

2026 Public Sector Employment Law Seminar

Conducted by:

CLARK BAIRD SMITH LLP



Featuring the Following Plenary Sessions:

If You Were the Arbitrator, How Would You Rule? Sharpen your skills in this interactive session. Participants will be presented with real-world scenarios involving contract interpretation and disciplinary grievances. After reviewing the facts and hearing oral arguments from CBS LLP attorneys, you'll step into the role of arbitrator and determine how you would rule.

We are honored to welcome Arbitrator Barry E. Simon, a distinguished member of the National Academy of Arbitrators, who serves on numerous state boards and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) panels. A respected lecturer and author in the field of arbitration, Arbitrator Simon will share his expert insights, issue an award, and explain the reasoning behind his decision. Join us for this unique opportunity to test your judgment, learn from a leading authority, and deepen your understanding of arbitration practice.

Collective Bargaining Trends and Issues – Gain valuable insights into the evolving landscape of public sector labor relations in this comprehensive review of recent Illinois and national collective bargaining trends and issues. This session will explore key developments affecting negotiations, contract administration, and labor-management relations across government sectors.

Potpourri of Employment Law Issues – Join us for an in-depth dive of key developments from the past year and gain a comprehensive understanding of how these developments impact public sector employment, along with practical insights for compliance and policy implementation.

Thursday, March 12, 2026

8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

(Registration begins 7:45 a.m.)

Ask the Attorney Reception Follows

Drury Lane Theater & Conference Center

100 Drury Lane

Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

And, Your Choice of Two Breakout Sessions ...

Each attendee will have the opportunity to participate in two breakout sessions — one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Please review the following topic descriptions.

Wait, There's More! Ask the Attorney Reception ...

Be sure to stay for our **Ask the Attorney Reception** – an opportunity to follow-up with the speakers and network with colleagues!

Breakout Session Descriptions

- Each attendee must select a morning and afternoon breakout session when registering.
- Classes will be assigned in order of receipt of registration ... first-come, first served.
- Registrants will receive a receipt once registered listing their desired class assignments. Final class assignments will be distributed at the seminar.

AM Only: Beyond Basics: Taking a “Deeper Dive” Into What the FMLA Requires: Most employers have a basic understanding about their obligations under the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA). In many cases, those “basics” do not help answer more complex questions ranging from suspicions of FMLA abuse to recertification timelines to intermittent leave calculations for non-traditional work schedules (e.g., firefighters). This session will address these and other less frequent FMLA issues that confront employers.

PM Only: Interest Arbitration for First Contract and Beyond: With the legislature’s recent expansion of interest arbitration rights to non-public safety units with more than 35 employees, employers must be prepared with a comprehensive understanding of interest arbitration strategies and implications, especially as they relate to units negotiating over their first ever collective bargaining agreement. Participants will also be updated on interest arbitration trends and settlements over the last year to help prepare for effective interest arbitrations.

Ready, Set, Negotiate! The Importance and Power of Preparation: Successful negotiation outcomes rarely happen by accident. Instead, meeting or exceeding bargaining goals are normally the outgrowth of strategic planning, information collection and analysis, development of a meaningful plan, followed by organized management support and measured execution at the table. Information is key, strategy is essential, and the ability to respond and react quickly with information in support of proposals is critical. However, all of this takes substantial pre-planning and thoughtful preparation throughout the process. In this session we will discuss key preparation steps such as: identifying/redefining external comparability, external comparability data and analysis, internal comparability data, and how to develop and effectively use information to achieve the best possible result in bargaining and/or to best position the employer to during impasse procedures, among other related issues.

From Performance Appraisals to Fallout: Avoiding Legal Landmines: Join us for a session on an often-maligned topic. We will explore the critical aspects of conducting effective performance appraisals and, most importantly, how to adequately summarize how an employee is actually performing. We’ll also discuss best practices to mitigate liabilities, ensure fairness, and uphold compliance standards. Lastly, we’ll highlight the more sensitive issues grappled with in performance reviews and how to avoid common pitfalls that can lead to legal complications. Don’t miss it!

What Negotiators Need to Know About the FLSA (including tax implications of the Big Beautiful Bill): Learn what contract language to negotiate – and what contract language to avoid – when tackling wage-hour compliance issues. Wage and hour compliance is more important than ever before, in part because the “No Tax on Overtime” legislation creates the opportunity for problems with the IRS if an employer calculates overtime rates of pay incorrectly. Furthermore, unions are becoming more astute at training their members on important wage and hour laws. Management needs to be a step ahead of their labor counterparts. Mistakes can and have been made during contract negotiations that make payroll more difficult to calculate more expensive than anticipated, or in the worst-case scenario, create liability for public employers.

Off Duty Misconduct – They Did What? And What Can I Do About That?: What did they post to Facebook? Who got arrested? He’s a member of what group? She gave a statement to the media? What did he say to the Village Board? They did what with a client/customer/contact from work? Public employers are often faced with challenging questions about whether and how to address like situations. This session will address what constitutes actionable off-duty conduct, the legal issues surrounding decisions to address them, and practical advice for solving problems.

Strategies and Recent Legal Developments in Public Safety Benefits Under the Pension Code and PSEBA: Join us for an intensive analysis and discuss recent updates about PSEBA and disability pension law, and learn best practices for responding to Police and Fire Department employees who report workplace injuries.



TENTATIVE AGENDA

7:45 – 8:30 am	Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:30 – 8:45 am	WELCOME: IPELRA President Tameika Jones
8:45 – 10:30 am	Plenary Session: If You Were the Arbitrator, How Would You Rule? - Guest Arbitrator: Barry E. Simon
10:30 – 10:45 am	Break
10:45 – Noon	<u>AM Breakouts:</u> • Beyond FMLA Basics: Taking a “Deeper Dive” Into What the FMLA Requires • Ready, Set, Negotiate! The Importance and Power of Preparation • Off Duty Misconduct – They Did What? And What Can I Do About That? • What Negotiators Need to Know About the FLSA (including implications of the Big Beautiful Bill) • What You Need to Know: Strategies and Recent Legal Developments in Public Safety Benefits Under the Pension Code and PSEBA • From Performance Appraisals to Fallout: Avoiding Legal Landmines
Noon – 1:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:00 – 2:15 pm	<u>PM Breakouts:</u> • Interest Arbitration for First Contracts and Beyond • Ready, Set, Negotiate! The Importance and Power of Preparation • Off Duty Misconduct – They Did What? And What Can I Do About That? • What Negotiators Need to Know About the FLSA (including implications of the Big Beautiful Bill) • What You Need to Know: Strategies and Recent Legal Developments in Public Safety Benefits Under the Pension Code and PSEBA • From Performance Appraisals to Fallout: Avoiding Legal Landmines
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Break
2:30 – 4:15 p.m.	Plenary Sessions Collective Bargaining Trends and Issues Potpourri of Employment Law Issues
4:15 p.m.	ASK THE ATTORNEY RECEPTION

Approval Being Sought for CLE credit (for attorneys), as well as HRCI and SHRM recertification credits.

Guest Arbitrator



Barry E. Simon

Scheduled Clark Baird Smith LLP Presenters

Ted Clark
James Baird
Robert Smith
Jill Leka
James Powers
Benjamin Gehrt

Roxana Underwood
Paul Denham
Kelly Coyle
Margaret Sewell
Catherine Seidelman
Ray Byrne

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Advance online registration is **required and must be submitted by February 27, 2026.** Credit card or check payments accepted.



To register, scan the QR Code or [CLICK HERE](#)

Registration is limited to non-union human resource and management professionals, department directors, and/or municipal administrators and management attorneys.

Registration Fees*:

Member	\$325.00
Organizational Associate of Member (includes all employees of a member's employer)	\$325.00
Non-Member	\$425.00

**If you are not sure of your membership status, please contact the [National PELRA Team](#).*

Confirmations: Registration/payment confirmations (as well as invoices for those who elect to pay by check) will be emailed to registrants upon completion of online registration. If you do not receive an email, please check your spam or *please contact the [National PELRA Team](#).*

***Deadline for cancellation is February 27, 2026.
Cancellations received after the deadline, or no shows, are considered nonrefundable.***

