



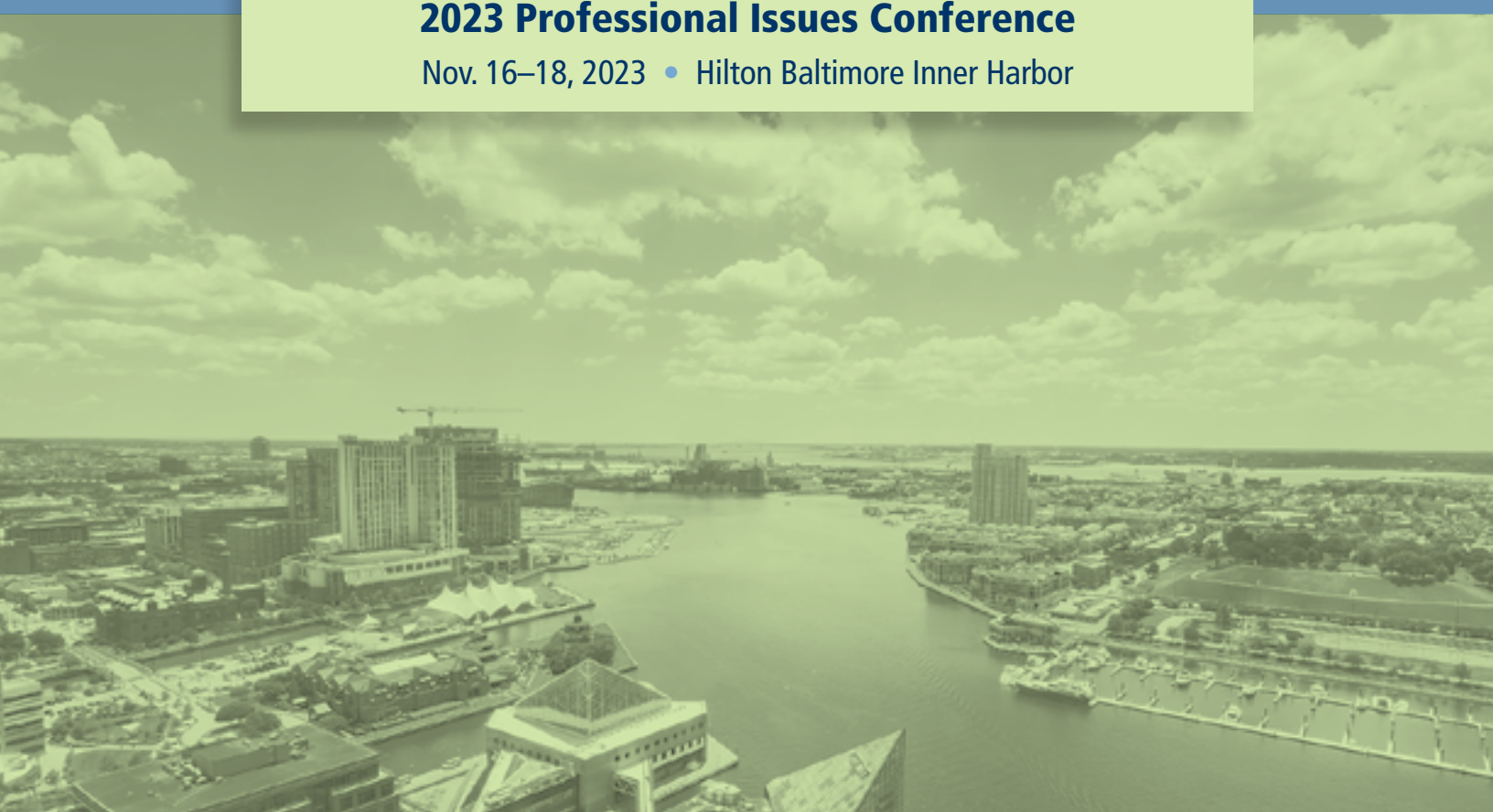
A Union of Professionals

AFT Public Employees

Focus *on the* *Future*

**REBUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES
WITH A STRONG PUBLIC SERVICE**

**AFT Public Employees
2023 Professional Issues Conference**
Nov. 16–18, 2023 • Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor





RANDI WEINGARTEN
PRESIDENT

FEDRICK C. INGRAM
SECRETARY-TREASURER

EVELYN DEJESUS
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

OUR MISSION

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

AFT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES PROGRAM AND POLICY COUNCIL

Chair: JILL COHENOUR, President, Federation of Public Health and Human Services, Local 4573 (Montana)

Vice Chair: GARY FEIST, President, North Dakota Public Employees, Local 4660

TRACY BREEDEN, Massachusetts Library Staff Association, Local 4928

RYAN CLARK, President, New York State Lifeguard Corps, Local 795

RANDI DIANTONIO, Vice President, Public Employees Federation, Local 4053 (New York)

JOHN DISETTE, President, Administrative and Residual Employees Union, Local 4200 (Connecticut)

MATTHEW EMIGHOLZ, President, Illinois Federation of Public Employees, Local 4408

BILL GARRITY, President, University Health Professionals, Local 3837 (Connecticut)

SARAH LAFRENZ, President, Kansas Organization of State Employees, Local 300

MIKE MILLER, Alaska Public Employees Association Supervisory Unit, Local 4900

RAY (SKIP) MILLER, President, Colorado Workers for Innovation and Solutions, Local 1876

SUE PARTON, President, Federation of Indian Service Employees, Local 4524

RACHEL PETERSON, Rhode Island Department of Education Professional Employees, Local 2012

ANTOINETTE RYAN-JOHNSON, President, City Union of Baltimore, Local 800

TARA SHIMAN, Worthington Public Libraries United

JERRY SMITH, President, Maryland Professional Employees Council, Local 6197

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AFT CODE OF CONDUCT: STATEMENT OF VALUES

The AFT executive council has adopted the AFT Code of Conduct (www.aft.org/CodeofConduct), which prohibits discriminatory, harassing or otherwise unacceptable behavior in the workplace and at any AFT activity, event or meeting, even if the conduct has not risen to a violation of law. There will be zero tolerance for harassment of any form, including but not limited to the use of racial epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, jokes or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to sex, race, age, disability or other protected categories. This behavior will be called out. The AFT takes these complaints seriously and may, at its discretion, take action that it deems appropriate upon assessing the situation. Possible responses may include a warning to or expulsion of the alleged offender from the AFT activity, event or meeting.

The AFT is a democratic organization that values open and vigorous discussion of the issues facing the AFT, our members, working people and the labor movement. The Code of Conduct is not intended to restrict free and open debate, but rather is intended to ensure a positive and respectful environment that is free of discrimination and harassment, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, ancestry, pregnancy or any other characteristic protected by law. We ask all meeting participants to conduct themselves consistent with the values of equity and equality.

The AFT encourages you to report any offending conduct as soon as possible; there will be no retaliation or adverse action taken against an individual who makes a complaint. Reports may be made to Gria Hernandez-Curtis, human resources director; Tear Jones, assistant to the president for organizational management; Dan McNeil, general counsel; the designated manager for the meeting; or any other supervisor or manager.

Gria Hernandez-Curtis Director of Human Resources	ghernandez@aft.org Office: 202-434-4699 Mobile: 667-229-7171	
Tear Jones Assistant to the President for Organizational Management	tear.jones@aft.org Office: 202-879-4443 Mobile: 240-535-5671	
Dan McNeil General Counsel	dmcneil@aft.org Office: 202-393-6305	
Meeting name:	Nurses and Health Professionals Professional Issues Conference	
Meeting date:	Nov. 16–18	
Code of Conduct co-managers:	Jenn Porcari, Director, AFT Public Employees	Kelly Nedrow, Senior Director, AFT Health Issues
Email address:	jporcari@aft.org	knedrow@aft.org
Mobile phone:	202-320-9038	614-753-6203

DAY **1**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

SCHEDULE

Noon – 7:00 p.m.

Registration

Room: Key South Foyer

1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Opioids: Prevention and Response

Room: Latrobe

Presenter: Keith Wrightson, AFT Health and Safety

\$30 registration fee to cover materials, 30 people maximum.

Every day, 180 Americans die from an opioid overdose. Workers in high-risk occupations or who work in hazardous environments face significant risk of injury, which may lead to opioid or other

substance use, overdose or death. Workers involved in emergency response, law enforcement, healthcare and environmental services also face the risk of occupational exposure to opioids. Library staff, lifeguards and other positions that interact daily with the public have found themselves addressing opioid overdoses on the job. These at-risk workers and other populations often lack the necessary resources and education to administer aid and protect themselves. This course is intended for workers who may be impacted by the opioid crisis. The goal of the course is to provide a worker-awareness training program that identifies workplace risk factors and solutions for opioid use, misuse and addiction. Additionally, this course will teach you how to recognize the signs of an opioid overdose and administer the opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone (Narcan).



DAY 2

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

SCHEDULE

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Registration

Room: Key South Foyer

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

WELCOME—OPENING SESSION

Room: Key Ballroom 7/9/10

JILL COHENOUR, chair, AFT Public Employees Program and Policy Council; president, Federation of Public Health and Human Services, Montana

JERRY SMITH, Maryland Professional Employees Council

ANTOINETTE RYAN-JOHNSON, City Union of Baltimore

KENYA CAMPBELL, AFT-Maryland

JENN PORCARI, director, AFT Public Employees

Keynote Interview

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT president

Interviewer: Jill Cohenour

10:45 a.m. – noon

WORKSHOP SESSION 1

(six workshops in three strands)

Recruitment and Retention

Workplace Safety:

Unsafe Work Sites in Baltimore

Room: Calloway AB

Presenters: Antoinette-Ryan Johnson, president, City Union of Baltimore; Audra Lucas, AFT staff

Moderator: Bill Garrity, president, University Health Professionals

In 2019, City Union of Baltimore member Trina Cunningham went to work and never returned home. Despite this tragic and preventable loss, the city of Baltimore continues to underinvest in safe work sites for its workers. CUB members, in conjunction with the AFT and AFT-Maryland, have been working to document and correct unsafe work sites. From helping members to earn OSHA-10 certifications to bargaining and publicity campaigns, learn about how CUB and the AFT are working to ensure safety for all workers.

Recruitment and Retention

Defined-Benefit Pension Plans: A Better Bang for the Buck

Room: Ruth

Presenters: Jeff Kasper, business manager, Alaska Public Employees Association; Gary Feist, vice president, North Dakota Public Employees; Dan Doonan, executive director, National Institute on Retirement Security; Kendal Killian, executive director, National Public Pension Coalition

Moderator: Rachel Peterson, Rhode Island Department of Education Professional Employees

Defined-benefit pensions have long been a cornerstone of benefits packages offered to recruit and retain top talent in the public sector. In recent decades, DB pensions have been chronically underfunded, leading to unfunded liabilities that must be paid out, even during times of deep austerity. Some conservative governments have sought to replace DB pensions with other retirement plans, like defined-contribution pensions and 401(k) plans. Despite claims that DC plans and 401(k) plans save money, evidence indicates that DB pension plans are more cost-effective and have positive ripple effects throughout the economy. Learn from researchers at the National Institute on Retirement Security and public employees in states that are exploring different public sector retirement plans.

SCHEDULE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work **Is Artificial Intelligence Going to Take My Job? What's Going on with AI, and Why Should Public Employees Care?**

Room: Latrobe

Presenters: Amy Hickey, AFT staff; Jill Cohenour, president, Federation of Public Health and Human Services, Montana

Moderator: Jerry Smith, president, Maryland Professional Employees Council

In November 2022, ChatGPT took the world by storm. AI has been in development for decades, but in recent years, generative AI has advanced at an alarming rate. Lawmakers, employers and other decision-makers struggle to keep pace with ever evolving concerns around the impacts of new technology that even the developers don't fully understand. This workshop will seek to explain why public employees should pay attention to ongoing AI developments and how they may impact public services.

Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work **New Isn't Always Better: The Impacts of Unregulated Artificial Intelligence on Public Services and How to Regulate New Technology**

Room: Johnson A

Presenters: Randi DiAntonio, vice president, New York State Public Employees Federation; Wayne Spence, president, New York State Public Employees Federation

Moderator: Skip Miller, president, Colorado WINS

The concept of using technology to predict and prevent crime has been in the public consciousness for decades, famously depicted in Philip K. Dick's dystopian novella *Minority Report*. In a true story of life imitating art, New York state has adopted the COMPAS program to utilize AI to predict recidivism in adult parolees. This workshop explores how over-reliance on new technology can have harmful effects on our democracy and proposes solutions for regulating digital technology. Representatives from the New York State Public Employees Federation will discuss their bargaining and legislative approaches to overreaching digital technology.



Core Union Skills **When Union Rights Are Under Attack**

Room: Johnson B

Presenters: Dan Carpenter, director of organizing, New York State Public Employees Federation; Donald Cohen, executive director, In the Public Interest

Moderator: Tara Shiman, Worthington Public Libraries United

For as long as workers have been fighting for their rights, bosses have been pushing back by employing union-busting firms to spread disinformation and fear to stymie union advances. In the public sector, anti-union campaigns tend to be even more insidious, as private interests actively work to dismantle our critical public services in a bid for privatization and profit. Learn more about recognizing boss tactics and how to combat anti-union campaigns.

Core Union Skills **Mini-Blitz Basics: How to Organize and Activate Your Local**

Room: Peale

Presenters: Deneen Taylor, field service director, Illinois Federation of Teachers; Jakob Miles, organizer, Montana Federation of Public Employees

Moderator: Sarah LaFrenz, president, Kansas Organization of State Employees

Tired of seeing the same old faces at every union meeting? Not sure how to engage new hires in a

post-*Janus* landscape? You might need to re-energize your organizing efforts. Learn from AFT local staff about mini-blitzes they have designed and executed to effectively organize their membership. This workshop will cover lessons learned, what it takes to design and execute a blitz and how to hold onto organizing gains after all the organizers go home.

12:15 – 1:30 p.m.

PLENARY LUNCH WITH SPEAKER

Location: Key Ballroom 7/9/10

1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

WORKSHOP SESSION 2

(six workshops in three strands)

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SCHEDULE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

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Core Union Skills **Bargaining for the Common Good: Supporting Our Communities**

Room: Johnson A

Presenters: Kyle Arnone, AFT Collective Bargaining Center staff; Hilary Glasgow, executive director, Colorado WINS

Moderator: Sue Parton, president, Federation of Indian Service Employees

Wages, hours and working conditions are the bread and butter of union negotiations. But what about expanding the scope of negotiations to bring community concerns to the forefront? Learn about how unions can mobilize members and leverage power by doing this. We will discuss successful campaigns to bargain for the public good and how this helps to lift all boats.

Core Union Skills **Student Debt Clinic**

Room: Johnson B

Presenter: Chris Goff, associate director, AFT Higher Education

Moderator: Tracey Breeden, Massachusetts Library Staff Association

After three and a half years, payments on federal student loans have resumed, but thanks to the AFT and our partners, borrowers have more tools to access lower monthly payments and loan forgiveness. Join us to learn about how you can take advantage of income-driven repayment plans to manage your monthly payments and set yourself up to receive Public Service Loan Forgiveness, which is available to anyone who works in the public sector!

Core Union Skills **Mini-Blitz Basics: How to Organize and Activate Your Local**

Room: Peale

Presenters: Deneen Taylor, field service director, Illinois Federation of Teachers; Jakob Miles, Montana Federation of Public Employees

Moderators: Matt Emigholz, president, Illinois Federation of Public Employees; Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, president, City Union of Baltimore

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3:15 – 4:30 p.m.

PLENARY

Focus on the Future: Full Staffing in the Public Sector

Room: Key Ballroom 7/9/10

The public sector staffing levels are at historically low levels, affecting our members, our work and our democracy. Over the past year, the AFT Public Employees Short Staffing Task Force has studied how our affiliates can be a part of the solution and will soon release a report that outlines 10 recommendations to get the public sector back up to full staffing.

JENN PORCARI, director, AFT Public Employees

GARY FEIST, vice president, North Dakota Public Employees; co-chair of the AFT Public Employees Short Staffing Task Force

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Joint Reception with AFT Nurses and Health Professionals

Room: Holiday Ballroom 4-6



DAY 3

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18

SCHEDULE

7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Registration

Room: Key South Foyer

7:45 – 8:45 a.m.

Buffet breakfast

Room: Key Ballroom 7/9/10

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

PLENARY

**Focus on the Future:
Artificial Intelligence and the Public Service**

Room: Key Ballroom 7/9/10

Public work is changing rapidly with more digitized work structures. What hasn't changed is the limited role workers have in discussions about the future of work, including algorithms, increased use of apps and data security. To protect our work, our data and our democracy, public employee unions must be prepared to negotiate and advocate for legislative protections.

WAYNE SPENCE, president, New York State Public Employees Federation

AMANDA BALLANTYNE, director, AFL-CIO Technology Institute

JAMES MARONEY, state senator, Connecticut

10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

WORKSHOP SESSION 3

(six workshops in three strands)

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and Retention in the Public Sector: Successful Strategies for Building a Strong Workforce

Room: Calloway AB

Presenters: Shawn Brown, vice president, University Health Professionals; Danielle Bridger, regional coordinator, New York State Public Employees Federation; Elena Temple, AFT staff, government affairs

Moderator: Matt Emigholz, president, Illinois Federation of Public Employees

Staffing in the public sector has reached a critical level in many localities around the country. From offering signing bonuses to housing support, local governments are throwing a lot of strategies at the wall to see what will work to fill hard-to-fill positions. Members of the AFT Public Employees Short Staffing Task Force will give examples of successful bargaining strategies and collaboration with management that are making a difference in hiring and retention. Join the conversation on how to make public jobs more attractive to potential applicants.

Recruitment and Retention

Presenting the Short Staffing Task Force Report: A Deep Dive into Recommendations

Room: Johnson A

Presenters: Jenn Porcari, director, AFT Public Employees; Michelle Wheat, 2nd vice president, Montana Federation of Public Employees

Moderator: John DiSette, president, Administrative and Residual Employees Union

Employment levels may be rebounding in the private sector, but many of our nation's most important public

SCHEDULE SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18

services are at risk due to a staffing crisis across the public sector. After a year of research and discussion, the AFT Public Employees Short Staffing Task Force is about to release a report detailing the staffing crisis in government and how this impacts democracy. This workshop will focus on the 10 recommendations made by the task force to improve recruitment and retention. If you are dealing with short staffing in your workplace and union, this workshop will provide an opportunity for networking around solutions!

Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work **Professional Skill-Building: Making AI Work for Your Union/Profession**

Room: Ruth

Presenter: Rob Weil, AFT Educational Issues staff

Moderator: Ryan Clark, president, New York State Lifeguard Corps

By now you've heard of Bard and ChatGPT, but what other AI is out on the market right now, and how is it being used? This workshop will explore currently available AI tools and how to utilize them to build your professional skills and strengthen your union. Come share what apps you are using at your work site as we build an arsenal of information to share across the AFT. Learn how to identify AI-generated content and how to use AI as a starting point to strengthen your work products.

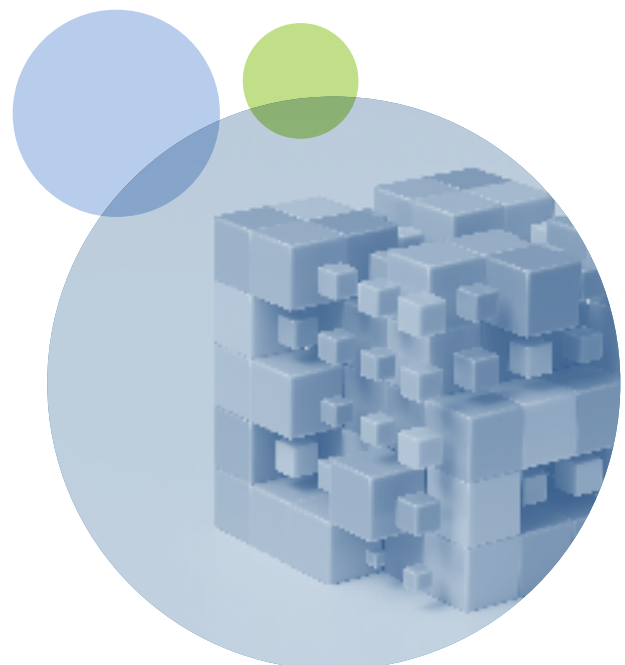
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12:15 – 1:30 p.m.

LUNCHEON

Room: Key Ballroom 7/9/10

Union Activism in the New Age: Networking ideas

1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

CLOSING PLENARY

Room: Key Ballroom 7/9/10

Focus on the Future: Our Democracy at Stake

Public employees have incredibly diverse jobs, yet they all have one thing in common: democracy. In this interactive closing plenary session, we will explore how all public employees defend democracy daily and how your local, state and national union can support the work you do to strengthen our democracy.

MARY CATHRYN RICKER, executive director, Albert Shanker Institute

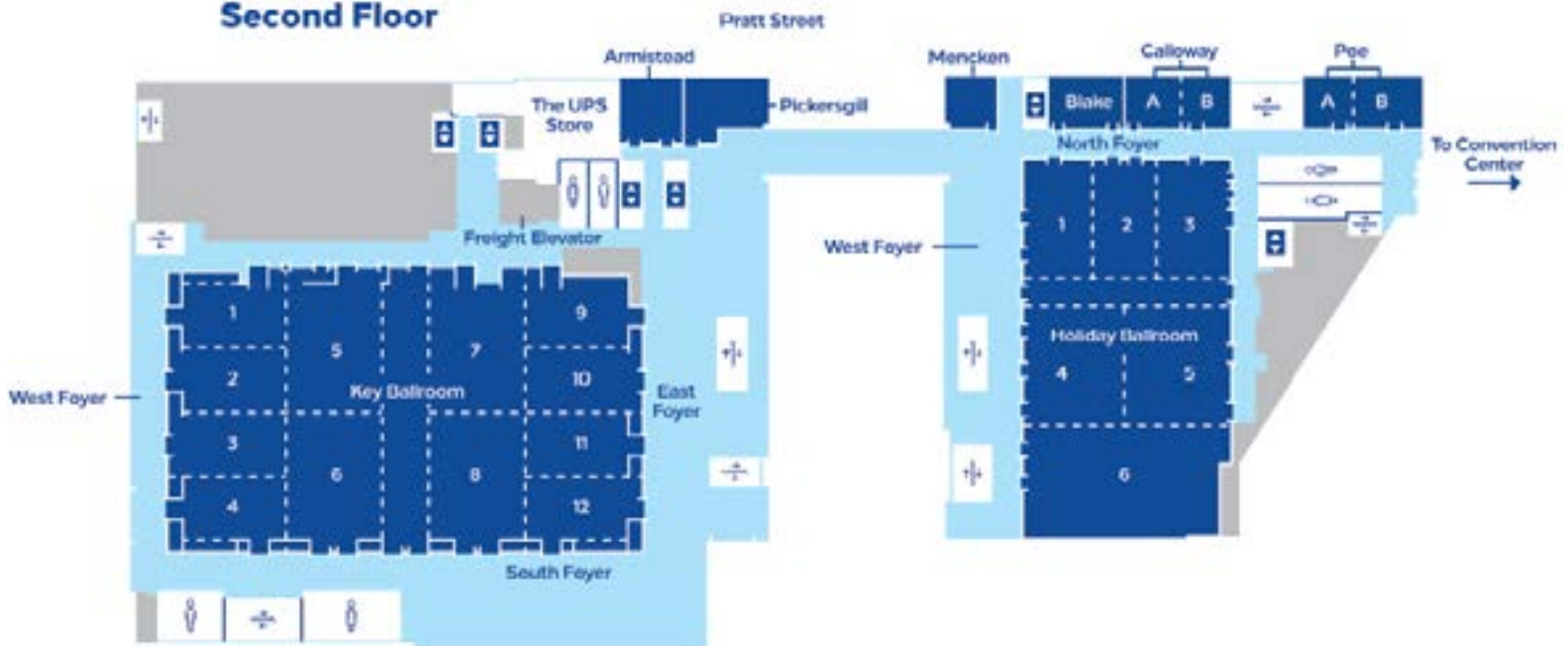
JAN HOCHADEL, president, AFT Connecticut; AFT vice president

MEETING SPACE

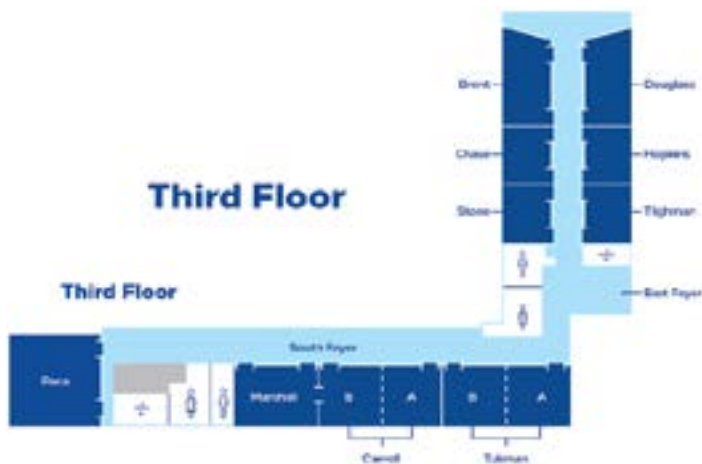
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor





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