

Sarah Miller Espinosa, J.D.
Arbitrator. Mediator. Ombuds.

673 Potomac Station Drive #815 Leesburg, Virginia
301-828-8566

sarahmillerespinosa@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Impartial Arbitrator/Hearing Officer (2013-Present): conduct arbitration hearings in an objective and balanced manner, making appropriate evidentiary rulings and ensuring procedural fairness; interpret applicable laws, regulations, procedures, and/or collective bargaining agreements; analyze, synthesize, and evaluate evidence; draft decisions involving statutory, regulatory, and collective bargaining agreement interpretation as well as disciplinary matters; render independent decisions. Practice in accordance with the Code of Professional Responsibility for Arbitrators of Labor-Management Disputes.

Ombudsman, Montgomery College (Rockville, MD, 2013- Present): serve as the part-time neutral ombudsman for Montgomery College employees responsible for providing a confidential, independent, and impartial forum for faculty, staff, and administrators to explore and identify issues, interests, and possible solutions to conflict; evaluate data and identify emerging trends. Practice in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

Panel Memberships: Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service (FMCS) Labor Arbitration Panel; Cornell University Roster of Neutrals; City of New York Department of Education and United Federation of Teachers, Local 2, AFT, AFL-CIO (2014-present: serve as hearing officer five days per month and issue written decisions involving terminations, suspensions, penalties (reductions in pay) and other discipline of tenured teachers in accordance with applicable statutory provisions); Nuclear Regulatory Commission Early ADR Mediation Panel; City of Baltimore Civil Service Commission hearing officer.

Previous Positions Held:

Vice President of Human Resources, Development, and Engagement and Director of Employee Engagement and Labor Relations, Montgomery College (Rockville, MD, 2009 to 2013): Responsible for leadership of all aspects of human resources, including employee and labor relations, classification and compensation, benefits and wellness, recruitment, and records management. Reviewed recommendations for discipline of all employees and determined whether to approve discipline for college employees. Negotiated resolutions of individual employment disputes, including settlements involving alleged statutory violations of Title VII, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and Age Discrimination Employment Act (ADEA). Implemented retirement incentive, employee engagement initiative, furloughs, and classification system. Served as chief negotiator in collective bargaining involving three bargaining units (full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff bargaining units).

Chief Negotiator, Labor Relations Manager, Montgomery County Government (Rockville, MD, 2006 to 2009): Oversaw employee and labor relations program for county government with

approximately 9,000 employees, including general government, corrections, police, and fire, in four bargaining units. Served as chief negotiator in collective bargaining and County's chief spokesperson in regard to an array of labor relations issues, including matters of contract interpretation, interpretation of personnel regulations, and reductions in force. Reviewed proposed adverse actions for all employees and determined whether to approve discipline. In accordance with relevant statutory provisions and County Code, advocated in regard to negotiability of proposals advanced in collective bargaining and formulated defenses to alleged prohibited practices.

Assistant General Counsel and Mediator, State of Connecticut Department of Labor

(Wethersfield, CT, 2004 to 2006): Performed legal research and analysis and drafted decisions regarding alleged prohibited practices on behalf of the State Board of Labor Relations, including matters involving: the appropriateness and certification of bargaining units; duty of fair representation; unilateral change; determination of mandatory subjects of bargaining; duty to bargain in good faith; repudiation; retaliation for engaging in protected, concerted activities and contract interpretation; full-time mediator responsible for facilitating settlement of public sector labor disputes within the State of Connecticut; utilized knowledge of labor relations, labor law, and settlement trends to facilitate agreements.

General Counsel/Assistant to the President, Service Employees International Union, Locals 511 & 506 (Middletown, CT, 1999 to 2003): Negotiated and advocated on behalf of public sector bargaining units and members; served as grievance arbitration advocate for matters involving discipline (suspensions and dismissals) as well as contract interpretation. In this role, presented evidence at hearing, made arguments, and drafted post-hearing briefs. Advocated before the Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations on behalf of union, presenting evidence and arguments and drafting post-hearing briefs.

EDUCATION

University of Connecticut School of Law, Juris Doctor, 1999

Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Bachelor of Science, 1995

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES/FELLOWSHIPS

American Arbitration Association Higginbotham Fellow, 2015

Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Scheinman Institute on Conflict Resolution, Labor Arbitrator Development Program, 2011-2014

Admitted to practice law, State of New York

Senior Professional Human Resources (SPHR)

Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner (CO-OP)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR), Board of Directors; Labor and Employment Relations Association; LERA Maryland Chapter; Society for Federal Labor and Employee Relations Professionals; American Bar Association; International Ombudsman Association; Cornell ILR Alumni Association.

RECENT PRESENTATIONS, PUBLICATIONS, TRAININGS

“Organizational Ombuds: Roles, Responsibilities, and Opportunities,” Panel Discussion at the Association for Conflict Resolution’s Annual Conference, 2015

“Mediation and Arbitration in Public Sector Collective Bargaining,” *ACResolution Magazine*, Summer 2014