

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 3:00 PM

Strategic Planning for the Public Sector: Why It Matters and How to Make It Work

Becky Davenport, Founding Partner, Strategiz, LLC



Becky has provided strategic planning and business development consulting services for nonprofit and for-profit companies over the past 25 years. Becky is a founding partner of Strategiz, LLC, launched in 2012. Strategiz is focused on assisting organizations in strategic planning, operational consulting, retreat facilitation, executive coaching and leadership development. Becky and Al Herbach founded Strategiz in 2012 to bring best-in-class strategic planning, executive coaching, and operational consulting to organizations. Over the past 13 years, Strategiz has supported area organizations including Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, Downtown Detroit Partnership, City of Sterling Heights, DRCFA &

Huntington Place, Visit Detroit, Velocity Center, SER-Metro, Samaritan Center, M-1 Rail, Detroit PBS, College for Creative Studies, Grosse Pointe Academy, Build Institute, MoGo, Ruth Ellis Center, Junior Achievement of Southeastern Michigan, Grosse Pointe War Memorial, and Grosse Pointe Public Library. Please see our website strategiz.com for a complete listing of clients and services.

Becky was part of the interim management team for the Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority when the Authority was formed in 2009. The interim team developed a comprehensive strategic plan for the Authority; financial operating statements and financial projections; recommendations regarding the future funding of the organization; and establishment of strategic and financial operating initiatives. Becky has continued to support the DRCFA and the Huntington Place Operations team in a variety of business planning and business management processes including quarterly Balanced Scorecard reports for the DRCFA Board and annual business planning. Becky has provided strategic planning support for other convention centers managed by ASM Global in destinations including Mobile, AL; Florence, SC; Pittsburgh, PA; and Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Becky, as a partner in The Macke Group, participated in the development of the strategic plan and launch of TechTown including program design and entrepreneurial support. Becky launched their first entrepreneurial program, the Frontline Accelerator for Science and Technology, to accelerate the commercialization of start-up and early stage businesses. Becky supported the development of the M1 Light Rail financial framework and business plan from 2009 through 2013 and developed a strategic plan for the organization in 2021 that led to the transition to the RTA. Becky worked with the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy on a variety of projects from business and financial planning to recruitment and programming initiatives.

Becky developed and taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate business at Wayne State University for over 18 years and taught in-person and online business courses for Walsh College. Becky mentored students through the DePaul Coleman Entrepreneur Center; taught a continuing education program known as Start-Up Chicago, and developed and taught an entrepreneurial class designed for formerly incarcerated individuals to provide the skills and resources necessary for them to develop and launch successful businesses.

Prior to her teaching and consulting practices, Becky spent 15 years in global account sales and marketing for AT&T in Boston and Detroit. She has been an active member of her community as a nonprofit Board Chair, board member, trustee and chairperson for numerous fundraising events.

Becky has an MBA from the University of Colorado and a BS from the University of Texas. Becky is an accredited Peer to Peer Facilitator from the Edward Lowe Foundation.

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 4:30 PM

Trial By Fire: A Legal Update

Helen “Lizzie” Mills, Attorney, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes, PLC



Helen “Lizzie” Mills brings extensive experience advising public sector clients on challenges ranging from policy development to regulatory compliance, employment matters, and collective bargaining agreement administration and negotiations. Recognized by Best Lawyers and Super Lawyers, Lizzie’s dedication and leadership have earned her a reputation as a trusted expert in the field. Her ability to anticipate and navigate within evolving legislative developments allows her to provide proactive, expert guidance to help clients navigate new laws before they take effect and manage those that are already around, haunting us. Lizzie’s exceptional advocacy, strategic insight, and attention to detail make her an indispensable partner and a sought-after speaker at industry conferences where she shares practical strategies to help employers confidently address the many complex labor and employment law challenges before them.

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 9:00 AM

Labor Arbitration Workshop

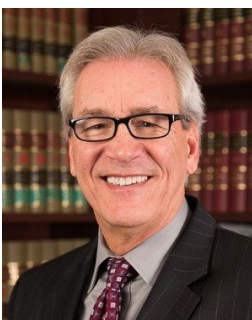
Brandon Fournier, Attorney, Shifman Fournier PLC



Brandon 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. 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. In 2023 he was recognized by Crain’s Detroit Business’ as a Notable Leader in Employment & Labor Law.

Peter Sudnick, Attorney, Peter P. Sudnick PC



Peter Sudnick is the President of Sudnick Law, 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.

Doyle O'Connor, Arbitrator



Doyle O'Connor is a Member of the National Academy of Arbitrators and serves exclusively as a labor arbitrator nationally, primarily in the Mid-West. He possesses 50 years of full-time involvement in labor relations, having served 30 years as an advocate and later as an ALJ hearing MERC cases for 7-years, with over 200 formal decisions as an ALJ and nearly 600 Awards as an Arbitrator. O'Connor also served a term as a member of the Michigan Board of Canvassers.

Having represented both management and labor as an advocate and trial attorney, Mr. O'Connor brings to cases a body of knowledge, and a deep understanding of the institutional needs of the parties, derived from multiple industries and employment settings and varied dispute resolution mechanisms. He has a solid background in private sector, general public sector, and Federal sector labor relations disputes, and serves on multiple permanent panels including: DTE Energy-UWUA; Cook County Illinois Sheriff (CCSD)-Teamsters L 700; CCSD-FOP; CCSD-AFSCME (Lts & Sgts); Cook County JTDC-Teamsters; U of M-COAM & POAM/COAM; UM-UMAPP; UM-UMSTU; POAM/COAM & various municipalities; Oakland County-UAW; ATU-Detroit SMART Bus System; USPS-NALC; New York State Ed Dept.; SEIU HCMI-Nursing Homes.

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 11:15 AM

Docs or It Didn't Happen: The Importance of Proper HR Documentation

Megan Norris, Attorney, Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone



Megan Norris is one of Michigan's most respected employment attorneys, with decades of experience advising public and private employers on workplace issues and defending them in complex litigation. She is nationally recognized for her expertise in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and other key employment laws that public employers navigate daily.

Megan works closely with clients on all aspects of employment counseling—from performance management and discipline to conducting workplace investigations and developing proactive compliance strategies. She is known for her practical, no-nonsense approach and ability to solve tough problems with clarity and confidence. Megan is one of the original authors for the MPELRA Michigan Public Employment and Labor Relations Law handbook.

As a litigator, Megan has served as lead counsel in high-profile cases across the country. She represents employers in claims involving discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful discharge, and other employment-related torts. In addition to employment matters, she has handled ADA cases involving student accommodations and access issues in the public sector.

A sought-after speaker and trainer, Megan has presented on employment topics for the National Employment Law Institute, the National Association of College and University Attorneys, the Vermont Conference for Legal Issues in Higher Education, and the Institute of Continuing Legal Education, among others, and regularly conducts training for all incoming police and fire fighters for the City of Kalamazoo.

Her honors and recognitions include:

- Fellow, College of Labor and Employment Lawyers
- Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers
- Band 1 ranking in *Chambers USA*
- “Lawyer of the Year,” *Best Lawyers in America*
- Top 100 Lawyers and Top 25 Women Business Lawyers, *Super Lawyers*
- Crain’s Detroit Business 100 Most Influential Women in Michigan
- Distinguished Service Award, State Bar of Michigan Labor and Employment Law Section

Megan also maintains an active role in legal and civic leadership. She has served on the United States District Court Local Rules Advisory Committee; American Bar Association, Litigation and Labor and Employment Sections; State Bar of Michigan, Labor and Employment Law Section Council; Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association and the Detroit Barristers’ Association, where she has served as president and board member; the Institute of Continuing Legal Education Labor Advisory Board; and the National Employment Law Institute Advisory Board. She was appointed by Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer to a five year term on the Detroit Police Commission, where she served as chair from 2003 to 2004.

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 1:30 PM

Understanding the Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA): A Guide for Public Employers

**Andrew Niedzinski, Director, Wage and Hour Division
Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity**



As the State Division Administrator for Michigan Wage and Hour, Andrew Niedzinski ensures that workers across Michigan receive fair wages and labor protections. He leads efforts to enhance efficiency, employer education, and enforcement actions to uphold state labor laws.

From 2020 to 2025, Andrew served as the City Manager of Vassar, where he developed intergovernmental partnerships and improved municipal efficiency. Before that, he was an elected Bay City Commissioner for seven years, focusing on policy and governance.

Andrew holds a Master of Public Administration from Central Michigan University and is a Michigan Certified Assessing officer. He resides in Bay City with his wife and two daughters.

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 3:00 PM

AI in HR: Smart, Practical & Hands-On Applications for Michigan’s Public Sector

Anthony Moggio, Finance Director & Treasurer, City of Rochester



Anthony Moggio is a dedicated public servant and accomplished finance professional with a deep commitment to community involvement. As the Finance Director & Treasurer for the City of Rochester, he manages the city's budgeting, finances, strategic planning, and capital projects. His role extends beyond finance as he also serves as a Captain with the Rochester Fire Department, where he applies his expertise in emergency preparedness and operations. Additionally, Anthony plays a critical role in county-wide emergency management as the Finance Section Chief for the Oakland County Incident Management Team.

Anthony's journey into public service began after earning an associate degree in business from Oakland Community College and a bachelor's degree in accounting

from Oakland University. At just 24, he ventured into entrepreneurship, purchasing his first business. However, his true calling led him back to public service, where his leadership and innovation have made a significant impact.

Recognized for his contributions, Anthony was named one of Oakland County Executive's Oakland Together 40 Under 40 Class of 2023. In 2023, he also received the prestigious Professional Recognition in Municipal Excellence (PRIME) Award from the Michigan Municipal Treasurers Association (MMTA), underscoring his leadership and commitment to municipal finance and community development.

Outside of work, Anthony enjoys spending quality time with his family, including his wife, Laura, and their two children, William and Violet. They share a love for outdoor adventures, particularly vacationing "up north," snowmobiling, skiing, and visiting water parks. His family remains a constant source of inspiration, motivating him to excel in both his personal and professional life.

Joellen LaBaere Haines, Human Resources Director, City of Rochester



Joellen Haines is an accomplished professional with over 25 years of diverse experience spanning municipal government, law enforcement, and private industry. She currently serves as the Human Resources Director for the City of Rochester, Michigan, where she plays a pivotal role in shaping and managing all facets of HR policy and operations for the organization. Known for her ability to operate effectively as a one-person HR department, Joellen brings strategic insight, operational excellence, and a deep commitment to employee and organizational development.

Before transitioning into municipal leadership, Joellen spent a significant portion of her early career in law enforcement. She served as a road patrol officer for the Pompano Beach Police Department with a specialization in OUIL (Operating Under the Influence of Liquor) investigations. Her policing experience also includes roles as a full-time and part-time police and fire dispatcher in Pompano Beach, Dearborn, and Birmingham, Michigan—providing her with a strong foundation in crisis management, public safety communication, and frontline service.

Her contributions extend beyond the public sector. In the private industry, Joellen began her professional journey as a marketing coordinator for GMARA, a General Motors joint venture, where she excelled in developing internal communications and training materials. She later worked as a technical editor and writer for General Motors Pontiac East Assembly, further sharpening her communication and editorial skills.

Throughout her municipal career, Joellen has led initiatives in recruitment, labor relations, employee benefits, workplace safety, and policy development. She is a trusted advisor to city leadership and has represented management in negotiations with four labor unions. Her credentials include a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Oakland University. She is also an active member of SHRM, OakMac SHRM and MPELRA, and maintains certifications in suicide prevention, opioid response, mental health first aid, and active threat assessment.

Joellen's multifaceted career showcases a unique blend of frontline service, strategic leadership, and a steadfast dedication to public service and employee wellbeing.

Friday, September 26, 2025, 9:00 AM

Strategic Compensation Planning and Communicating with Your Governing Board

Jaymes Vettraino, Managing Partner, Vettraino Consulting LLC



A committed public servant professional, Jaymes provides municipal management consulting services to communities. His focus is on assisting with facilitation, executive recruitment, operational management, community relations, human resources, and financial planning. Since 2015, Jaymes has completed over 100 consulting projects with cities, counties, villages, townships, and authorities across the State of Michigan.

Prior to starting his consulting service and academic career, Jaymes spent 17 years as a City Manager. Most recently as the City Manager of Rochester, MI, where he led a dynamic management team to simultaneously reduce expenses and increase the level of community service during years of the “great recession.” During his time as the Manager of Kutztown, PA, Jaymes had the opportunity to lead the town in the

development of its own fiber-to-the-home service and strengthen its town-gown relations with Kutztown University. Jaymes also had the privilege to be the first Manager of Pen Argyl, PA, where he led the community through organizational development initiatives and many grant funded quality of life improvement projects.

As a full-time faculty member of Rochester University (Rochester Hills, MI) and Department Chair of the School of Business, Management and Leadership program, Jaymes focuses on accelerating RU’s development of students that have a passion for social and community impact. During his time at RU, he has restructured the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Management degree and created a new BBA, Nonprofit Management program to better serve students’ calling to be a positive influence in the world. Exercising his passion for the community, he leads RU’s campus-wide civic engagement efforts. He has also launched several community initiatives, including a partnership with Oakland County (MI) to develop local government leaders.

Jaymes is married to Lynne and they have two children, Lia and JJ. He has an MBA in Management from Lehigh University (Bethlehem, PA) and a BA in Political Science from Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI).

Friday, September 26, 2025, 10:30 AM

MERC Case Update & More

Sidney McBride, Bureau Director, Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC)



Sidney McBride joined the MERC staff in 2009 and has held various positions including Election Officer, Administrative Law Specialist, Labor Mediator, Mediation Director, and since February, 2020 Bureau Director. During his time at MERC, Sidney has been directly involved in key functions which have included research and writing Commission decisions, conducting representation elections, administering the agency’s Act 312 and Fact-Finding programs, spearheading special projects, training initiatives, rule-making projects and the recent acquisition of the agency’s case management system. Sidney is a proponent of the agency’s use of advancing technology evidenced by current services that include virtual mediation and training; voluntary mediation of ULP and election cases; e-signatures on show of interest documents and live stream viewing of the monthly Commission meetings and when requested factfinding and Act 312 hearings.

Prior to MERC, Sidney worked for many years at this state’s largest circuit court in management and labor roles where he was involved in activities such as collective bargaining, grievance and arbitration matters, and MERC proceedings. He is an active board member of industry related organizations such as the Detroit LERA Chapter and the (International) Association of Labor Relations Agencies (ALRA). Sidney is also a licensed attorney and active member of the State Bar of Michigan Labor and Employment Law Section.