

The 2026-2027 Nuts and Bolts of Employment Law Series
Season Two **SHRM Credit Descriptions**

Starring Abby Areinoff Harbicht and Denise Blommel
Guest Stars [confirmed] Gideon Esakoff, Cheri McCracken, Jeff Jacobson, Edmundo Robaina, Cornele Overstreet, Gerard Morales, Otto Shill, Clara Bustamante, Laura Clymer
[invited] Nick Enoch, Susan Martin, Laurent Badoux
Directed by Amy Irke, State Bar of Arizona
Produced by Employment and Labor Law Section, State Bar of Arizona
Executive Producer State Bar of Arizona Continuing Legal Education

Series Description

Welcome to Season Two of the Nuts & Bolts of Employment Law Series!

The United States is a nation of employees and employers. Both are affected by a multitude of statutes, rules, regulations, ordinances, and common law. These seven episodes of Season Two of our Series continue to explore the basics of the law governing the modern American workplace and what attorneys, human resource professionals, public entity managers, business owners, and nonprofit managers need to know. The goal of the Series is to educate and inform with practical advice on how to deal with the important issues facing Arizona employers.

Come join us at one, more, or all seven of the episodes to learn how to help your client, boss, or yourself understand more about workplace rights and responsibilities and the strategies to minimize risk.

Episode One

Five Generations in the Workplace: Legal and HR Issues

September 11, 2026 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

2.25 hours MCLE credit

ABSTRACT

The late Professor Peter Drucker, the “Father of Modern Management,” famously said that culture eats strategy for breakfast. Today’s workplace encompasses factories, offices, moving vehicles, gaming areas, and living rooms and includes Silent Generation, Baby Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, and Gen Z employees. Complicated work-life issues arise daily – from understanding Arizona’s paid sick leave requirements to child/elder care to disability accommodation to when to grant or deny leave. The never-ending cycle of technological challenges – from an Internet disconnection to a privacy breach to a cybersecurity nightmare – also are daily features. This episode explains the various Arizona and

federal laws involved in these situations and practical options to deal with them. This episode also illustrates how Human Resources is pivotal to the strategic success of a business, public, or nonprofit organization.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. **Know** the Arizona and federal laws applicable to work-life issues in your organization
2. **Identify** what is important to each generation in the workplace to establish a culture where everyone belongs and can work together.
3. **Explain** the various ways to deal with the daily technological challenges in your organization as well as how to handle a huge emergency.
4. **Apply** best practices for Human Resources, including HR's strategic value, and compliance with legal requirements

Chairs: Denise Blommel and Abby Areinoff Harbicht

Guest Star: Gideon Esakoff

Episode Two

Employment Issues of Public Employees

October 2, 2026 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

2.25 hours MCLE credit

ABSTRACT

The public work sector in Arizona is huge, encompassing federal, Postal, state, county, municipal, school district, military, and special district employees. The first half of this episode will focus on federal workplace laws and rules including whistleblowing, discrimination, union representation, and other employee rights as well as the complaint, charge, grievance, and other legal procedures federal and Postal workers must follow. The second half of this episode is devoted to the laws and rules that govern state and local employees, including at will or merit status, union representation, school and special district contracts, and what is required in a Notice of Claim when an employee moves to sue a public entity.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. **Differentiate** the laws and processes applicable to federal and state and local employees
2. **Determine and Apply** the appropriate federal and Arizona laws to an employee's situation
3. **Explain** the appropriate federal and Arizona processes to both Management and workers

Chairs: Denise Blommel and Abby Areinoff Harbicht

Guest Stars: Cheri McCracken, Jeff Jacobson, Edmundo Robaina

Episode Three

Unique Arizona laws and a Federal law applicable to your business or nonprofit

November 6, 2026 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
2.25 hours MCLE credit

ABSTRACT

The first hour of this episode will address questions like these:

What does “Right to Work” really mean? Why is it enshrined in Arizona’s Constitution?
Why does the prohibition of sexual harassment in the Arizona Civil Rights Act apply to all employers, but the rest of the provisions only apply if my business has 15 employees?
Where did medical marijuana employment protections come from? Are there any for recreational marijuana?
Why is mandatory paid sick leave so misunderstood...and complicated?

The second hour of this episode focuses on the National Labor Relations Act. Region 28, which covers Arizona, New Mexico, six counties in West Texas, and Clark County, Nevada, has been “Ground Zero” for the NLRB’s enforcement of workers’ rights to engage in protected concerted activity, an important law that applies to both union and non-union employers. Our special Guest Stars are the Regional Director of Region 28, and seasoned Management and Union/Employee attorneys to discuss why your business or nonprofit needs to know, understand, and comply with this 91-year-old labor law.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. **Understand** the background and rationale for some unique Arizona laws
2. **Know** why compliance with the National Labor Relations Act is so important
3. **Identify** protected concerted activities
4. **Implement** employee handbooks and policies which respect employee NLRA rights

Chairs: Denise Blommel and Abby Areinoff Harbicht

Guest Stars: Cornele Overstreet, Regional Director, Region 28, NLRB, Attorneys Gerard Morales and Clara Bustamante

Episode Four

A Primer on ERISA and Employee Benefits

January 8, 2027 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
2.25 hours MCLE credit

ABSTRACT

The federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act is one of the most complicated labor laws to understand. Its scope far exceeds traditional pensions because employee benefits come in an almost infinite number of varieties such as group health, dental, vision, disability, and life insurance, as well as the 401(k) or 403(b) retirement plans. ERISA covers many other retirement and insurance vehicles

and plans for severance, reduction in force, and even vacation. Taxes are also an important consideration, especially in executive compensation. There even is a provision of ERISA which prohibits discrimination against employees for using a benefit. Our Guest Stars are the experts and will guide us through the ERISA landscape.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. **Identify** whether your ideas for employee benefits meet the legal requirements
2. **Explain** to employees why the Plan, not you or the boss, make the rules
3. **Navigate** employee benefits with an eye toward employee retention as well as cost
4. **Understand** that this area is complicated, but manageable with the right assistance

Chairs: Denise Blommel and Abby Areinoff Harbicht

Guest Stars: Susan Martin, Otto Shill

Episode Five

A Compendium of Employment Documents

February 5, 2027 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

2.25 hours MCLE credit

ABSTRACT

Documentation is the most important element in Human Resources and labor/employment litigation. This episode will focus on the federal and Arizona law and rules about employment contracts, restrictive covenants (e.g. confidentiality, non-compete, non-solicitation), employee handbooks, mandatory arbitration, personnel folders, access to personnel information, termination forms and letters, settlement agreements, and practical advice for dealing with recordkeeping, developing written materials, and how to avoid risk.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. **Identify** what documents you need to add, revise, refresh, move from one folder to another, or destroy
2. **Differentiate** offer letters from contracts
3. **Develop** a system where forms and templates are continuously reviewed
4. **Explain** to management staff why documentation is absolutely imperative
5. **Understand** the nuances of employment contracts and restrictive covenants
6. **Consider** the pros and cons of mandatory arbitration

Chairs: Denise Blommel and Abby Areinoff Harbicht

Guest Star: Nicholas Enoch [invited]

Episode Six

An Exceptional Employee

March 5, 2027 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

2.25 hours MCLE credit

ABSTRACT

The first hour will focus on exceptions to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, including exemptions for entire business entities, the “white collar” exemptions (professional, administrative, executive, outside sales, computer employees, highly compensated employees, teacher/attorney/physician), special employee exemptions from overtime, and different workweeks for fire and law enforcement employees.

The second hour will explore the “Gig Economy” and the “Contingent Workforce” of independent contractors, job-shoppers, staff augmentation, temporary workers, contract employees, part-time workers, and leased employees. There have been multiple attempts by federal agencies to define joint employment and the responsibilities of potential multiple employers for a variety of employee issues. This episode is especially important for business entities who contract with an “HR provider” or a Professional Employer Organization (“PEO”).

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. **Identify** the factors as to whether an employee is FLSA exempt or nonexempt and the factors as to whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor
2. **Explain** your reasoning to Management as to exemptions from the FLSA
3. **Understand** that the definition of “independent contractor” is not just about the IRS and being FLSA exempt is not just about receiving a salary. Every worker is different and every situation is unique.
4. **Recognize** that it takes time to ascertain and evaluate FLSA exemptions
5. **Apply** the appropriate legal status to each worker

Chairs: Denise Blommel and Abby Areinoff Harbicht

Guest Star: Laurent Badoux [invited]

Episode Seven

Why the General Counsel and HR need to know about Arizona workers’ compensation

April 2, 2027 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

2.25 hours MCLE credit

ABSTRACT

Seriously injured workers from large organizations are often caught in a disconnect between Risk Management, which is scrutinizing the workers’ compensation claim to minimize the payment of benefits, and HR, which is being lobbied by Management to fire the injured worker. This episode explains why HR and Risk Management must be on the same page. In order to do so, HR and the General Counsel’s office need to know the basics of Arizona’s workers’ compensation system, including the elements of compensability, workers’ compensation as an exclusive remedy (and its exceptions), claim filing, benefits (both payments and medical), the litigation process, the right to reopen a claim and rearrange permanent benefits, and settlements. Case studies will be explored where workers’ compensation collides with the Family Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities

Act, and Arizona's Paid Sick Leave law.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. **Understand** the basics of Arizona's workers' compensation system
2. **Recognize** the relationship of workers' compensation with the ADA, FMLA, and Arizona's paid sick leave laws
3. **Develop** a strategy for minimizing risk for employers in both the workers' compensation and employment areas
4. **Further develop** a return to work program that provides meaningful work and complies with the ADA
5. **Train** supervisors to be mindful of the needs of injured workers and document observations

Chairs: Denise Blommel and Abby Areinoff Harbicht

Guest Star: Laura Clymer