



## Heather R. Coffman

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### EXPERIENCE

Heather advises, negotiates, and litigates on behalf of a diverse portfolio of public sector clients. Her clients include counties, cities, public safety agencies, and public education institutions. Heather regularly advises and represents these clients in matters ranging from investigations, disciplinary matters, administrative proceedings, unfair practice charges, and litigation involving state and federal discrimination and harassment claims. In addition, Heather represents public agencies at the bargaining table. Heather also frequently trains clients on new legal developments and strategies to prevent litigation, enhance employee performance, and strengthen labor relations.

Prior to practicing public employment and education law, Heather practiced immigration law. Outside of the office, she serves as a volunteer mediator through a community-based dispute resolution organization.

### EDUCATION

JD, University of California, Hastings College of Law  
MALD, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University  
BA, Tufts University

### LEGAL EXPERTISE

Employment Law  
Investigations  
Labor Relations & Collective Bargaining  
Litigation Services  
Public Education  
Public Safety  
Retirement, Health & Disability

### REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

#### ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

**Classified Employee Discipline (2018)** - Successfully upheld the suspension of a classified employee at a community college district. The employee engaged in a series of escalating confrontations with fellow employees, despite progressive action by the District to support him to comport with District policies.

**Police Officer Termination (2017)** - Successfully upheld termination of a police officer who used his body to block a female non-sworn employee from leaving a work area and shared sexually explicit stories with her.

**Correctional Deputy Termination (2016)** - Successfully upheld termination of a correctional deputy who, while off-duty, brandished a firearm at inmates who were performing duties on a work crew. The deputy then misled the Internal Affairs investigator regarding his conduct.

**Vacaville Peace Officers Association v. City of Vacaville (2014)** - Successfully represented City defending against Unfair Practice Charges brought by a Peace Officers' Association before the Public Employment Relations Board. The POA alleged the City engaged in bad faith bargaining during labor negotiations.

## LITIGATION

**Jackson v. County of Humboldt (2017)** - Obtained summary judgment in favor of the County in a case where Plaintiff, an employee, asserted that he suffered discrimination on the basis of age. Prior to the motion for summary judgment, successfully represented the County in demurrers to multiple additional claims by the same Plaintiff.

**Lake v. City of Hercules (2013)** - Obtained summary judgment in favor of the City in a case where Plaintiff, a female police officer, lied to her Police Chief in order to obtain approval to purchase an assault weapon. After the City terminated her employment for dishonesty she sued the City, alleging that the termination was based on her gender, disability, and protected activity. She also alleged that she had been harassed based on her gender and disability.

## NEGOTIATIONS

**Sonoma County** - Union and Employee units.

**Marin Community College District** - Classified Employee Units.

## AFFILIATIONS

California Council of School Attorneys (CCSA)

California Bar Association

Bar Association of San Francisco

## AWARDS

Selected for inclusion in Northern California *Super Lawyers Rising Stars* in the field of Employment & Labor Law, (2015)

## PUBLICATIONS

**Looking for Alternatives to Cash-in-Lieu Benefits for Employees? New Health Reimbursement Arrangements Available for Current Employees, Starting in 2020**, Jul 16, 2019

**Paid Time Off for Union Leaders: New Law Extends Requirements for Public Employers to Grant**

**Leaves of Absence for Union Stewards and Officers**, Oct 4, 2018

**The Importance of Posting a Salary Schedule**, Sep 22, 2016

**Building Your Dream Team**, Aug 9, 2016

**Public Records Act Update: What Happens on a Personal Device (May) Stay on a Personal Device**, Mar 31, 2014

## **PRESENTATIONS**

**Difficult Conversation**, Napa/Solano/Yolo ERC, Suisun City, Apr 16, 2020

**Public Service: Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Public Employees**, Napa/Solano/Yolo ERC, Suisun City, Apr 16, 2020

**Legal Aspects of Violence in the Workplace**, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Los Altos, Feb 20, 2020

**Legal Aspects of Violence in the Workplace**, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Los Altos, Feb 18, 2020

**Legal Aspects of Violence in the Workplace**, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Los Altos, Feb 13, 2020

**Legal Aspects of Violence in the Workplace**, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Los Altos, Feb 11, 2020

**Accusations of Workplace Bullying: A Growing Concern**, Bay Area CCD, Hayward, Feb 7, 2020

**Going Outside the Classified Service: Short-Term Employees Substitutes and Professional Experts**, Bay Area CCD, Hayward, Feb 7, 2020

**Preventing Workplace Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation**, City of Menlo Park, Menlo Park, Oct 28, 2019

**An Agency's Guide to Employee Retirement**, Mendocino County ERC, Ukiah, Oct 24, 2019

**Exercising Your Management Rights**, Mendocino County ERC, Ukiah, Oct 24, 2019

**Training Academy for Workplace Investigators: Core Principles, Skills & Practices for Conducting Effective Workplace Investigations**, City of San Jose, San Jose, Oct 2, 2019

**Overcoming Obstacles to Alternative Schedules and Telecommuting**, Municipal Management Association of Northern California (MMANC) Lunch and Learn, Mountain View, Sep 27, 2019

**Preventing Workplace Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation**, City of Mountain View, Mountain View, Sep 26, 2019

**Nuts and Bolts of Serving as a Skelly Officer**, City of Gilroy, San Francisco, Sep 20, 2019

**Workplace Bullying**, ERMA, Pleasant Hill, Sep 18, 2019

**Maximizing Supervisory Skills for the First Line Supervisor**, San Mateo County ERC, South San Francisco, Sep 3, 2019

**Fire Management Academy**, San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department, Foster City, Aug 29, 2019

**Managing the Marginal Employee**, ERMA, Martinez, Aug 23, 2019

**Managing the Marginal Employee**, ERMA, Novato, Aug 21, 2019

**Reasonable Suspicion**, Monterey One Water, Marina, Aug 14, 2019

**The Future is Now - Embracing Generational Diversity and Succession Planning**, San Mateo County ERC, Belmont, Jun 20, 2019

**Exercising Your Management Rights**, City of Concord, Concord, May 29, 2019

**Harassment Prevention: Train the Trainer**, City of Morgan Hill, Morgan Hill, May 22, 2019