the firm of Shifman Fournier. He possesses a juris doctor degree from Wayne State University Law School. His diverse career in municipal law began with his appointment as City Administrator for the City of Southgate. During this time, he served as the Director of Labor Relations and Operations for the City. This included overseeing the City's Department of Law. During his tenure, Mr. Fournier was recognized by Crain's Detroit Business Prestigious 20 in their 20's Program as a regional leader for innovation and sound government management.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Fournier has negotiated numerous collective bargaining agreements, presented Act 312 arbitrations, handled grievance arbitrations, actively designed, and maximized employee benefit programs and assisted with benefit compliance and implementation. In 2018, Mr. Fournier was honored with receiving the Michigan Municipal League Outstanding Service Award for his work representing the MML for a variety of legislative issues including the recent focus on retiree health care, which resulted in the adoption of Public Act 202 of 2017. Mr. Fournier continues to enjoy the pleasure of serving as Special Counsel to the Michigan Municipal League for matters of labor and employment relations.



Peter Sudnick, President, SudnickLaw, P.C.
Friday, September 16, 2022, 10:30 AM: Dueling Attorneys

Peter Sudnick is the President of SudnickLaw, P.C. which was established in 2008 following his employment as a partner at the full-service law firm of Dean & Fulkerson located in Troy, Michigan. He graduated cum laude from Detroit College of Law, now Michigan State University College of Law. He is a labor and employment attorney representing employers in the transportation service industries and public sector police unions, including the Detroit Police Lieutenants and Sergeants Association, the Warren Police Officers Association, and the Police Officers Labor Council.

Mr. Sudnick has a unique combination of experience handling contract negotiations, grievance and interest arbitrations, unfair labor practice hearings, unit clarification petitions, labor injunctions, EEOC complaints, and civil litigation involving the defense of wrongful termination, sexual harassment, and race, sex, age, and handicapped civil rights actions. He was retained to represent the interests of active uniformed employees in the historic Detroit bankruptcy case. He has served as an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association and Michigan Employment Relations Commission. He also served as an adjunct professor at the Macomb County Community College and was listed by **dbusiness**, Detroit's premier business journal, as one of Metro Detroit's Top Lawyers in 2010.