



Public Pension HR Summit

*Invest in Your Professional Growth &
the Success of Your Organization*

Equipping public pension leaders with practical strategies
and insights to turn workforce challenges into opportunities.

September 23-25, 2026 | Phoenix, AZ



FINAL AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

7:30 AM–6:00 PM **REGISTRATION** | Hotel Lobby

8:00 AM–9:00 AM **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST** | Salon 3

9:00 AM–1:30 PM **Mental Health First Aid at Work Training**
Learn practical tools to recognize and respond to mental health challenges in the workplace. Participants will earn a three-year Mental Health First Aid certification. *Separate registration is required.*

Instructor *Suzanne Pearlman, National Council for Mental Wellbeing*

3:00 PM–5:00 PM **HR SUMMIT OPENING GENERAL SESSION** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

3:00 PM–3:15 PM **Welcome Address**
Hank Kim, NCPERS

3:15 PM–4:15 PM **Introductions & Insights**
Kick off the Summit with energy! This interactive session is your opportunity to introduce yourself, share what you're looking forward to, and connect with peers from across the HR community.

4:15 PM–5:00 PM **NCPERS 2026 Compensation Survey Results**
Get a sneak peek at the results of the 2026 Public Pension Compensation Survey. Conducted by NCPERS and CBIZ, this annual survey provides key insights to help benchmark your fund's compensation and benefits package.

Moderator *Meredith Wahlers, State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio*
Speakers *Joe Rice, CBIZ*
Matt Eckel, NCPERS

5:30 PM–6:30 PM **WELCOME RECEPTION** | Goldwater (Lobby Level)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

7:00 AM–5:00 PM **REGISTRATION** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

7:00 AM–8:00 AM **BREAKFAST** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

8:00 AM–5:15 PM **GENERAL SESSION II** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

8:00 AM–8:45 AM **The 2026 HR Landscape: Legislative, Regulatory, and Compliance Outlook**

A forward-looking overview of federal and state legislative developments impacting public pension HR leaders. This session will address various policy shifts, compliance trends, and emerging regulatory scrutiny.

Moderator *Shunne Powell, Teacher Retirement System of Texas*
Speaker *Neil Reichenberg, former executive director of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources*
Scott Kelly, Ogletree Deakins

8:45 AM–9:30 AM **From Roles to Skills: Building a Skills-Based Workforce Strategy**

HR leaders are shifting from traditional role-based models to skills-based workforce planning. This session will examine reskilling and upskilling initiatives, future-ready talent pipelines, and strategies to align workforce capabilities with long-term organizational needs. Guided discussion will center on practical implementation within public pension systems.

Moderator *Ricardo Carlos, City of Austin Employees' Retirement System*
Speaker *Lisa Taylor, Challenge Factory*

9:30 AM–9:45 AM **Wellness Break: Stress Management with Movement**

This 15-minute session will explore practical strategies for stress management, mental well-being, and building healthier daily habits that support resilience and productivity.

Speaker *Christine DeLeon, California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS)*

9:45 AM–10:30 AM **Upskilling Staff through AI Tools**

AI is reshaping the future of work and public pension HR teams that embrace it now will have a decisive advantage. In this session, Darren Dang of OCERS bridges vision and practice, exploring how AI tools can elevate your workforce strategy while giving staff the hands-on skills to work smarter today.

Speaker *Darren Dang, Orange County Employees Retirement System*

10:30 AM–10:45 AM **REFRESHMENT BREAK** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

10:45 AM–11:30 AM **The Great Disengagement and Job Hugging: Retention vs. Engagement**

Drawing on emerging research around employee disengagement and long-term role stagnation, this session reframes workforce stability as both a risk and an opportunity. Participants will explore how to interpret disengagement data, strengthen internal mobility, enhance career path clarity, and equip managers to re-energize tenured employees. The discussion will focus on moving from passive retention to active workforce development.

Moderator *Roshni Patel, CalPERS*
Speaker *Vibhas Ratanjee, Gallup*

11:30 AM–12:30 PM **Hot Topics Breakout I**

- *Navigating Board Dynamics*
- *Bring a Problem, Solve a Problem*
- *People Problems No One Wants to Talk About*
- *Job Hugging & Career Development*

12:30 PM–1:30 PM **NETWORKING LUNCH** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

1:45 PM–3:00 PM **Programs in Practice: Peer Case Studies**

Public pension HR leaders are developing creative solutions to address the challenges facing their organizations. In this session, fellow HR professionals will share successful projects they have implemented, highlighting innovative approaches to strengthening workplace culture, improving processes, and enhancing employee experience. Attendees will leave with practical ideas they can adapt for their own organizations.

Speakers *Ricardo Carlos, City of Austin Employees' Retirement System*
Elaine Gorton, Fire & Police Pension Association of Colorado
Lori Casey, Kentucky Public Pensions Authority
Lisa Versulues, Missouri State Employees Retirement System

3:00 PM–3:45 PM **Enforcement Priorities and the Evolving Workplace: What Public Pension HR Leaders Need to Know**

The workplace legal landscape continues to evolve, creating new compliance challenges for public employers. This session will provide

an overview of current EEOC enforcement priorities, emerging employment law developments, and practical guidance for public pension HR professionals. Topics may include workplace discrimination and harassment, reasonable accommodations, recruitment and hiring practices, employee relations, and other regulatory developments affecting today's workforce.

Moderator *Asiah Clendinen Gumbs, Virgin Islands Government Employees Retirement System*

Speaker *Elsie Darcy, Arizona, U.S. Department of Labor*
Nonnie L. Shivers, Ogletree Deakins

3:45 PM–4:00 PM **REFRESHMENT BREAK** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

4:00 PM–4:45 PM **Menopause in the Workplace: Policy, Benefits, and Culture**
An evidence-based exploration of menopause and its impact on workplace performance. Topics include benefits design, policy considerations, manager education, and building a supportive culture. The session will provide actionable guidance for organizations looking to proactively address this under-discussed issue.

Moderator *Stacey Barnier, San Bernardino County Employees' Retirement Association (SBCERA)*

Speaker *Dr. Jewel Kling, The Menopause Society*

4:45 PM–5:00 PM **Wellness Break in Action: From Practice to Implementation**
A continuation of the earlier wellness break, we will use this time to implement the key points from the morning session.

Speaker *Christine DeLeon, California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS)*

6:00 PM–9:00 PM **NETWORKING RECEPTION & DINNER**
Mancuso Restaurant - 201 E. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85004

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

7:00 AM–11:30 AM **REGISTRATION** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

7:00 AM–8:00 AM **BREAKFAST** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

8:00 AM–12:15 PM **GENERAL SESSION III** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

- 8:00 AM–8:45 AM **From Prompts to Agents: The Next-Level AI Playbook Session Overview**
 Take your AI skills from possibility to production. This session provides a practical playbook built on the CHATPROMPT framework, a multi-element prompt architecture applied live to common public pension HR use cases, including application screening, recruitment bulletins, structured interviews, performance evaluations, and communications.
- A pre-conference survey will benchmark adoption, governance, and confidence levels across the field, with results shared during the session. The program concludes with a look at agentic AI, the shift from prompt-based tools to autonomous workflows that can draft, screen, schedule, and report across systems, and the implications for HR roles and job design.
- Speaker *Dr. Frank Olmos, Ed.D., President of DFO HR Consulting*
- 8:45 AM–9:30 AM **HR Benchmarking Exchange: AI, Technology, and the Future of HR**
 As public pension systems navigate rapid technological change, HR leaders are taking different approaches to implementing AI, modernizing HR technology, and preparing their organizations for the future of work.
 This interactive benchmarking discussion brings HR professionals together to share what's working, what challenges they're facing, and the lessons they've learned along the way.
- Panel *Dr. Frank Olmos, Ed.D., President of DFO HR Consulting*
Elaine Gorton, Fire and Police Pension Association of Colorado
Shunne Powell, Teacher Retirement System of Texas
Meredith Wahlers, Meredith Wahlers, State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio
- 9:30 AM–10:30 AM **Hot Topics Breakout II**
- What Are Your Organizational Goals for the Future?
 - HR Benchmarking Exchange - Follow Up Discussion
 - ❖ AI
 - ❖ Technology
 - ❖ Organizational Modernization
- 10:30 AM–10:45 AM **REFRESHMENT BREAK** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)
- 10:45 AM–11:30 AM **Leadership Longevity and Succession Planning**
 Sustaining leadership in an era of burnout, political complexity, and career mobility is a growing challenge. This session will explore succession planning models, leadership development pathways, and

strategies to strengthen bench depth. Participants will examine how to prepare future leaders while maintaining stability in critical roles.

Moderator *Christine De Leon, California State Teachers' Retirement System*
Speaker *Lisa Taylor, Challenge Factory*

11:30 AM **Summit Wrap Up & Open Forum** | Pueblo (Lobby Level)

Thank you to our Sponsors!

