



FMCS
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FMCS Virtual NLMC A Success and Lesson In Modern Flexibility

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Aug. 20, 2020) – The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) concluded their biennial National Labor-Management Conference (NLMC) yesterday as a 100-percent virtual event.

FMCS announced in May that the event, originally scheduled in person in Chicago over three days, would be conducted entirely as two-day online conference due to COVID-19 precautions to protect the health and safety of attendees and FMCS staff.

With almost 1500 registered attendees, the 2020 virtual NLMC, titled The Collaborative Connected Workplace, was one of the largest FMCS conferences ever and proved to be an overwhelming success in large part to the meticulous planning and flexibility of FMCS staff.

“Our team pulled out all the stops and worked tirelessly to make the best of an otherwise unfortunate situation,” said FMCS Division of Agency Initiatives Executive Manager and NLMC planning committee co-chair Javier Ramirez. “Transitioning from a live event to a first-time entirely virtual one was no easy task, but I’m proud of our ability to be flexible and create an event that brought the same great content NLMC is known for.”

The 2020 virtual NLMC featured a wide array of experts, decision-makers and notable names in the world of industrial labor relations including keynote speakers, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, U.S. Deputy Labor Secretary Patrick Pizzella and Sr. Vice President of Labor Relations for Albertson’s grocery chain Daniel Dosenbach to name a few.

In addition to group plenary sessions, attendees registered for a variety of individual workshops and panel discussions that earned them Continuing Legal Education, Society for Human Resource Management, and Human Resources Certification Institute credits.

FMCS Commissioners Ligia Velazquez and Tom Melancon gave a fast-paced, interactive overview about defining and understanding our implicit biases. They concluded with practical takeaways on what we can do to counter the negative impact of our implicit biases while giving examples of their own experiences at the bargaining table, and in life, of unconscious bias at work.

Commissioner Joshua Flax, FMCS’ chief strategy officer, moderated a panel on federal sector labor relations consisting of FMCS Director Richard Giacalone, Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) Chairman Mark Anthony Carter and Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) Chairman Colleen Duffy Kiko.

The panelists discussed topics that included telework, best practices for making arguments before the FSIP/FLRA and the impact of President Trump's Executive Orders on labor relations in the federal sector.

Other presentations during NLMC included discussions of the regulation of the gig economy, ethics and honesty in collective bargaining, video arbitration, ingredients of collaborative innovation, and many more.

Director Giacolone praised the entire event, noting, "The human capacity for pragmatic innovation, combined with the persistent focus on achieving the objective at hand, has won the day. The inconceivable became conceivable, and, in the end, we were able to come together and have a wonderful intellectually stimulating, content-rich conference."

Director Giacolone closed the event by commenting to attendees, "I hope you have been inspired by what you have heard in the last two days. From AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, to National Labor Relations Board Chairman John Ring, to Artificial Intelligence expert Jay Richards, the Conference plenary sessions have been extraordinary. The many Conference workshops have offered excellent insights into the difficult issues that you as labor and management wrestle with every day."

While FMCS continues to explore and implement other virtual services and capabilities, they are confident that they are ready should there be a need or desire to conduct another major virtual conference. In the meantime, the next NLMC is currently being planned for August 2-4, 2022 in Chicago, which will also be a celebration of the 75th anniversary of the creation of FMCS.

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The U.S. Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service (FMCS) is the nation's premier public agency for dispute resolution and conflict management. FMCS was created by Congress as a neutral and independent government agency upon enactment of the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 (Taft-Hartley Act) and mandated to resolve industrial conflict and promote labor-management peace and cooperation, minimizing the impact of these disputes on the free flow of commerce. With headquarters in Washington, D.C. and offices across the country, the agency has a proud track record of decades of effective dispute resolution and conflict management services for employers and unions across industries and work activities in the private, public, and federal sectors. FMCS is also recognized for its success facilitating negotiated rulemaking processes and for its robust employment mediation program in the federal sector as well as its global program, partnering with more than 60 countries to provide international consulting and training. For more on FMCS or to request services, visit www.fmcs.gov



(Aug. 19, 2020) Counter-clockwise from upper right, FMCS Director Richard Giacolone, FSIP Chairman Mark Anthony Carter, FLRA Chairman Colleen Duffy Kiko, and FMCS Chief Strategy Officer Joshua Flax talk about federal sector labor relations in a panel discussion attended by more than 440 of the almost 1500 people attending a variety of panels and workshops at the FMCS 2020 Virtual National Labor Management Conference.